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THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

The Philosopher's Stone is an ancient symbol of the perfected and regenerated man whose divine nature shines forth through a chain of purified and unfolded vehicles. As the rough diamond is dull and lifeless when first removed from the black carbon, so the spiritual nature of man in its "fallen" state reveals little, if any, of its inherent luminosity. Just as in the hands of the skillful lapidary the shapeless stone is transformed into a scintillating gem from whose facets pour streams of rainbow-hued fire, so upon the table of the Divine Lapidary the soul of man is ground and polished until it reflects the glory of its Creator from every atom. The perfecting of the Diamond Soul through philosophical-chemical art was the ceremonial object of Hermetic Renaissance.

Albert Mackey sees a correspondence between the Philosopher's Stone and the Masonic Temple, for both represent the realization and accomplishment of the ideal. In philosophy the Stone of the Wise Man is "supreme and unalterable Reason. To find the Absolute in the Infinite, in the Infinite, and in the Finite, that is the Magnum Opus, the Great Work of the Magus, which Hermes called the Work of the Sun." (See Masonic and Occultic.) He who possesses the Philosopher's Stone possesses Truth, the gateway of all knowledge, and is therefore wiser than the calculation of man, he is immortal because Reason takes no account of death and he is healed of ignorance—the most heinous of all diseases. The Hermetic Stone of wisdom, which Hermes called the Work of the Sun, is the secret of the universe, the secret of the universe, the secret of the universe. The Hermetic Stone of wisdom, which Hermes called the Work of the Sun, is the secret of the universe, the secret of the universe, the secret of the universe. The Hermetic Stone of wisdom, which Hermes called the Work of the Sun, is the secret of the universe, the secret of the universe, the secret of the universe.

Stones, Metals and Gems

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STONES, METALS, AND GEMS

Prehistoric monuments--The tablets of the Law--The Holy Grail--The ages of the world--Talismanic jewels--Zodiacal and planetary stones and gems.

EACH of the four primary elements as taught by the early philosophers has its analogue in the quaternary terrestrial constitution of man. The rocks and earth correspond to the bones and flesh; the water to the various fluids; the air to the gases; and the fire to the bodily heat. Since the bones are the framework that sustains the corporeal structure, they may be regarded as a fitting emblem of the spirit--that divine foundation which supports the composite fabric of mind, soul, and body. To the initiate, the skeleton of death holding in bony fingers the reaper's scythe denotes Saturn (Kronos), the father of the gods, carrying the sickle with which he mutilated Ouranos, his own sire.

In the language of the Mysteries, *the spirits of men are the powdered bones of Saturn*. The latter deity was always worshiped under the symbol of the base or footing, inasmuch as he was considered to be the substructure upholding creation. The myth of Saturn has its historical basis in the fragmentary records preserved by the early Greeks and Phœnicians concerning a king by that name who ruled over the ancient continent of Hyperborea. Polaris, Hyperborea, and Atlantis, because they lie buried beneath the continents and oceans of the modern world, have frequently been symbolized as rocks supporting upon their broad surfaces new lands, races, and empires. According to the Scandinavian Mysteries, the stones and cliffs were formed from the bones of Ymir, the primordial giant of the *seething clay*, while to the Hellenic mystics the rocks were the bones of the Great Mother, Gæa.

After the deluge sent by the gods to destroy mankind at the close of the Iron Age, only Deucalion and Pyrrha were left alive. Entering a ruined sanctuary to pray, they were directed by an oracle to depart from the temple and with heads veiled and garments unbound cast behind them the bones of their mother. Construing the cryptic message of the god to mean that the earth was the Great Mother of all creatures, Deucalion picked up loose rocks and, bidding Pyrrha do likewise, cast them behind him. From these rocks there sprang forth a new and stalwart race of human beings, the rocks thrown by Deucalion becoming men and those thrown by Pyrrha becoming women. In this allegory is epitomized the mystery of human evolution; for spirit, by ensouling matter, becomes that indwelling power which gradually but

sequentially raises the mineral to the status of the plant; the plant to the plane of the animal; the animal to the dignity of man; and man to the estate of the gods.

The solar system was organized by forces operating inward from the great ring of the Saturnian sphere; and since the beginnings of all things were under the control of Saturn, the most reasonable inference is that the first forms of worship were dedicated to him and his peculiar symbol--the stone. Thus the intrinsic nature of Saturn is synonymous with that spiritual rock which is the enduring foundation of the Solar Temple, and has its antitype or lower octave in that terrestrial rock--the planet Earth--which sustains upon its jagged surface the diversified genera of mundane life.

Although its origin is uncertain, litholatry undoubtedly constitutes one of the earliest forms of religious expression. "Throughout all the world, " writes Godfrey Higgins, "the first object of Idolatry seems to have been a plain, unwrought stone, placed in the ground, as an emblem of the generative or procreative powers of nature." (See *The Celtic Druids*.) Remnants of stone worship are distributed over the greater part of the earth's surface, a notable example being the menhirs at Carnac, in Brittany, where several thousand gigantic uncut stones are arranged in eleven orderly rows. Many of these monoliths stand over twenty feet out of the sand in which they are embedded, and it has been calculated that some of the larger ones weigh as much as 250,000 pounds. By some it is believed that certain of the menhirs mark the location of buried treasure, but the most plausible view is that which regards Carnac as a monument to the astronomical knowledge of antiquity. Scattered throughout the British Isles and Europe, these cairns, dolmens, menhirs, and cistvaens stand as mute but eloquent testimonials to the existence and achievements of races now extinct.

Of particular interest are the rocking or logan stones, which evince the mechanical skill of these early peoples. These relics consist of enormous boulders poised upon one or two small points in such a manner that the slightest pressure will sway them, but the greatest effort is not sufficient to overthrow them. These were called *living* stones by the Greeks and Latins, the most famous one being the Gygorian stone in the Strait of Gibraltar. Though so perfectly balanced that it could be moved with the stalk of a daffodil, this rock could not be upset by the combined weight of many men. There is a legend that Hercules raised a rocking stone over the graves of the two sons of Boreas whom he had killed in combat. This stone was so delicately poised that it swayed back and forth with the wind, but no application of force could overturn it. A number of logan stones have been found in Britain, traces of one no longer standing having been discovered in Stonehenge. (See *The Celtic Druids*.) It is interesting to note that the green stones forming the inner ring of Stonehenge are believed to have been brought from Africa.

In many cases the monoliths are without carving or inscription, for they undoubtedly antedate both the use of tools and the art of writing. In some instances the stones have been trued into columns or obelisks, as in the runic monuments and the Hindu *lingams* and *sakti* stones; in other instances they are fashioned into rough likenesses of the human body, as in the Easter Island statues, or into the elaborately sculptured figures of the Central American Indians and the *Khmers* of Cambodia. The first rough-stone images can hardly be considered as effigies of any particular deity but rather as the crude effort of primitive man to portray in the enduring qualities of stone the procreative attributes of abstract Divinity. An instinctive recognition of the stability of Deity has persisted through all the intervening ages

between primitive man and modern civilization. Ample proof of the survival of litholatry in the Christian faith is furnished by allusions to the *rock of refuge*, the *rock* upon which the church of Christ was to be founded, the *corner stone* which the builders rejected, Jacob's *stone pillow* which he set up and anointed with oil, the *sling stone* of David, the *rock Moriah* upon which the altar of King Solomon's Temple was erected, the *white stone* of Revelation, and the *Rock of Ages*.

Stones were highly venerated by prehistoric peoples primarily because of their usefulness. Jagged bits of stone were probably man's first weapons; rocky cliffs and crags constituted his first fortifications, and from these vantage points he hurled loose boulders down upon marauders. In caverns or rude huts fashioned from slabs of rock the first humans protected themselves from the rigors of the elements. Stones were set up as markers and monuments to primitive achievement; they were also placed upon the graves of the dead, probably as a precautionary measure to prevent the depredations of wild beasts. During migrations, it was apparently customary for primitive peoples to carry about with them stones taken from their original habitat. As the homeland or birthplace of a race was considered sacred, these stones were emblematic of that universal regard shared by all nations for the place of their geniture. The discovery that fire could be produced by striking together two pieces of stone augmented man's reverence for stones, but ultimately the hitherto unsuspected world of wonders opened by the newly discovered element of fire caused pyrolatry to supplant stone worship. The dark, cold Father--stone--gave birth out of itself to the bright, glowing Son-fire; and the newly born flame, by displacing its parent, became the most impressive and mysterious of all religio-philosophic symbols, widespread and enduring through the ages.



SATURN SWALLOWING THE STONE SUBSTITUTED FOR JUPITER.

From Catrari's *Imagini degli Dei degli Antichi*.

Saturn, having been warned by his parents that one of his own children would dethrone him, devoured each child at birth. At last Rhea, his wife, in order to save Jupiter, her sixth child substituted for him a rock

enveloped in swaddling clothes--which Saturn, ignorant of the deception practiced upon him, immediately swallowed. Jupiter was concealed on the island of Crete until he attained manhood, when he forced his father to disgorge the five children he had eaten. The stone swallowed by Saturn in lieu of his youngest son was placed by Jupiter at Delphi, where it was held in great veneration and was daily anointed.

The *body* of every thing was likened to a rock, trued either into a cube or more ornately chiseled to form a pedestal, while the spirit of everything was likened to the elaborately carved figure surmounting it. Accordingly, altars were erected as a symbol of the lower world, and fires were kept burning upon them to represent that spiritual essence illuminating the body it surmounted. The square is actually one surface of a cube, its corresponding figure in plane geometry, and its proper philosophic symbol. Consequently, when considering the earth as an element and not as a body, the Greeks, Brahmins, and Egyptians always referred to its four corners, although they were fully aware that the planet itself was a sphere.

Because their doctrines were the sure foundation of all knowledge and the first step in the attainment of conscious immortality, the Mysteries were often represented as cubical or pyramidal stones. Conversely, these stones themselves became the emblem of that condition of self-achieved godhood. The unchangeability of the stone made it an appropriate emblem of God--the immovable and unchangeable Source of Existence--and also of the divine sciences--the eternal revelation of Himself to mankind. As the personification of the rational intellect, which is the true foundation of human life, Mercury, or Hermes, was symbolized in a like manner. Square or cylindrical pillars, surmounted by a bearded head of Hermes and called *hermæ*, were set up in public places. Terminus, a form of Jupiter and god of boundaries and highways, from whose name is derived the modern word *terminal*, was also symbolized by an upright stone, sometimes ornamented with the head of the god, which was placed at the borders of provinces and the intersections of important roads.

The *philosopher's stone* is really the *philosophical stone*, for philosophy is truly likened to a magic jewel whose touch transmutes base substances into priceless gems like itself. Wisdom is the alchemist's *powder of projection* which transforms many thousand times its own weight of gross ignorance into the precious substance of enlightenment.

THE TABLETS OF THE LAW

While upon the heights of Mount Sinai, Moses received from Jehovah two tablets bearing the characters of the Decalogue traced by the very finger of Israel's God. These tables were fashioned from the divine sapphire, *Schethiyâ*, which the Most High, after removing from His own throne, had cast into the Abyss to become the foundation and generator of the worlds. This sacred stone, formed of heavenly dew, was

sundered by the breath of God, and upon the two parts were drawn in black fire the figures of the Law. These precious inscriptions, aglow with celestial splendor, were delivered by the Lord on the Sabbath day into the hands of Moses, who was able to read the illumined letters from the reverse side because of the transparency of the great jewel. (See *The Secret Doctrine in Israel* or *The Zohar* for details of this legend.)

The Ten Commandments are the ten shining gems placed by the Holy One in the sapphire sea of Being, and in the depths of matter the reflections of these jewels are seen as the laws governing the sublunary spheres. They are the sacred ten by which the Supreme Deity has stamped His will upon the face of Nature. This same decad was celebrated by the Pythagoreans under the form of the tetractys--that triangle of spermatoc points which reveals to the initiated the whole working of the cosmic scheme; for ten is the number of perfection, the key to creation, and the proper symbol of God, man, and the universe.

Because of the idolatry of the Israelites, Moses deemed the people unworthy to receive the sapphire tables; hence he destroyed them, that the Mysteries of Jehovah should not be violated. For the original set Moses substituted two tablets of rough stone into the surface of which he had cut ten ancient letters. While the former tables--partaking of the divinity of the Tree of Life--blazed forth eternal verities, the latter--partaking of the nature of the Tree of Good and Evil--revealed only temporal truths. Thus the ancient tradition of Israel returned again to heaven, leaving only its shadow with the children of the twelve tribes.

One of the two tables of stone delivered by the Lawgiver to his followers stood for the oral, the other for the written traditions upon which the Rabbinical School was founded. Authorities differ widely as to the size and substance of the inferior tables. Some describe them as being so small that they could be held in the hollow of a man's hand; others declare that each table was ten or twelve cubits in length and of enormous weight. A few even deny that the tables were of stone, maintaining that they were of a wood called *sedr*, which, according to the Mohammedans, grows profusely in Paradise.

The two tables signify respectively the superior and the inferior worlds--the paternal and the maternal formative principles. In their undivided state they represent the Cosmic Androgyne. The breaking of the tables signifies obscurely the separation of the superior and the inferior spheres and also the division of the sexes. In the religious processions of the Greeks and Egyptians an ark or ship was carried which contained stone tablets, cones, and vessels of various shapes emblematic of the procreative processes. The Ark of the Israelites--which was patterned after the sacred chests of the Isiac Mysteries--contained three holy objects, each having an important phallic interpretation: the pot of manna, the rod that budded, and the Tablets of the Law--the first, second, and third Principles of the Creative Triad. The manna, the blossoming staff, and the stone tables are also appropriate images respectively of the Qabbalah, the Mishna, and the written law--the spirit, soul, and body of Judaism. When placed in King Solomon's Everlasting House, the Ark of the Covenant contained only the Tablets of the Law. Does this indicate that even at that early date the secret tradition had been lost and the letter of the revelation alone remained?

As representing the power that fabricated the lower, or Demiurgic, sphere, the tablets of stone were sacred to Jehovah in contradistinction to the tablets of sapphire that signified the potency that established the higher, or celestial, sphere. Without doubt the Mosaic tablets have their prototype in the stone pillars or obelisks placed on either side of the entrance to pagan temples. These columns may pertain to that remote time when men worshiped the Creator through His zodiacal sign of Gemini, the symbol of which is still the phallic pillars of the Celestial Twins. "The Ten Commandments, writes Hargrave Jennings, "are inscribed in two groups of five each, in columnar form. The five to the right (looking from the altar) mean the 'Law'; the five to the left mean the 'Prophets.' The right stone is masculine, the left stone is feminine. They correspond to the two disjoined pillars of stone (or towers) in the front of every cathedral, and of every temple in the heathen times." (See *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries*.) The same author states that the Law is masculine because it was delivered direct from the Deity, while the Prophets, or Gospels, were feminine because born through the nature of man.

The right Tablet of the Law further signifies *Jachin*--the white pillar of light; the left Tablet, *Boaz*--the shadowy pillar of darkness. These were the names of the two pillars cast from brass set up on the porch of King Solomon's Temple. They were eighteen cubits in height and beautifully ornamented with wreaths of chainwork, nets, and pomegranates. On the top of each pillar was a large bowl--now erroneously called a ball or globe--one of the bowls probably containing fire and the other water. The celestial globe (originally the bowl of fire), surmounting the right-hand column (*Jachin*), symbolized the divine man; the terrestrial globe (the bowl of water), surmounting the left-hand column (*Boaz*), signified the earthly man. These two pillars respectively connote also the active and the passive expressions of Divine Energy, the sun and the moon, sulphur and salt, good and bad, light and darkness. Between them is the door leading into the House of God, and standing thus at the gates of Sanctuary they are a reminder that Jehovah is both an androgynous and an anthropomorphic deity. As two parallel columns they denote the zodiacal signs of Cancer and Capricorn, which were formerly placed in the chamber of initiation to represent birth and death--the extremes of physical life. They accordingly signify the summer and the winter solstices, now known to Freemasons under the comparatively modern appellation of the "two St. Johns."

In the mysterious Sephirothic Tree of the Jews, these two pillars symbolize Mercy and Severity. Standing before the gate of King Solomon's Temple, these columns had the same symbolic import as the obelisks before the sanctuaries of Egypt. When interpreted Qabbalistically, the names of the two pillars mean "In strength shall My House be established. "In the splendor of mental and spiritual illumination, the High Priest stood between the pillars as a mute witness to the perfect virtue of equilibrium--that hypothetical point equidistant from all extremes. He thus personified the divine nature of man in the midst of his compound constitution--the mysterious Pythagorean Monad in the presence of the Duad. On one side towered the stupendous column of the intellect; on the other, the brazen pillar of the flesh. Midway between these two stands the glorified wise man, but he cannot reach this high estate without first suffering upon the cross made by joining these pillars together. The early Jews occasionally represented the two pillars, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, as the legs of Jehovah, thereby signifying to the modern philosopher that Wisdom and Love, in their most exalted sense, support the whole order of creation--both mundane and supermundane.



MOSES RECEIVING THE TABLES OF THE LAW.

From an old Bible.

Moses Maimonides, the great Jewish Philosopher of the twelfth century, in describing the Tables of the Law written by the finger of God, divides all productions into two general orders: products of Nature and products of art. God works through Nature and man through art, he asserts in his Guide for the Perplexed. Thus the Word of the Lord is the hand, or active principle, by which the will of the Creator is traced upon the face of His creation. The Tannaim, or initiates of the Jewish Mystery School, alone possessed a complete understanding of the significance of the Ten Commandments. These laws are esoterically related to the ten degrees of contemplation constituting the Path of Ecstasy, which winds upward through the four worlds and ends in the effulgence of AIN SOPH.

THE HOLY GRAIL

Like the sapphire Schethiyâ, the *Lapis Exilis*, crown jewel of the Archangel Lucifer, fell from heaven. Michael, archangel of the sun and the Hidden God of Israel, at the head of the angelic hosts swooped down upon Lucifer and his legions of rebellious spirits. During the conflict, Michael with his flaming sword struck the flashing *Lapis Exilis* from the coronet of his adversary, and the green stone fell through all the celestial rings into the dark and immeasurable Abyss. Out of Lucifer's radiant gem was fashioned the Sangreal, or Holy Grail, from which Christ is said to have drunk at the Last Supper.

Though some controversy exists as to whether the Grail was a cup or a platter, it is generally depicted in art as a chalice of considerable size and unusual beauty. According to the legend, Joseph of Arimathea brought the Grail Cup to the place of the crucifixion and in it caught the blood pouring from the wounds of the dying Nazarene. Later Joseph, who had become custodian of the sacred relics--the Sangreal and the Spear of Longinus--carried them into a distant country. According to one version, his descendants finally placed these relics in Glastonbury Abbey in England; according to another, in a wonderful castle on Mount Salvat, Spain, built by angels in a single night. Under the name of Preston John, Parsifal, the last of the Grail Kings, carried the Holy Cup with him into India, and it disappeared forever from the Western World. Subsequent search for the Sangreal was the motif for much of the knight errantry of the Arthurian legends and the ceremonials of the Round Table. (See the *Morte d'Arthur*.)

No adequate interpretation has ever been given to the Grail Mysteries. Some believe the Knights of the Holy Grail to have been a powerful organization of Christian mystics perpetuating the Ancient Wisdom under the rituals and sacraments of the oracular Cup. The quest for the Holy Grail is the eternal search for truth, and Albert G. Mackey sees in it a variation of the Masonic legend of the Lost Word so long sought by the brethren of the Craft. There is also evidence to support the claim that the story of the Grail is an elaboration of an early pagan Nature myth which has been preserved by reason of the subtle manner in which it was engrafted upon the cult of Christianity. From this particular viewpoint, the Holy Grail is undoubtedly a type of the ark or vessel in which the life of the world is preserved and therefore is significant of the body of the Great Mother--Nature. Its green color relates it to Venus and to the mystery of generation; also to the Islamic faith, whose sacred color is green and whose Sabbath is Friday, the day of Venus.

The Holy Grail is a symbol both of the lower (or irrational) world and of the bodily nature of man, because both are receptacles for the living essences of the superior worlds. Such is the mystery of the redeeming blood which, descending into the condition of death, overcomes the last enemy by ensouling all substance with its own immortality. To the Christian, whose mystic faith especially emphasizes the love element, the Holy Grail typifies the heart in which continually swirls the living water of eternal life. Moreover, to the Christian, the search for the Holy Grail is the search for the real Self which, when found, is the consummation of the *magnum opus*.

The Holy Cup can be discovered only by those who have raised themselves above the limitations of sensuous existence. In his mystic poem, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, James Russell Lowell discloses the true nature of the Holy Grail by showing that it is visible only to a *certain state of spiritual consciousness*. Only upon returning from the vain pursuit of haughty ambition did the aged and broken knight see in the transformed leper's cup the glowing chalice of his lifelong dream. Some writers trace a similarity between the Grail legend and the stories of the martyred Sun Gods whose blood, descending from heaven into the earth, was caught in the cup of matter and liberated therefrom by the initiatory rites. The Holy Grail may also be the seed pod so frequently employed in the ancient Mysteries as an emblem of germination and resurrection; and if the cuplike shape of the Grail be derived from the flower, it signifies the regeneration and spiritualization of the generative forces in man.

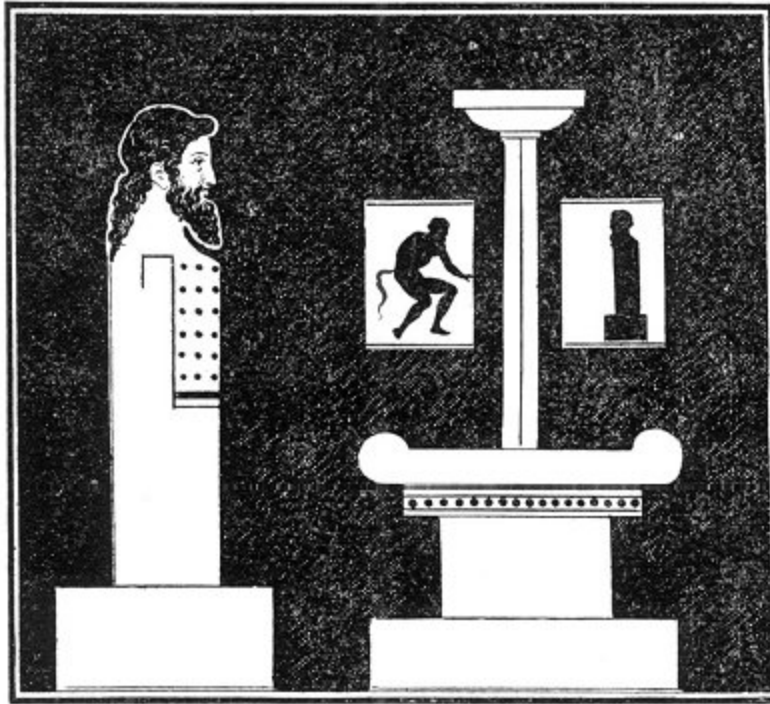
There are many accounts of stone images which, because of the substances entering into their composition and the ceremonials attendant upon their construction, were ensouled by the divinities whom they were created to resemble. To such images were ascribed various human faculties and powers, such as speech, thought, and even motion. While renegade priests doubtless resorted to trickery--an instance of which is related in a curious apocryphal fragment entitled *Bel and the Dragon* and supposedly deleted from the end of the *Book of Daniel*--many of the phenomena recorded in connection with sanctified statues and relics can hardly be explained unless the work of supernatural agencies be admitted.

History records the existence of stones which, when struck, threw all who heard the sound into a state of ecstasy. There were also echoing images which whispered for hours after the room itself had become silent, and musical stones productive of the sweetest harmonies. In recognition of the sanctity which the Greeks and Latins ascribed to stones, they placed their hands upon certain consecrated pillars when taking an oath. In ancient times stones played a part in determining the fate of accused persons, for it was customary for juries to reach their verdicts by dropping pebbles into a bag.

Divination by stones was often resorted to by the Greeks, and Helena is said to have foretold by lithomancy the destruction of Troy. Many popular superstitions about stones survive the so-called Dark Ages. Chief among these is the one concerning the famous black stone in the seat of the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, which is declared to be the actual rock used by Jacob as a pillow. The black stone also appears several times in religious symbolism. It was called *Heliogabalus*, a word presumably derived from *Elagabal*, the Syro-Phœnician sun god. This stone was sacred to the sun and declared to possess great and diversified properties. The black stone in the Caaba at Mecca is still revered throughout the Mohammedan world. It is said to have been white originally and of such brilliancy that it could be seen many days' journey from Mecca, but as ages passed it became blackened by the tears of pilgrims and the sins of the world.

THE MAGIC OF METALS AND GEMS

According to the teachings of the Mysteries, the rays of the celestial bodies, striking the crystallizing influences of the lower world, become the various elements. Partaking of the astral virtues of their source, these elements neutralize certain unbalanced forms of celestial activity and, when properly combined, contribute much to the well-being of man. Little is known today concerning these magical properties, but the modern world may yet find it profitable to consider the findings of the early philosophers who determined these relationships by extensive experimentation. Out of such research arose the practice of identifying the metals with the bones of the various deities. For example, the Egyptians, according to Manetho, considered iron to be the bone of Mars and the lodestone the bone of Horus. By analogy, lead would be the physical skeleton of Saturn, copper of Venus, quicksilver of Mercury, gold of the sun, silver of the moon, and antimony of the earth. It is possible that uranium will prove to be the metal of Uranus and radium to be the metal of Neptune.



EXAMPLES OF HERMÆ.

From Christie's *Disquisitions upon the Painted Greek Vases*.

The Primitive custom of worshipping the gods in the form of heaps of stones gave place to the practice of erecting phallic pillars, or cones, in their honor. These columns differed widely in size and appearance. Some were of gigantic proportions and were richly ornamented with inscriptions or likenesses of the gods and heroes; others--like the votive offerings of the Babylonians--were but a few inches high, without ornament, and merely bore a brief statement of the purpose for which they had been prepared or a hymn to the god of the temple in which they were placed. These small baked clay cones were identical in their symbolic meaning with the large hermæ set up by the roadside and in other public places. Later the upper end of the column was surmounted by a human head. Often two projections, or tenons, corresponding to shoulders were placed, one on either side, to support the wreaths of flowers adorning the columns. Offerings, usually of food, were placed near the hermæ. Occasionally these columns were used to uphold roofs and were numbered among the art objects ornamenting the villas of wealthy Romans.

The four *Ages* of the Greek mystics--the Golden Age, the Silver Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age--are metaphoric expressions referring to the four major periods in the life of all things. In the divisions of the day they signify dawn, midday, sunset, and midnight; in the duration of gods, men, and universes, they denote the periods of birth, growth, maturity, and decay. The Greek Ages also bear a close

correspondence to the four Yugas of the Hindus: *Krita-Yuga*, *Treta-Yuga*, *Dvapara-Yuga*, and *Kali-Yuga*. Their method of calculation is described by Ullamudeian as follows: "In each of the 12 signs there are 1800 minutes; multiply this number by 12 you have 21600; e.g. $1800 \times 12 = 21600$. Multiply this 21600 by 80 and it will give 1,728,000, which is the duration of the first age, called *Krita-Yuga*. If the same number be multiplied by 60, it will give 1,296,000, the years of the second age, *Treta-Yuga*. The same number multiplied by 40 gives 864,000, the length of the third age, *Dvapara-Yuga*. The same multiplied by 20 gives 432,000, the fourth age, *Kali-Yuga*." (It will be noted that these multipliers decrease in inverse ratio to the Pythagorean tetractys: 1, 2, 3, and 4.)

H. P. Blavatsky declares that Orpheus taught his followers how to affect a whole audience by means of a lodestone, and that Pythagoras paid particular attention to the color and nature of precious stones. She adds: "The Buddhists assert that the sapphire produces peace of mind, equanimity, and chases all evil thoughts by establishing a healthy circulation in man. So does an electric battery, with its well-directed fluid, say our electricians. 'The sapphire,' say the Buddhists, 'will open barred doors and dwellings (for the spirit of man); it produces a desire for prayer, and brings with it more peace than any other gem; but he who would wear it must lead a pure and holy life.'" (See *Isis Unveiled*.)

Mythology abounds with accounts of magical rings and talismanic jewels. In the second book of his *Republic*, Plato describes a ring which, when the collet was turned in ward, rendered its wearer invisible. With this Gyges, the shepherd, secured for himself the throne of Lydia. Josephus also describes magical rings designed by Moses and King Solomon, and Aristotle mentions one which brought love and honor to its possessor. In his chapter dealing with the subject, Henry Cornelius Agrippa not only mentions the same rings, but states, upon the authority of Philostratus Jarchus, that Apollonius of Tyana extended his life to over 20 years with the aid of seven magical rings presented to him by an East Indian prince. Each of these seven rings was set with a gem partaking of the nature of one of the seven ruling planets of the week, and by daily changing the rings Apollonius protected himself against sickness and death by the intervention of the planetary influences. The philosopher also instructed his disciples in the virtues of these talismanic jewels, considering such information to be indispensable to the theurgist. Agrippa describes the preparation of magical rings as follows: "When any Star [planet] ascends fortunately, with the fortunate aspect or conjunction of the Moon, we must take a stone and herb that is under that Star, and make a ring of the metal that is suitable to this Star, and in it fasten the stone, putting the herb or root under it-not omitting the inscriptions of images, names, and characters, as also the proper suffumigations." (See *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*.)

The ring has long been regarded as the symbol of attainment, perfection, and immortality-the last because the circlet of precious metal had neither beginning nor end. In the Mysteries, rings chased to resemble a serpent with its tail in its mouth were worn by the initiates as material evidence of the position reached by them in the order. Signet rings, engraved with certain secret emblems, were worn by the hierophants, and it was not uncommon for a messenger to prove that he was the official representative of a prince or other dignitary by bringing with his message either an impression from his master's ring or the signet itself. The wedding ring originally was intended to imply that in the nature of the one who wore it the state of equilibrium and completion had been attained. This plain band of gold therefore bore witness of the union of the Higher Self (God) with the lower self (Nature) and the

ceremony consummating this indissoluble blending of Divinity and humanity in the one nature of the initiated mystic constituted the *hermetic marriage* of the Mysteries.

In describing the regalia of a magician, Eliphas Levi declares that on Sunday (the day of the sun) he should carry in his right hand a golden wand, set with a ruby or chrysolite; on Monday (the day of the moon) he should wear a collar of three strands consisting of pearls, crystals, and selenites; on Tuesday (the day of Mars) he should carry a wand of magnetized steel and a ring of the same metal set with an amethyst, on Wednesday (the day of Mercury) he should wear a necklace of pearls or glass beads containing mercury, and a ring set with an agate; on Thursday (the day of Jupiter) he should carry a wand of glass or resin and wear a ring set with an emerald or a sapphire; on Friday (the day of Venus) he should carry a wand of polished copper and wear a ring set with a turquoise and a crown or diadem decorated with lapis lazuli and beryl; and on Saturday (the day of Saturn) he should carry a wand ornamented with onyx stone and wear a ring set with onyx and a chain about the neck formed of lead. (See *The Magical Ritual of the Sanctum Regnum*.)

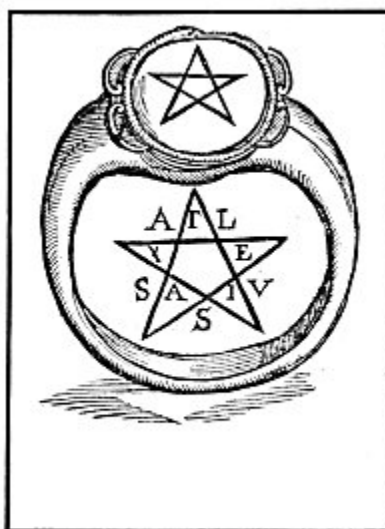
Paracelsus, Agrippa, Kircher, Lilly, and numerous other magicians and astrologers have tabulated the gems and stones corresponding to the various planets and zodiacal signs. The following list has been compiled from their writings. To the sun is assigned the carbuncle, ruby, garnet---especially the pyrope---and other fiery stones, sometimes the diamond; to the moon, the pearl, selenite, and other forms of crystal; to Saturn, the onyx, jasper, topaz, and sometimes the lapis lazuli; to Jupiter, the sapphire, emerald, and marble; to Mars, the amethyst, hyacinth, lodestone, sometimes the diamond; to Venus, the turquoise, beryl, emerald, and sometimes the pearl, alabaster, coral, and carnelian; to Mercury, the chrysolite, agate, and variegated marble.

To the zodiac the same authorities assigned the following gems and stones: To Aries the sardonyx, bloodstone, amethyst, and diamond; to Taurus the carnelian, turquoise, hyacinth, sapphire, moss agate, and emerald; to Gemini the topaz, agate, chrysoprase, crystal, and aquamarine; to Cancer the topaz, chalcedony, black onyx, moonstone, pearl, cat's-eye, crystal, and sometimes the emerald; to Leo the jasper, sardonyx, beryl, ruby, chrysolite, amber, tourmaline, sometimes the diamond; to Virgo the emerald, carnelian, jade, chrysolite, and sometimes the pink jasper and hyacinth; to Libra the beryl, sardius, coral, lapis lazuli, opal, and sometimes the diamond; to Scorpio the amethyst, beryl, sardonyx, aquamarine, carbuncle, lodestone, topaz, and malachite; to Sagittarius the hyacinth, topaz, chrysolite, emerald, carbuncle, and turquoise; to Capricorn the chrysoprase, ruby, malachite, black onyx, white onyx, jet, and moonstone; to Aquarius the crystal, sapphire, garnet, zircon, and opal; to Pisces the sapphire, jasper, chrysolite, moonstone, and amethyst

Both the magic mirror and the crystal ball are symbols little understood. Woe to that benighted mortal who accepts literally the stories circulated concerning them! He will discover--often at the cost of sanity and health--that sorcery and philosophy, while often confused, have nothing in common. The Persian Magi carried mirrors as an emblem of the material sphere which reflects Divinity from its every part. The crystal ball, long misused as a medium for the cultivation of psychical powers, is a threefold symbol: (1) it signifies the crystalline *Universal Egg* in whose transparent depths creation exists; (2) it is a proper figure

of Deity previous to Its immersion in matter; (3) it signifies the ætheric sphere of the world in whose translucent essences is impressed and preserved the perfect image of all terrestrial activity.

Meteors, or *rocks from heaven*, were considered tokens of divine favor and enshrined as evidence of a pact between the gods and the community in which they fell. Curiously marked or chipped natural stones are occasionally found. In China there is a slab of marble the grain of which forms a perfect likeness of the Chinese dragon. The Oberammergau stone, chipped by Nature into a close resemblance to the popular conception of the face of Christ, is so remarkable that even the crowned heads of Europe requested the privilege of beholding it. Stones of such nature were held in the highest esteem among primitive peoples and even today exert a wide influence upon the religiously-minded.



THE PYTHAGOREAN SIGNET RING.

From Cartari's *Imagini degli Dei degli Antichi*.

The number five was peculiarly associated by the Pythagoreans with the art of healing, and the pentagram, or five-pointed star, was to them the symbol of health. The above figure represents a magical ring set with a talismanic gem bearing the pentalpha, or star formed by five different positions of the Greek Alpha. On this subject Mackey writes: "The disciples of Pythagoras, who were indeed its real inventors, placed within each of its interior angles one of the letters of the Greek word YΓΕΙΑ, or the Latin one SALUS, both of which signify health; and thus it was made the talisman of health. They placed it at the beginning of their epistles as a greeting to invoke a secure health to their correspondent. But its use was not confined to the disciples of Pythagoras. As a talisman, it was employed all over the East as a charm to resist evil spirits."

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