

THE SYMBOLS OF CREATIVE ENERGY IN THE LITERATURE ON MYSTICISM AND ON ALCHEMY

S.MAHDIHASSAN

SD-34, Block A, North Nazimabad, Karachi-33, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT: Alchemy as art tries to imitate creation such as spontaneous generation. The magic wands of creation, of Chinese origin, would be a compass and a triangular carpenter's square. Creation is represented by the dual-natured soul, comprising of the spirit (Ruh) and "the" soul (Nafs). The ultimate source is creative energy which emanates from the Divine word of command. Creative energy, in its non-manifest form, would be ultrasonic energy, which can be represented by a humming sound. This would be symbolized by the humming sound. This would be symbolized by the humming sound of bees represent creative energy and in fig 3 the fiddle, as direct producers of a humming sound.

It has been maintained that alchemy tries to imitate creation. Due to such claim Dante placed the alchemist in his Inferno. We must however be critical and try to realize what was understood as creation, say in medieval ages. What appeared as a radical change was understood as creation. Nevertheless there existed belief in spontaneous generation and it has been asserted that curd mixed with cow

dung can generate scorpions. Apart from such a belief creation proper was accepted as having resulted from the word of Divine command so that the Divine word is the source of all creation. The creative energy emanating from the Divine word was conceived as the highest form of ultrasonic energy.

The nearest approach to it would be a humming sound such as is generated when the word OM is pronounced. It is also comparable with the humming sound of bees as produced by them in group while approaching their nest. There is also another way of generating creative energy and it is when the symbols of heaven and earth, as opposites of the highest degree, are made to function like Magic Wands of creation and brought face to face with each other. Heaven was supposed to be round and to depict such an entity the instrument for it was the compass. Earth was imagined to be square shaped and to depict such a design the agency would be the triangular "carpenter's square". Now the compass



Fig. 1: Creative energy is conceived as Ultrasonic energy and this further as humming sound, such as can be generated by Honey Bees, which then symbolize creative energy. The figure represents Purusha, Cosmic Man—From Myer.



Fig. 1. Cosmic Man.

and the carpenter's square became the Magic wands of creation and it was essentially a Chinese idea. It is proposed to show how, during medieval ages, creative energy was conceived as a form of ultrasonic energy, further as a humming sound such as was symbolized by bees which generate such a sound. Moreover as a musical instrument the fiddle can produce sounds of different energy content including a humming sound. Thus the sound of OM as pronounced and the humming sound of bees, as also what the fiddle can produce, finally function as symbols of source of creative energy. We now turn to illustrations depicting the symbols of creative energy. In Indian mysticism the creator is represented by Purusha, the Cosmic Man. He is seen in fig.1 as a celestial being, for his arms and legs are provided with wings, which would carry him to

heaven whenever he wants it. He has produced the Cosmic Soul with the snake as its symbol. With cosmic soul also came heaven which is seen, egg shaped, with signs of a few constellations. All this creation resulted when he pronounced the Word "OM" a humming sound as ultrasonic creative energy. The humming sound is generated by bees of which there is a number on either side of the Cosmic Man. Fig 1 is taken from Myer's book on Qabbalah. The designer however can only be an Indian, well versed in mysticism, for he has depicted bees when their sound is to be understood as "OM".

The Chinese have conceived creation as generated by the use of Magic Wands of Creation, the compass as symbol of Heaven and the triangular carpenter's square as the symbol

of Earth. Fig.2 shows two Chinese deities one holding the compass and the other the triangular carpenter's square. The original picture is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

We now turn to fig.3 to show what an alchemist has depicted as creation In fig.1 the first thing

created was the cosmic soul (snake), and this gave rise to Heaven or the celestial globe. Corresponding to cosmic soul which gives man his life. According to the earliest idea Blood=Soul. But freshly spilt blood gives rise



Fig. 3: The alchemist with his paraphernalia. As magic wands of creation, the compass and the carpenter's square. Cock and Serpent represent spirit and "the" soul and the fiddle, the producer of humming sound similar to that of bees. From Schouten.

to vapours. It was imagined that these rise upwards and become a bird. Blood is red so that a red cock, with its red comb, would be the best symbol of soul. Now this is depicted in fig.3 on the upper left corner, indicated by an arrow on the margin above. The other fraction of blood, being fluid, sinks into the ground and is believed as becoming a snake. This is seen on the upper right corner further indicated by an arrow above it. Thus the dual natured soul, as Ruh plus Nafs, to use Arabic words, or spirit and "the" soul in English, is represented by the cock and the Serpent in fig3. Now comes the Magic Wands of creation. These have been illustrated among others by Cheng Te-Khun (1957) and have been fully discussed by me in (1986). In fig 3 we find, in the left corner below, the compass, marked as "C", further pointed out by an arrow on the margin. Below the compass is a globe, which represents heaven and thereby the universe. To the right of the globe, which represents heaven and thereby the universe. To the right of the globe is the triangular carpenter's square. To it is tied a rod, which would bear scales and is used by the carpenter as well as his square. In fact this rod is added to show that the triangular object is the carpenter's square. We have by now considered soul as creation which is symbolized by the cock and serpent. Next come the magic wands of creation the compass and triangular carpenter's square. What has still to come is the symbol of creative energy, the final source of all creation. In fig.1 it was identified as ultrasonic energy, further symbolized as the humming sound of bees. Now fiddle is a musical instrument that can also generate a humming sound, in fact even other kinds of ultrasonic energy. Thus the fiddle serves as a symbol of creative energy even better than the bees do in fig.1 Briefly bees of fig.1 are replaced by the fiddle in fig.3

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