

A metaphor is something like a bucket

by Sam Webster (c)1988

This is not a piece of scholarship, rather is an expression of my experience of the grades. I do not presume to know truth, rather I search for a metaphor to 'encrypt' my experience within this arrangement of words so as to reach across the gap between you and I, dear reader. Will it carry my message, like a bucket?

Thesis: In each of the Grades a piece of a Whole is energetically imposed upon the Aura of the Candidate. This creates the Physical Vehicle or the Chariot of the Elements which the Holy Guardian Angel vivifies and employs in the working of its will in Assiah.

I refer to this kind of transmission as Holonomic because it addresses the energy field of the Candidate as a whole. At any given point the whole message can be read. However, at different scales of resolution different patterns emerge and often appearing quite dissimilar from scale to scale. Fractal mappings, clouds and dripping faucets evince these kinds of patterns.

I take refuge in the observation "the rituals shall be half known and half concealed." Being that one each of the myriad scales had its own myriad patterns I can only refer to the scales with which I am acquainted.

*** 0=0 ***

During the 0=0 ritual a vast number of things are happening to the Candidate at a level usually unbeknownst to him. The particular area under consideration is when the three principle officers form a tetrahedron over the head of the Candidate. They speak the words of Light In Extension drawing down the Audic Force, the L.V.X. into his aura. This has three primary functions:

- ***Establishing***First this establishes the current of the Order within the Aura of the Candidate. As such it is a gift of power, making the raw energy which we use to do our type of magick more available to the new initiate.
- ***Charging***Second it charges the aura with an interpatterning of three-fold forces and four-fold forms which the initiate will explore during his subsequent career. This is shown quite clearly in the geometric shape formed around the Candidate at this part of the ritual, the Tetrahedron. It is formed by the three officers linking their tools over the head of the Candidate, thereby representing the three-fold force: a foreshadowing of the supernal triad. The faces or boundaries of the tetrahedron are four triangles which show forth the creation of form within the triangle which is the Throne of Form: Binah.
- ***Shocking***Third, a special stress is laid upon the Candidate both by the aforementioned action and by the knells during his circumambulation and further with his encounters with the guardians of the East and the West. This process of straining the energies of the Candidate correlates to the initial pulse of energy required, according to physics, to overcome a body's initial inertia to set it in motion. Here we are setting the Candidate in motion upon the path of Initiation.

Energy +Information=Action ?!

*** 1=10 ***

Having begun, that Candidate sets out to explore the Path. First it is necessary to set the limits of ones abilities so as to develop strategies for mapping out the interior territory. Boundaries define what is inside from what is outside. This is the nature of systems and essential to knowledge of the self as system.

There are two kinds of constraints placed upon the initiate within this grade. One is a constraint placed upon the direction of travel or Vector of activity.

The initiate is shown the paths of light and darkness and shown that such extremes are forbidding to ones progress. Then with the aid of the Living Soul of the Earth the initiate is enjoined to the straight and narrow path of the Middle Way. This balancing of forces and demonstration of the virtue of mildness and equanimity strengthens the magickal will of the initiate by focusing it, unassuaged of purpose, in its journey to the Highest.

The Introduction of the Temple

Besides defining the trajectory of one's magickal career, the other kind of border the Initiate is helped to build in the 1=10 temple is that of the periphery of his magickal sphere. This is done by introducing the Candidate to the metaphorical or nonphysical Temple of Solomon.

One is lead from the outside (in between the two parts of the ceremony) into the temple and then given a guided tour of its parts concluding at the altar of incense but not entering the Holy of Holies. In essence one is being given the keys to seeing the Universe, represented by the temple, being composed of the Hebrew alphabet. This alphabet is the stones of which the Temple is built. This is in accord with Sepher Yetzirah. It also reflects the view of the Universe as being the Logos or living Name of God, each being therein a Letter in that Name.

The basic analysis here is the universe composed of three scales. The most lofty being the 12 fold stellar realm of the Zodiac, represented by the 12 simple letters. Every one of these twelve letters is also placed in one of the angular directions in the temple; NW, SE, above North, below East, etc.

The Middle realm of the Planetary realm is seven fold and expresses the human or interpersonal region. This is denoted by the 7 doubles. Each of these also points to a cardinal direction in space.

Then, the foundation, the key stone and the central pillar of the Temple is shown in the three mother letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Here the interpenetrant three and four fold realms of the elements and primal forces are given form in human body, to parts of which each of the Three relate. Perhaps the absence of the fourth element alludes to the connection to Gaia, the Living Earth, that the magickian is to formulate in this grade.

*** 2=9 ***

The lesson of the 2=9 is the building of the foundation of the elements, the central vertical axis of the Magickian and reaching towards the vault of the heavens above. This is the three-fold balance or triple union expressed in L.Tzaddi vel Hermeticus in its

earliest foreshadowing. Also we see here a preview of the work of an adept expressed in intellectual terms for the Outer Order.

The first task for the officers upon the Candidate's entrance into the temple is to build within the temple and thus within the Candidate, the firm foundation. As said in the Vision of the Universal Mercury, "If thine own soul be baseless how wilt thou find a standing point whence to fix the soul of the Universe?"

In the Passing of the Path of Tau the initiate is introduced to the living Kerubic forces, the Presidents of the elements and is blessed by them. This four fold empowerment creates the balanced cross of the elements within the sphere of the Candidate. Without this equilibrium the would-be mage could not enter the higher regions.

Or by an other metaphor, if the starship of the mage's consciousness is not balanced perfectly upon the thrust of the Lifting Drive, upon lift-off from the terrestrial sphere, the mage would veer off at a tangent from its course to the 'one star in sight.' In this way and in many others are the four elements the foundation to our practical magicks.

The admission badge of the grade is most apropos. Having been introduced to the Letters of the Magickal Hebrew Alphabet in the 1=10, the Candidate holds them in hand in the form of the equal armed or Greek cubical cross with each of the Letters upon its surface squares. In one sense this is a summation of the 1=10 grade in a single three dimensional hieroglyph. This cross of 5 cubes is a foreshadowing of the cross of 5 squares in the portal.

It is customary in our temples for the members to wear Tau-shaped robes. In this path two keys to this custom is given. The first is hidden in the Sepher Yetzera, who's attributes are first intimated in the Temple of the Zelatori: In the 1=10, the Letters of the alphabet are given location in space (see above). Each of the planets and their Double Letters is given a cardinal direction.

The direction of Saturn, the planet of structure, is the center. Subtly, the initiate is counseled in the practical magick that the magickian is the center of the temple, thus the universe, about which all turns. This is the place from which magick is done.

The second key relates to the structural power of Saturn. In the Temple, Saturn is the upholding of fundamental form. The initiate upon examination might well realize himself as the center pole of the temple holding aloft its roof. This brings us to the actual ceremony of the reception into Yesod.

The admission badge gives the Candidate the key to upholding the temple. The Caduceus shows the dynamic action of the middle pillar and the tree as a Zoomorphic or animal based form. We usually see the Tree as a plant-like or a 'botanomorphic' form. This teaches the paradox of stability through change. Here we see an identity of the rigid nature of Saturn with the volatile nature of Mercury. This perhaps points to the early Hermetic discovery that there are no solids; only the whirling motions of atomic forces which present to ours senses the appearance of solidity. It has been said the Great Work is to Fix the Volatile.

The hieroglyph of this process is the central Icon of the Grade, the Serpent on the Tree of Life.

The initiate is shown a gesture which kinesthetically sums up this process of becoming a Pillar of the Temple. The grade sign is the god form of Shu or Atlas. These

gods held up the Sky, each for their own reasons. In this same way does the magickian uphold the firmament (read Heaven or Divine Order). Order here is the patterning force of information, mind or will.

With the end of the 2=9 rite the Kerux appears no more, signaling among other things, the end of the wandering of the Candidate in the Abodes of the Formless.

*** 3=8 ***

With the entrance of the Theoricus into the 3=8 Temple begins his introduction to the substance of magick, the Fluid Light.

The Practical magick of the G.D. is the Magick of Light. It is by manipulating this subtle substance that we cause change in the World about us.

Forms quickened with the Living Force of Magickal Light begin to act in the world in accord with the will of their maker. The lens necessary to focus and concentrate this Light into sufficient intensity is the Mind. We are taught in the 3=8 that it was in mind that the Father of All did enclose his acts, not matter. It was from Mind that the Light of the Primogenial Will first took form. The character of mind is to divide, to analyze. This makes the homogeneous Light, the Ain Soph Aur, into discrete patterns at first in the realm of formation, the Yetzirah, and later down further into Assiah, matter.

To show this analytical process of fire, most often thought of as homogeneous, Fire is divided into four types; Solar, Terrestrial (Volcanic), Astral (Biological), and hidden or latent Heat. To unite them the names of the three actions of Fire are given which show by their letters their unity: AUD, AUB, AUR, and ASCH. Of this, Two hieroglyphs are given. The admission badge being a tetrahedron and the Letter being Shin, both show in their shapes the form of fire, lapping flame. The tetrahedron cut open Forms the letter Shin and Shin folded forms a tetrahedron. And of course the Trump XX, resumes these ideas (see ritual).

To balance the tetrad of the fiery substance we are next led in the path of Resh to the Triad of Solar mind. In the path of Shin we learn of the substance we are dealing with. In the path of Resh we learn the keys of how to craft with it. First, we are again counseled to follow the path of mildness, returning extremes to the middle way and the point of transformation. Then we see the Sun as a vast human Head in the center of space whose locks are rays of light, 'stretching to the confines of Space.'

This gives the magickian the key to the use of the Magickal Light. As in the last grade one is shown to be the center of all and the radiant point, the still point in the turning world, the Axis of the Wheel. This is the balance point of the OmniTopological Lens of the Mind with which the mage focuses Will into Action.

The Garden of Eden diagram combines the two previous paths into a single Icon.

The four rivers represent the four primal elemental currents in the Magick of Light, best represented to the western mind as rivers. Further this Icon shows the place of humanity within the flow of the current. It is an Icon of the undisturbed reflection of the Most High, before the decent into the realms of the duality of Good and Evil.

*** 4=7 ***

Having obtained the Lever Long Enough, and the Place To Stand, we are now counseled as how to move the world, to make change.

We are taken to the primal abyss where in all was Chaos. Naught could exist there in save for the briefest of times; for a second or an Aeon.

Yet, somehow, in the midst of the Chaos, the Unity, the One, did form itself, self-begotten, and out of the constant homogeneous turmoil formulating the Triad of +,- and =, a triad so abstract as best to be pointed to and not given word. This triangle of Form and co-mingled forces creates the primal forms. It is the first and only structure of which our Universe is formed.

By reflection the Triangle formulates the Hexad, the basis for manifestation with in the World.

By division, within the once homogeneous Unity, does each thing come into being. In the path of Tzaddi, the path of the Hermeticists, the way of division is shown. Having been introduced to the Idea of division in the previous grade the magickian now learns the means. Out of the Primal and unformed Chaos or Hell, energy is called into the Triangle of Form, which is also the triangle of evocation. This gives pattern to raw, unstable energy forcing it into a self-regenerative structure, one stable enough to survive within manifestation.

This triad is sacred to the Hermeticists and to many others because it is seen as the Highest unto which communication can be obtained. Beyond this point there is not enough duality to have sufficient separation with which to have a conversation. Beyond this there is only the One.

The Triad rules over all things in that it is the source of all and the source of the governor of all, the Hexad. These two combined form the Whole of the Tree of Life above Malkuth wherein they achieve manifestation.

The Nature of this is as a fountain which in its Eternal flowing creates “the Matrix containing All, the springing forth. . .the generation of multifarious Matter.”

The Path of Peh interjects into all this creation the essential counter balance of destruction and renovation. Enter the Warrior God destroying the ‘Out-Of-Place.’ The danger of creation amongst the imperfectly conscious, such as we humans, is that sometimes we make something that we must also unmake.

Being responsible for our actions and to understand them fully we place our selves subject to the lightning bolt of inspiration. As before a warrior god the earth of our Ideas trembles and the mountains of our creations bow down in the face of true inspiration which threatens to undo what has been done.

The path of Peh is called the Exciting Intelligence because it stimulates things into change or motion. In the Trump, the Blasted Tower, this mystery is shown. The bodies falling from the tower are the old ideas cast out by Inspiration. The Lightning Bolt comes from the Sigil of Mars and strikes below the Crown which has opened it self to the Most High.

Note, the crown is not thrown off, but receives the inspiration. Perhaps the actual point of striking is at the Ajna or Third Eye chakra, which is the Eye of the Mind. Without the ability to destroy what no longer is ‘appropriate,’ represented here by the Kings of Edom, we would be buried by the refuse of our past.

The Fall, the sensation of separation, to cause the yearning for union.

The Fall as shown in the Ceremony of the Reception into the 4=7 Grade resumes the conflict of the entrance of consciousness or Spirit into the limitation of Matter and the

thereby into the duality of Creation-Destruction/Good-Evil and the inertia of the Wheel of Fortune (Karma). The reaching down of the Great Goddess into the Lower Realms is here seen as a Fall.

However, my preference is for the ancient Celtic tale of the Great Goddess Bridged, Tri-Starred, who heard the wailing song of the Earth in torment in the pits of Chaos and called to the other gods, the Tuatha de Dannan, the Children of Danu, to come with her out of the heaven realms of Tir nan Og, onto the Earth and roll back the Chaos. Thus did that pantheon begin their labors within the realm of manifestation.

Within the psyche of the mage, however, this image is to evoke the awareness of the imperfections therein. The mage is given the taste of hunger for the indwelling spirit of the Most High who will set to right the horror of the fall, once again giving wings to Anima-Homo and to again break the Dragon of the Depths to saddle.

*** _Portal_ ***

In the portal there is a radical departure from the other ceremonies. Besides all of the symbolic difference the point to be examined here is that the Candidate-Philosophus is to specifically know without prompting Word and Grip and Sign and the Words of Power of each of the Elements so as to be able to call them.

This has a very specific purpose. It is to unify within the sphere of the Candidate the separated elements and above explained factors of the Magick of Light into a single interactive unit. This is done through the invocation of the MetaElement of Spirit.

One by one each of the elements which has been distributed through out the hall is returned by the Philosophus to the central altar. The separation, now being undone, is the same separation shown forth in the 0=0 and 2=9 grades before the Candidate enters the hall In each of the preceding grades the Tablet of the Element was added to the temple until in the 4=7 all save the Tablet of Union was present. Here in the Portal each element is seen as a fragment of a whole.

Yet it is in the Offering Ritual within the Ceremony of The Pentagram and The Five Paths that the Whole is shown forth. Each element is seen as but a letter of a Word, a word which is the door or Portal into Adeptship. To formulate the whole the parts must be consumed. Each of the elements have been associated with the parts of the body of the Aspirant. Each of them, as the body of the Aspirant, must be consumed in the Brazier of Aspiration. So does each of the Officers, each representing the projected parts of the Whole of the Aspirant, place within the Brazier that part of the perfected whole to be offered as sacrifice in the formulation of a Suitable Vehicle for the Most High to indwell. To this end the Word is spoken.

*** _Summary_ ***

In each of the Grades of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn a piece of the Art of Causing Change is given to the Initiate. At first seen as separate, by the time the Initiate reaches the Portal each portion is seen as being part of the Whole of the Initiate. Being prepared by the Sacrament of Ceremonial the Initiate, now Aspirant, sacrifices all he has obtained for the 'pearl of great price,' the indwelling of the Most High, the Holy Guardian Angel, without which all Magicks are vain and debased.

Please note this essay was written in the male pronoun as a change of pace for the author. Its original audience had all experienced the aforementioned rites.