

The Seal of The Theosophical Society



THE SEAL OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY was adapted from H. P. Blavatsky's personal seal, used by her before the Society was founded in 1875. The symbols it contains are so ancient that nobody knows when they were first used to express universal ideas. They far antedate any political or other modern applications, and have nothing to do with any social or political movements. They are in fact part of the universal mystery-language that can convey wordlessly to the mind sacred truths of nature.



The Serpent swallowing its tail:

A very ancient symbol depicting eternity and the continuity of cyclic time. Like the biblical serpent of Paradise lost understood mystically, it represents wisdom and, because of its ability to shed its skin, regeneration and rebirth. As a circular symbol it signifies to the Hindus the outbreathing and inbreathing of Brahmā ("expander"), the cosmic creator: when Brahmā breathes out, worlds come into being; when he breathes in, all is reabsorbed into the divine essence. The descending

arc of the serpent's body signifies worlds descending into matter; the ascending arc, their evolution toward spirit. This spiral circulation is eternal, implying evolution through time. The circle itself represents perfection and the restoration of universal harmony; also the Boundless from which all manifestation springs and to which all will return. The symbol is found also in ancient Egypt, Greece, and West Africa, and among Buddhists and Jains, Gnostics and alchemists.



The Swastika: A Sanskrit word meaning "well-being," "auspicious" — the perennial symbol of good fortune found in the cradle of ancient cultures

of India, China, Japan, and the Americas, as well as Greece and Rome (including the early Christians). In Scandinavia it was Thor's hammer and in India Vishnu's discus and the Jaina cross. In Buddhism, it expresses the "wheel of the Law." Symbol of evolution and perpetual motion, the swastika denotes the ever-churning "mill of the gods," in whose center is the soul, while the bent arms suggest the ceaseless turning of the wheels of life throughout universal existence. When we look at photos of faraway spiral galaxies, we are wonderstruck to see that they clearly resemble swastikas in their vortical motion.



The Interlaced Triangles: Known in the Occident as King Solomon's seal or star, it was called in India the seal of Vishnu. The interlaced triangles signify the bipolarity in nature — spirit and matter, or male and female. The apex of the white triangle represents the divine monad;

the apex of the dark triangle, the manifested worlds. The upward triangle suggests spirit, consciousness, and concealed wisdom, which are mirrored in the downward-pointing triangle representing matter, receptive space, manifestation, or wisdom revealed. The sides of the dark triangle may stand for form, color, and substance; the three gunas or fundamental qualities; and the creative, preserving, and destructive/regenerative forces of the Hindu triad, Brahmā, Vishnu, and Śiva.

Together the triangles represent the manifested universe evolved from the central point within the serpent-circle of time and space. They also form the hexagon of six principles, cosmic and human, emanating from and synthesized by the central point, the seventh and highest self of any evolving being. Thus they express the sevenfold structure of the universe. The central cross is the inner person, touching all things from the six sides through the six triangles. The six points of the star reach outward toward the serpent of eternity, growing and evolving through time.



The Ankh, or Ankh, or Tau: A sacred symbol particularly associated with ancient Egypt, it signifies life, regeneration, and the descent of

spirit from inner realms into the worlds of substance. It can denote a universe in embryo, the circle representing the cosmic or spiritual germ or egg hovering over the cross of matter which has issued from it; or limitless, uncreated space. Astronomically it is the sign of Venus, Earth's sister-planet and guardian of humanity. Applied to the human race, it may represent the evolution of man-

kind into the bipolarity of male and female, as well as the initiate who holds the key to the mysteries when united with his own spiritual intelligence.

These spiritual symbols forming the seal of The Theosophical Society together comprise an entire philosophy of the inner workings of man and universal nature. Taken as a whole, the seal represents the spiritually reborn person, symbolized by the tau/cross in the center, evolving through the six human and cosmic principles and encircled by the serpent of evolution of spirit in and through matter. On the larger scale, it expresses a universe expanding into manifestation from cosmic spirit.

The seal used in this leaflet is a replica of the original TS seal, printed in the Society's first *Preamble and Bylaws*, October 30, 1875.



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