

## A LOOK AT SYMBOLS

“...the man who understands a symbol not only opens himself to the objective world, but at some time succeeds in emerging from his personal situation and reaching a comprehension of the universal.”

Mircea Eliade

### Symbols, in general

Why are we so interested in symbols? What importance or relevance do they have in our lives? Let's first look at the definition of the word *symbol* and explore **various potent symbols of different cultures in order to provide a basis for the symbolic forms of the microscopic images of the elements.**

**What do we mean by symbol? Symbols are a visible sign for something invisible:** an act, a concept, an object with deep cultural significance.

**They have the capacity to excite a response through unconscious association.** When we "know" that there is something beyond our sensory ability to understand we use symbols to represent that "something". Symbols are what Carl Jung called the collective unconscious, that part of ourselves that contains the psychological inheritance common of all our pasts. **A symbol bypasses words and represents more than the actual picture.** It reflects a basic underlying concept not understandable through words. Imagine a picture of a cross. If you are Catholic, that cross will elicit a whole set of reactions within you to remind you of your religious beliefs. If you are of a different religion, that cross may trigger negative reactions within you or may have little or no effect on you. That particular symbol of a whole religious context and philosophy may not be part of your inner symbolic repertoire, but it gives you the idea of what a symbol can be or do.

**One of the first known uses for symbols was to concentrate the human mind on God, the spiritual source, the Infinite one.** The symbol itself was not worshipped - it was only a tangible object or picture to keep the mind from wandering. **By focusing on the symbol** ( be it a picture, a candle, a statue) no outside sights or sounds would attract attention from the object of worship. **Those used in early religious teachings were known as sacred symbols.** We can go back as far as primitive human cultures and observe in the ancient cave paintings that the forms presented there most likely represented more than the simple story of a hunt, that the whole array of images were probably a symbolic prayer to bring about many successful hunts for the people.

**In exploring the microscopic universe, you see within it many of the same forms that have been used as sacred symbols.** My belief is that these microscopic images obtained through technology can also serve to help us enter into a resonant state with a spiritual source, the great Mystery. To take this idea one step further, a moment of thought - could it be that our ancient ancestors "knew" of their inner world, "saw" the microuniverse and projected those images outward to become sacred and potent symbols to remind them of their infinite connection with their spiritual source.

As you look at and learn about some of these universal symbols, watch your reactions to them. Are some soothing and calming for you while others stimulate you with intense emotion or passion? This wonderful visual language may help you understand some of your dream imagery or daytime reveries.

## **SACRED SYMBOLS**

### **Sun and Moon**

One of the ancient concepts that many cultures believed was that to produce anything, both male and female energies were required. In many Creation myths, the Sun symbolizes the male, and the Moon the female. Temples were often built with symbols of the Sun and Moon near each other.

The Egyptians were not content with having only the Moon symbolize the female attribute so they devised a symbol for the Moon called Isis. Isis wore a headdress of a Moon with a pair of cow's horns, the latter symbolizing motherhood. The ancient Oriental cultures also have a woman symbolizing a Moon. This is similar to the symbol of Taurus.

The Sun and the Moon also represent the light and the darkness, the assertive and receptive, the creative and the nurturing qualities of human endeavors. All of us are endowed with solar and lunar qualities which we can learn to bring out through meditation, reflection, discovery of those inner powerful symbols which align us with the Creative Force.

### **The Serpent**

Symbols of the Creator were often represented as adorned serpents. One, a cobra, had 7 heads and was called Nagas. The other serpent called Quetzalcoatl was covered with feathers instead of scales and is still found in the Yucatan and Central America. The Dragon of the northern parts of Asia is thought to arise from Quetzalcoatl and was adorned with a crest and wings. The Pueblo Indians bestowed on it the name of the Bearded Serpent. As sacred symbols of the creative powers, these were held in great reverence and stood next to the Sun, the most sacred symbol of all.

Ancient serpent symbols were divided into adorned symbols of the Creative Attribute of the Deity and plain unadorned symbols of the waters. An Egyptian papyrus dating about 3000 BC depicts Horus the symbol of the sun in combat with Apep of the waters. The Greeks had their Sun God Apollo killing the serpent Python of the waters. The Hindus' Krishna killed the serpent and the Chaldeans had Belmarduk the Sun overcoming Tiamat, the Waters. According to the sacred writings of Mu, there was no combat or fight between the god and the serpent, life and death, it was a commingling of forces of elementary matter.

The ancient people of Mexico, the submerged Mu and the Pueblo Indians of Arizona and New Mexico all had a feathered serpent as a symbol of the Creator suggesting an intimate religious connection between these past and present civilizations.

The Serpent seems to be a symbol of mixed powers, revered and feared. Being both the Creative Life Spirit and the force of death that needed to be conquered, its ultimate power is experienced by containing the creative, destructive and regenerative powers within. Harnessing the Serpent energy is used to reach a higher state of consciousness in many cultures. The Serpent moving in its undulating rhythms reminds us of the spiral coil of growth and transformation.

**Water** Throughout all ancient writings the waters are referred to as the "mother of life," and the first known life on earth was marine life. According to natural laws this was imperative since life can begin only at temperatures below 200 F. **During the Earth's cooling, the waters were always a step ahead of the cooling rocks so were down to a temperature where life could start.**

Among the North American Indians of the Northwest the killer whale is the symbol for the ocean waters. Again, the serpent, unadorned this time symbolized the waters among many ancient peoples. Those living in the Yucatan called this serpent of the waters, Khanab.

### **Birds and feathers**

Mexico gives us a glimpse of what birds symbolized to the ancient peoples. The bird is a common symbol for the creative forces among some North American Indians - the Thunderbird. The bird has also come to represent the Spirit.

Legend says that the feather was selected to symbolize Truth because a puff of wind blows it away. In ancient Mayan times yellow feathers were used to symbolize royalty, blue, the priesthood and red for soldiers and nobility. The curled feather is part of Osiris' headdress. The ancient name for feathers was Kukum, Ku or Kuk. Among the Mayans, the serpent Kukul Khan translates into the King of the Serpents which is covered with feathers.

Number and form are the unifying forces behind all the systems of occult science. They are also the **underlying threads of the natural universe and bring together the worlds of matter, reason, spirit, awareness of God and mysticism.** All the forms found in nature delineate a given mode of primal energy. The Ancients used mathematics, geometry and number as tools for both the intellect which requires reason and for "feelings" which require meaning. They viewed these numerical concepts as myth and symbol and it would be useful if we could understand and view them as they did.

The Mayans and other ancient peoples used numbers to express what couldn't be expressed in any other way. **Numbers embodied the mysteries of the universe and were used to describe these mysteries.** They were symbolic as well as descriptive and overshot the world of limitation and form. It was believed that the numbers and their accompanying geometric shapes provided a simple language on which is founded our perceptions and consciousness. Each culture in the ancient and modern world used number and geometric symbols ritualistically and numbers have defined symbolic attributes.



It is thought that **numbers in the form of specific geometric shapes trap and resonate specific vibrations.** Form gives breadth and depth to the number and the shapes of each form are determined by number. For instance, if you think of the number 4 you may picture a square which represents the physical form of the abstract concept of the number 4. Sacred geometry built from these concepts is concerned with order and space. Psychologists found that different geometric shapes exert specific influences on human attitudes, physiology, and perception. In Great Britain, hospital architects are putting this knowledge into practice. Walls of rooms slanting inward toward the ceiling psychologically "ground" the individual. The reverse lightens the mood and stimulates creativity and dreams.

**An example of the use of number in modern technological ritual is seen in the 106 chemical elements** that make up our own physical universe . The only difference between each of these elements is the number of electrons and atomic particles. Physical and chemical properties of all molecular marvels are dependent solely on number.

1 3 5 7 9 2 4 6 8 0 11 22

Around 500 BC, Confucius gave the qualities of heaven and earth a numerical symbol. Both the **Greeks and Chinese independently developed the concept that odd numbers 1,3,5,7,9, are masculine, divine, heavenly** and that the **even numbers 2,4,6,8, are feminine, mortal, and earthy**. Ancient traditions of both East and West **used number symbols to express metaphysical cosmology**. Do you have a favorite or lucky number? What is its shape?

At the same time that Confucius was in China, Pythagorus in Greece was also **seeing number as a language that contained within it a hidden reality of form**. Number and cosmology were intertwined in ancient times and that intertwining can be seen in the archaic geometric art and architecture of the times.

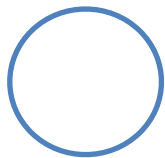
**The square in most cultures symbolized the earth, matter, and rationalism**, whereas the **circle symbolized the encompassing world of spirit, heart and feeling. Infinity and totality, nothing and the base of all beginning**. However, in my photomicroscopic investigations of the astrominerals, I saw the opposite. The Earth element mineral salts were round; air, square. This makes intellectual sense. Isn't our own Earth that we stand on round? Doesn't wind blow in a linear direction? Don't "Air People" think logically following lines of thought?

Whatever symbols we use, we each try to **reconcile the duality of matter and spirit, intellect and feeling, in our own lives**. Likewise, we are each drawn to different forms for aesthetics or inner symbols. For example, for many years most of the designs on my towels and sheets were linear or

angular forms of different colors. In fact most of the patterns that I chose to decorate my house are abstract geometric forms. Now I have begun to choose flowers to adorn my sheets and walls. What designs do you sleep on? A personal question on symbols, **is it possible that the designs and forms that we are drawn to are related to the hidden symbology of our astrological make-up?** As you journey further in this book, you may discover the answer to this question by learning what forms and shapes are symbolic of your birthdate.

In the beginning based on sacred geometry, three symbols were used: the circle, the triangle and the square.

### The circle

The **picture**  **of the sun** was used by many cultures to represent the worshipped god, **the monotheistic symbol for the Infinite One**, the most sacred of all. The sun was selected for this symbol because it was seen as the most powerful object that came within sight and understanding of man in ancient times.

The circle, being **without beginning or end**, is also a **sign of God** or of eternity, representing infinity and everlasting. Red circles, perhaps the setting sun, decorated the tops of Egyptian pillars and monuments to the dead.

The life symbol or Ankh from the Egyptians has a **circle loop at the top symbolizing a mouth or gateway** and was the origin for the symbol of Venus - triumph of the spirit over bodily matter, the soul over materialism.

### The triangle



The triangle, thought to **represent the intellect is constructed of three lines** joined to one another forming a single unbroken line without ends, has special meaning. These three lines **enclose a space forming a definite figure** of which the triangle is the symbol for the **creative intellect** which thought to join them and bring them together. The triangle also has other significance depending on where and how it is used.

**Triangles are steeped in symbolism pertaining to creation, more specifically, co-operative creativity.**

▲ is an ancient Egyptian symbol of the Godhead and in **Christianity is looked upon as the sign of the Trinity or three personalities of God.** It was also a **Pythagorean symbol for wisdom.** Interestingly, even though it represented God in some philosophies it was also a sign for the female element based on the earth yearning for higher things. In the mysticism of the Middle Ages this represented the fire element.

▼ represents the male element in early Christianity, celestial in nature striving after truth. Yet in the Middle Ages, it symbolized the female water element.



▼ Two triangles joined was an ancient symbol for an offering. It also symbolizes bringing together male and female energies necessary for creation. and you can also see the 2 triangles in the Seal of Solomon, an ancient Arabic

▼ The Seal of Solomon is the signet ring attributed to King Solomon in medieval Arabic tradition, from which it developed in Islamic and Jewish mysticism and in Western occultism. It is the predecessor of the Star of David, considered to be one of the most ancient symbols. which became the symbol of the Jewish people in modern times. Of all the geometric shapes in sacred geometry, the hexagon is arguably the most powerful and fascinating. It is found in many spiritual symbols such as the Star of David, The Tree of Life in the Kabbalah and the Hagal Rune composed by ancient tribes of northern Europe.

**The Star of David, also known as the Seal of Solomon, is believed to be one of the oldest symbols ever used. Although its origin is unknown, it probably existed long before it was incorporated into the philosophies of Judaism.**



You find the hexagon in the centre of the Star of David. It is the sacred geometry formed by the interlocking of two triangles – the upward-pointing triangle representing positive/male energy, and the downward-facing triangle representing negative/female energy.

This scientific explanation is one of the meanings at the heart of the Star of David. And that heart is the hexagon. **Look at nature and you find the hexagon is one of the principal governing patterns that is dominant in the natural world.** <https://mastermindcontent.co.uk/esoteric-meaning-of-the-hexagon/>

And it is at the core of mankind as well.



**The square** 

The square **symbolizes strength and in many cultures was a conventional symbol for the Earth** for the purpose of teaching the cardinal points - North, South, East, and West. The Earth being drawn as a square gave "4 corners", later called the Great Pillars or "Four Great Primary Forces."

**The Hexagon**

This 6-sided symbol is a wonderful part of nature duplicated in the snowflakes all the way down to the atomic structure of our metabolic energy source, sugar.

**The Pyramid**

The Great Pyramid in Egypt contains within its structure, measurements which are proportional to the size and distance of the earth, moon and sun. These so-called cosmic relationships contained within a geometric

architectural structure give to it the harmonies and vibrations of the cosmos - powerful energetic forms rediscovered this century when Bovis, a Frenchman investigated the observation that organic materials decayed very slowly in the Great Pyramid. In fact, in Italy and France, milk and other perishables are being sold in pyramid-shaped containers because they withstand longer periods without refrigeration.

### The Four Directions and their symbols

Culture	East	South	West	North
Mayan	Red	Yellow	Black	White
Hindu	King of Heaven	Judge of Dead	God of Waters	God of Wealth
Native Buffalo American	Eagle Morning Spring Beginnings Air	Coyote, Mouse Mid-day Summer Creativity Fire	Brown Bear Evening Autumn Reflection Water	White Night Winter Wisdom Earth



Triangle above square symbolized heaven above earth and is seen as a glyph on one of the temples built in Uxmal, Yucatan over 10,000 years ago.

### The Spiral

*"Like all existence on the descending scale of realities, the spiral is a symbol. It denotes eternity, since it may go on forever."*

*"This order, reverberating down into the microscopic and subatomic levels, both structures and reflects our consciousness"*


*Jill Purce.  
The Mystic Spiral*

The spiral is an early sacred symbol of man represented by the whirlwind. **Wherever it was found in nature it was worshipped.** The whorled shell was sacred as early as paleolithic times. The curved and undulating spiral form is peculiarly feminine and all the earliest fertility life-giving deities were fertility mother-goddesses.

**In nature, the spiral is characteristic of flow and growth.** Writhing spiral forms are prevalent in plants. The twining vine is a sacred Hebrew symbol for eternal life. It also symbolized the special relationship between the ancient Hebrew people and their God - they must cling to their god. This ancient religious symbol and connection is represented in the spiral curls (pais) worn by Orthodox Jewish men, the prayer. phylacteries, and the challah, the ritual bread of Sabbath.

Galaxies, too, are thought to grow and be created by the inward spiralling of interstellar gases. These macrocosmic movements are mirrored in the microcosm of man and all living things. The curve of an elephants tusks, a canary's claws, the swirling arms of the spiral galaxies, and the brightly hued seashells are all logarithmic spirals.

A moth navigating mistakenly towards the flame of a candle maintains a constant angle between the direction of its flight and the direction of the light. The resulting path is a tightening logarithmic spiral. The embryonic mollusk secretes its curved shell in a characteristic shape. As a result of the need for compactness and mobility, mollusks have evolved shells that spiral downward around their central axis, coiling at a constant angle, like the light-transfixed moth.

The Chinese dragon moves upward in a spiral. The  yin-yang is a spiral within a circle symbolizing the male and female principles creatively linked. Curved paths to the house kept out life-threatening demons.

Symbols of growth and the path of the soul, spirals were generally associated with the passing on of the soul from the material body and are seen decorating ancient burial chambers. An ancient reference to man's soul having no end or beginning:

"If we live on we must continue forever, and if we continue forever, like the circle and eternity, man had no beginning."

An ancient Egyptian papyrus dating  
1320 BC

As there are no ends this is a continuous line returning to the starting point and proceeding on as if one can find no place to stop - no beginning or end similar to the circle.

Spirals with one end pointing to the right were an ancient Ulghur symbol meaning "going to somewhere." The angular spiral is found at the entrance of Mayan burial chambers symbolizing a return.

## Spiral Energies

Did you ever wonder about the nature of energy - probably not. But if you were to imagine what energy looked like, how would it appear to you?

Some energy spirals like waves of sound, vibrating at different beats - a high-pitched screechy sound has a different energy pattern than a deep bass.

Memory energy in the chemical molecule of inheritance is also spiral. The famous double helix coil carries the informational energy that instructs and constructs all of life.

The Ancient yogis and Oriental masters of the Chi or Ki ( life energy) knew that energy spirals through the body from the bottom to the top and back again. Tai Chi exercises use the form of the spiral as the basis for movement and flexibility throughout the body.

### THE ELEMENTS AS SYMBOLS

*Primitive man saw the power of the outside world. The elements of weather and nature were very powerful symbols for the meaning behind and of the visible physical universe. The tempestuous storms, the warming sun, the clear, cool air, the earth beneath our feet, are all seen in the earliest art and myths. They drew what they saw and took these pictures to represent the higher powers, the gods.*

The Elements are expressed in most cultures. **The amazing similarities of the meanings of those symbols from peoples of remote regions around the world speak strongly of a cosmic consciousness.**

The Elements have a variety of definitions starting with the very essence of life as expressed by early civilizations. **Life was thought to arise from the alchemy of the four elements of fire and earth, air and water.** Later as scientific explorations of life began, it was learned that all living things required warmth (fire), air to breathe, food and touch (earth), and of course, water to drink. The **four states of matter** were also described as these same four elements: gaseous (air), solid (earth), fluid liquid (water) and energy (fire). As our scientific knowledge grew so did our spiritual. However for many years **much of this spiritual knowledge of the elements was delegated to the occult, the hidden.** After all, scientists had learned that there were over 100 different chemical elements, not four. And what of the idea that illness was a result of an imbalance of four humours or elements. The Germ Theory put a hole in that theory. And what of Creation, it certainly required more than those four properties of matter.

As we look into humankind's ideas of life, health, and Creation **the four elements have played a prominent symbolic** part in these facets of our existence. Then we moved out of the physical realm of earlier centuries, and this century leaped into the psychological sphere. As in the physical descriptions of life, **psychology, too, was blessed with an elemental vision, namely through the insight of the great Swiss physician Carl Jung.**

The photographic images of the astrological minerals also give us a language that is both visual and symbolic for the Elements. Using these microscopic images of the cell salts to **symbolize elemental types of people, energy and relationships** may help you discover why you resonate with some and not with others.

**Biblical** narrative. The description of **Jacob's ladder** appears in Genesis 28:10-19: And **Jacob** went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. ... And he dreamed, and behold a **ladder** set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

**Jacob's Ladder** (Hebrew: סולם יעקב *Sulam Yaakov*) is a ladder leading to heaven that was featured in a dream the biblical Patriarch Jacob had during his flight from his brother Esau in the Book of Genesis.

The significance of the dream has been debated, but most interpretations agree that it identified Jacob with the obligations and inheritance of the people chosen by God, as understood in Abrahamic religions.

And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon the place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood beside him, and said: 'I am the LORD, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee back into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.' And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said: 'Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not.' And he was afraid, and said: 'How full of awe is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'

— Genesis 28:10-17 Jewish Publication Society (1917)