

Symbolism

Classification: IT.IV.C.2.e
Title: Symbolism
Author: Grand Master of the Order of Shuti
Temple of Set
Date: December, XXIV
Published: Dialogues I.3
(The section on "Neters" was published in
issue I.4)
Subject: Symbolism
Reading List: 2L, 2V

The first session of the year-XXIV Order of Shuti Workshop discussed symbolism.

While the study of symbolism itself is not a primary concern of the Order of Shuti, several of the Order's activities do involve working with forms of symbolism, or are discussed using various symbols.

The symbols of the twin lion gods, Shu and Tefnut, who together are Shuti, are obviously of importance in understanding the activities of the Order. The topic of symbolism was therefore chosen for the introductory session of the workshop.

Application

In discussing this session and what would be discussed, the Grand Master stressed that symbolism wasn't to be discussed simply as an intellectual exercise, but that all participants should try to apply the Setian yardstick of "application" to this discussion.

Each and every topic of this session (and all sessions in the workshop) should be measured by the questions of a) Can it be applied? b) Is it useful? c) Does it work?

What is symbolism?

One answer suggested by workshop participants is that symbolism is a language of the unconscious.

It is a dynamic language in which one image, a single symbol, can conjure up archetypical impressions, complex or complete concepts and/or meanings, rather than being a structured language in which many words and/or several sentences are needed to put together an

equivalent concept or meaning.

Another purpose of symbolism offered by the participants is to serve as a metalanguage which has two levels or multiple levels of meaning.

1561

Each symbol or set of symbols can have one meaning to the initiated, and another meaning to the uninitiated. That symbol or set of symbols could also have *different* meanings to the initiated, depending upon how the symbols are communicated, and how they are mixed with other symbols. A statement in a symbolic language could even have multiple meanings communicated at the same time to the same person.

A lot of the symbols Setians use in our writings are like that. When we read through the *Scroll of Set* or the jewelled *Tablets*, those of us who have been using the language of the Temple of Set for a while will see certain words, and will know just from the way the words are used that the author is writing symbolically as well as grammatically, and he therefore means "this type of thing".

This symbolic use of language lets us add meaning to an article without adding substantially to the size of that article.

Those who haven't been in the Temple of Set long enough to pick up on that symbolic use of language will miss almost all of that meaning on their first reading.

This is one of the reasons why we all find it useful to reread past issues of the *Scroll* and to reread *Tablet* articles. It enables us to read meaning in an article that we may have missed on an earlier reading.

It sometimes happens that "unintended" meaning is found in an article during such a rereading.

Even though the author may not have consciously intended to convey a certain meaning, that author's Higher Self may have influenced the writing in such a way as to symbolically give a specific message in the writing. These messages remain hidden except for those who can perceive and understand them.

On the other side of the scale, if our writings are read by someone totally unfamiliar with occult symbolism, then the message can be totally lost, and the reader may never see it.

Symbolism can be visual (examples are the Pentagram of Set, pictures of the Egyptian Neters, etc), and verbal (the closing we use on our letters, "Xeper and Remanifest", is a statement and reminder of our dedication to this Formula, a way of developing and keeping the habit of Xeper and Remanifestation going strong).

Each Word itself is a symbol (Xeper, Indulgence, Thelema, etc.), as is each Neter (Shu, Tefnut, Sekhmet, Bast). A lot of principles can be used as symbols which have more meaning to the initiated than they do to those who just read about them in a dictionary.

Visual and verbal/written symbols involve just one of our senses (sight). If you include verbal/spoken symbols, we then involve a second sense (hearing). We then asked the question, "Are there symbols which are perceived and communicated through each of our other senses?"

1562

The first examples offered by workshop participants were incense and music: Incense can bring about different emotions and responses through the sense of smell. Music can bring about different responses through the sense of hearing, in ways totally different than the verbal symbols do (the difference between right brained behavior and left brained behavior).

Where does symbolism come from?

When dealing with incense and music, we are leaving the mental processes and intellectual reactions that visual symbols will evoke, and going instead to the more reactive, bodily, reactions.

We react to the smell of bodily feces with distaste because of the body's reaction to that sort of an input. We find the fragrance of a rose very pleasing.

One of the reasons we use fragrant incenses during a ritual is to bring about bodily reactions which enhance a ceremony because of the smells and our reactions to the smells.

The discussion of one question leads to another. We learn the reactions / interpretations / meanings of visual and verbal symbols (at least those discussed above). Do we also learn reactions to incenses and music, or are those reactions more innate?

The first response was that our reactions and interpretations, even our likes and dislikes of music are learned.

The example given was classical music, which strikes some people as very soothing and relaxing, and which is likely to put these people to sleep. But others who are aware of the intelligent dynamics and many other ingredients of classical music will find the same music very stimulating.

(We believe that the workshop participant was thinking about the lighter classical pieces, such as "Tales from the Vienna Woods," and not the more active pieces such as "Night on Bald Mountain.")

The second response disagreed with the first, pointing out that regardless of whether they are used in classical, modern, or any other form of music, harps and strings tend to evoke emotional (peaceful) moods, while drums are more primal and physical, evoking more active responses.

The next example we discussed referred to the sense of smell. To a farmer, feces and fertilizer are pleasing and filled with promise, a smell of promised growth and life, a totally different reaction than most people will have (especially after scraping a dog's refuse off the bottom of one's shoe).

Similarly, an inlander's first pleasant reaction to sea gulls on wing, grace in motion, can be compared to the reaction of those who live on the beach and have to live with the noise and the mess and the droppings left behind by those very same sea gulls.

These examples tend to support the theory that we learn our interpretations of the sounds and smells around us.

1563

It seems from these examples that our reactions to inputs are learned, or at least they arise from our experiences. The question then becomes, can symbols have innate visceral responses, or is the response to a symbol necessarily a learned one?

To look at innate responses, the original responses to stimuli, we necessarily looked at children.

For instance, children generally have no innate response to feces, and will often eat them until they learn not to. They later learn to either react with disgust to feces, or to view them as fertilizer and the source of life.

The first example of a possibly innate response brought to the discussion was that of the ephemeral beauty of a butterfly on the wing. None of the participants could envision any child's reaction other than awe and delight at such beauty (or at least none would admit to any other vision).

This brought forth remarks concerning innate childish "awe", where almost everything is new and wonderful.

Children as they begin to distinguish between the multiple events and objects in their world are simply delighted at the beauty and diversity they find around them. There is no "evil" during this time -- only the beauty of nature.

Few of us have any reason to unlearn this initial response to the butterfly. These reactions can therefore be considered innate, stemming from the earliest days of our consciousness. Other reactions, unpleasant reactions and also more complex reactions, seem to be learned over time.

Therefore, there's some of both types of reactions. People will have initial reactions to many meaningful symbols and inputs, but their reactions can be modified by their experience and training.

This discussion raised yet more questions, for which no answers were attempted during this workshop. The questions were, how much of our symbolism is learned, and how much of our symbolism is innate? And if some form of consciousness or memory can survive from one life to another, then how much might be remembered from past lives?

Symbols may or may not come to one's attention. An extremely visually-oriented person may not notice or respond to other types of symbols, such as a room's smell, or a background level of music, while those who are oriented towards those senses will respond to those inputs, but perhaps not to others.

Symbolism may have personal and/or experiential meaning (such as

the manure used to plant your garden or that you step in), or symbolism may be abstract (learned and used in writing, teaching, or jewelry, but not something that's impacted upon you in the past). This is the difference between a) the visceral response, which may be innate and may also be a learned response, modified through experience or training, and b) the mental response which must always be learned or developed.

1564

The Grand Master wishes to note that the discussion at this point had unintentionally left the strict topic of symbolism, and was dealing instead with experience and reaction to stimuli, on the unspoken assumption that these reactions applied to our use of symbolism.

We feel this to be a valid assumption, since the pleasant reaction we have to a butterfly or to a unicorn extends to and impacts our use of those images as symbols. Those with differing reactions to sea gulls as described above would similarly have different reactions to Johnathon Livingston Seagull's story.

Also, by concentrating on experience and reaction rather than symbolism, we temporarily lost sight of the most important measure of symbolism -- that of meaning.

Yes, music has impact, but that music is symbol only if its impact includes meaning, such as the sense of freedom and power that accompanies the visual image of the "Flight of the Valkyries" and similar images of meaning those who are familiar with the movie will get from various pieces in the sound track from 2001.

Likewise incense is symbol only if its impact includes meaning.

That meaning may be supplied by the smell, or that meaning may be supplied by knowledge of the ingredients within the incense. Meaning may also be supplied by the words used during the censuring of the chambre. Without some meaning, incense is not symbol, but only smell.

Closely related to the sense of smell is the sense of taste, and it's fairly easy to see that certain tastes can have meaning as well.

During Passover Seder, a ritual meal of thanksgiving and freedom (celebrating the Exodus), Jews will dip greens into salt water and eat the salty greens, to remind them of tears shed by the Jews in bondage. They will eat bitter herbs to remind them of the bitterness of slavery.

Likewise, there can be kinesthetic symbols as well.

We feel different when we hold a sword in ritual as opposed to when we hold a dagger. We feel different when we are standing up than we feel when we are sitting down, and different still when we are kneeling or laying down. We feel different in charged rooms, dry rooms, wet rooms, hot rooms, cold rooms, still rooms, breezy rooms. Uncontrolled, these latter experiences are just stimuli. Controlled and used meaningfully, these latter experiences can be symbols, manipulated and understood as such.

How should symbolism be used?

The first obvious use of symbolism is in the communication of ideas, whether written, spoken, or communicated through one or more other senses.

1565

Based on the idea that a single symbol can have a whole galaxy of meaning, a useful communications skill is the ability to use symbols in the proper places, in the proper ways, to communicate more meaning in a smaller package (with fewer words).

Perhaps of greatest importance within the Temple of Set are the magical aeonic Words: Xeper, Remanifestation, and Xem, and the preceding Words of Indulgence and Thelema. By using these Words in writing or other forms of communication, we communicate the meanings associated with those Words.

If I say the word "Xeper" to an initiate, it means something totally different than it would mean to someone off the street, and it means something totally different to a Setian than it would mean to an Egyptologist who /thinks/ he knows the Egyptian god Xepera. Our use of the Word is quite different and the symbol carries so much more meaning than just the word "Xeper" would carry in a modern Egyptian dictionary.

This use of symbolism doesn't apply just to magical Words or Formulae, but applies to symbols of many different kinds, in many different uses.

You'll sometimes find certain words capitalized in text, as are "Words" and "Formulae" above. When not overly used, this is a clear indication that the author wishes you to view these words with their symbolic meanings, rather than their normal meanings.

During group ritual, certain words will be spoken more flamboyantly, perhaps louder, perhaps longer, and often with more gesturing. These words are then generally being used symbolically, with special meaning at least to the speaker, if not to other participants.

Symbolism can also be used in Lesser Black Magic, as tools to influence certain people (singular or multiple) in certain ways. The magician (or politician or religious leader or arts director or other manipulator) will use lighting, music, fragrance, and other symbols in ways particular to their audience's response to the symbols.

Symbolism can be used upon ourselves in a similar manner, to bring out responses from us that we want to bring out, as in ritual or as an aid to Xeper.

Words which have become symbols to us can be used as a means of increased concentration, as a visual mantra or as a sensual mantra. Such mantras can be used in ritual, in nonritual meditation, or whenever we choose to remind ourselves of the principles carried within that symbol.

Over time, some symbols can become richer and can carry more and more meaning to those people who work with the symbol.

These symbols can become "magnetic", in that each use of the symbol brings forth yet another repetition of the symbol. Each reference brings forth a constellation of meaning, with one meaning and use leading to another. Each use of the symbol sparks, or attracts, another use of the symbol.

In these cases the symbols will often be repeated over and over throughout a conversation or other communication, each time

exercising one or more of those meanings, and through the course of the communication this symbol can almost hold or reflect an entire world view. This is the way the people influenced by the symbol see their world.

At a political rally the symbol might be "America", "Democracy", or "the Party" (citizens of other countries may substitute those symbols meaningful in your domain). To some, the symbol might be "the Environment".

The symbol "Xeper" has a similar impact within the Setian culture.

Group consensus is important for communication through symbols. Different groups can have differing uses of symbols, and attempts to communicate between these groups using the symbols particular to one group (or those symbols which are viewed differently by different groups) can result in confusion or worse.

Because Setians come from such diverse backgrounds, we have various communication problems related to these diverse backgrounds.

Members from the O.T.O. may know all of the Qabalistic correspondences, while members from the Wiccan background couldn't care less about the Qabalistic attributions, and have correspondences which are totally different. Numerologists apply different meanings to their numbers than do the Qabalists. And all of these symbolic systems work.

But very, very few of them work for all Setians.

Qabalists within the Temple of Set who write articles and/or letters steeped in Qabalistic symbolism find that very few others care enough about their symbols to wade through the text. Those from other backgrounds with intensive use of symbols similarly find difficulty communicating within the Temple of Set, since our symbolic vocabulary is so much less cohesive.

This lack of similarity in symbolism affects not only written communication, but also ritual activity.

Each pylon seems to develop its own pattern of symbolism, and inter-ylon rituals can at times be very difficult. Fitting many diverse magicians with their diverse backgrounds into one meaningful ceremony can be a challenge, a challenge faced at each Conclave, and at each activity like the Order of Shuti Workshop.

Language of the Unconscious?^{fn 1}

The first question asked by the Grand Master was, "What is symbolism?" The first answer received was, "A language of the unconscious."

Parts of the workshop's discussion might seem to support this definition, while others contradict it. So let the Grand Master speak:

Symbols have many attributes. Among the more important of these attributes is their ability to cause reaction in their audience, visceral if not innate reactions, as discussed above.

Elizabeth S. Helfman, in her book *Signs and Symbols around the World*, defines symbol as being: "anything that stands for something else."

Look in your dictionary. Mine includes several definitions of symbol and symbolism, including:

>> Symbol: 2: something that stands for or suggests something else
by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance. 5: an act, sound, or object having cultural significance and the capacity to excite or objectify a response.

>> Symbolism: 1: the art or practice of using symbols esp. by investing things with a symbolic meaning or by expressing the invisible or intangible by means of visible or sensuous representations; as a: the use of conventional or traditional signs
in the representation of divine beings and spirits, b: artistic imitation or invention that is a method of revealing or suggesting
immaterial, ideal, or otherwise intangible truth or states. 2: a system of symbols or representations.

Symbolism is an art, a practice, something which is done. It is used to communicate meaning. It is a language.

Our visceral responses to symbolism may be unconscious, but if

that's all there is, then have we received and/or responded to meaning?

The transmission and communication of **Meaning** requires some form of consciousness.

Let's use the word *Awake* to mean the highest form of consciousness. Remember -- the capital letter indicates I'm using a symbol; Setian use of this specific symbol (*Awake*) most often refers to Ouspenski's heightened state of consciousness and awareness, a state of being totally awake.

1568

For simplicity, let's assign a whole range of various levels of conscious awareness to the name "conscious". This name can apply to heightened states of consciousness which those we would call *Awake*, those that barely miss being *Awake*, down to the almost somnolent states in which most of mankind spends their day.

Finally, I would call the preconscious state one of consciousness in this case, a state in which meaning can be received, interpreted, and acted upon, without the individual being "consciously" aware that this has happened. But if the individual's attention is brought to the subject, then the symbol and its meaning can be recalled and the process repeated without any difficulty.

If symbols are generated and communicated, if they are transmitted and received, in one of these three states, then I believe we can correctly talk about symbolism, about language.

However, if the generation and/or reception of the symbol is unconscious, and/or totally unintended, then I propose that that instance is not an example of symbolism, not language or communication, but rather the accidental generation of and/or visceral response to sensory input.

[Now let us return to the discussion as it took place in the workshop...]

Planetary Symbol System?

We know there are differences in the meanings of many symbols. "Patriotism" can be exceedingly important to a Republican and also to a Libertarian, but the meanings that this symbol will have can be quite different in many ways.

This leads us to ask the question of whether there might perhaps be a "planetary symbol system" in which some symbols at least can be found commonly used in many or all cultures.

The cross, square, circle, and most or all simple symbols have been found in use all over the earth. We therefore can ask whether their meanings are similar, or are the symbols used simply because they are simple geometric figures, but with meanings arbitrarily assigned by the individual cultures?

One participant brought forth Ouspenski's example that "Table" has a function, an innate form or essence, which can be perceived beyond words, and beyond a learned experience.

"Table" provokes an image, feeling, or essence that is evoked through a willed perception that extends beyond the actual set of tables that a person may have ever experienced.

1569

Ouspenski claims that at a certain state of consciousness the Aware individual can see this deeper meaning or essence, and that this deeper meaning or essence can be commonly perceived by all who reach this level of consciousness.

Similar ideas were offered by Plato, and the concept of Platonic Forms is very prevalent throughout the Setian use of symbolism. We often speak of the Egyptian Neters as being Forms, the original or specific essence of an Ideal.

This is certainly an area that needs deeper investigation. The

workshop session discussion however left the topic of abstract Forms, and instead investigated the historic use of symbols in various cultures.

Looking first at the more complex god forms, it seems each major culture has a "trickster" god: Coyote fills this niche in several Amerindian cultures, Loki in the Norse mythos, and Thoth (Hermes and Mercury) in the Egyptian (Greek and Roman) mythologies.

The Trickster is that Spirit who makes you Think. He is the Spirit who is unpredictable in his actions or reactions, who gets himself and everyone else into trouble. In the process of doing so -- most often after everyone is already in trouble -- he makes people Think, and in the end he generally gets everyone out of trouble by thinking.

To represent the Trickster, each culture used that type of symbol or god form which for them was most appropriate for that type of character.

The coyote is a fairly independent and hard to track animal in America, requiring more than the usual amount of intelligence and stealth to catch. Monkeys similarly were appreciated for their seeming intelligence and playfulness, and so Egyptians assigned the Trickster attribute and the monkey's form to Thoth.

The question becomes ... is this type of being, this symbol, something which is universal, cross-cultural, or is it something which happens in just a few cases, and many other societies never had any use for it?

Jung was exploring this area. He defined specific symbols which he felt were common to many or all cultures. They were fairly common within his culture and Jung did manage to validate them with some cross-cultural study.

We still need to ask how complete his studies were, how extensive and wide spread.

Given people in extremely different environments, such as the Eskimo, Hawaiian, Indian, Tibetan, etc., cultures where the people have many different experiences, totally different social and physical environments, it can be expected that these people would have very different reactions to the symbols that Jung thought he had commonality on.

Jung's *Man and his Symbols* was recommended by one participant as containing documentation on his cross-cultural studies in this area.

Not having access to any resource materials that would answer our questions at the time, the workshop session then proceeded into the topic of Egyptian Neters and the use of Neters in symbolism.

Neters

The Workshop discussion of Egyptian Neters started with a brief discussion of the Egyptian languages.

The ancient Egyptians used three different written languages, the hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic.

The demotic language was a mostly alphabetic language used for common communications among those who could read and write. Its primary uses were for social and business reasons.

The hieratic language was a pictographic language related to the hieroglyphic, but in which the pictographs were abbreviated and simplified to speed writing. It was used for important state documents and many later religious texts.

The hieroglyphic language was the most ornate of the three languages, the most ancient of the three languages, and the most symbolic. It was used for the most important religious and philosophical statements, and for the most important state declarations.

Many of the symbols used to form the hieroglyphic language had assigned sounds, and many others did not. In addition to the sounds and symbols used to form words, the Egyptians used determinatives, signs added to specifically identify each word. Through the use of the determinative, it was impossible to mistake one written word for another, even if verbal sounds were the same, even if the letters used were the same.

This use of a purely symbolic, picture-oriented language encouraged the ability in the learned ancient Egyptians to think with right brained methods while doing the left brain activity of reading.

It also encouraged these educated and intelligent Egyptians to work with symbols as they worked with language. They were able to communicate ideas and ideals in a language particularly well suited to this purpose.

Setians use the ancient Egyptian neters as symbols, representing aspects of the world, or aspects of the individual. We feel this is very close to the way the higher initiates of the ancient Egyptian Temples, the priests of the Temples, and the smarter pharaohs used and viewed their neters. The neters were concepts that could be communicated to and shared among the initiated, rather than being actual gods and goddesses.

1571

The common man may very well have believed in the literal existence of his many gods and goddesses, but we believe the elite of the Egyptian society understood that these neters were purely symbols. When the Egyptian elite paid homage to the neters, they paid homage to the aspects of the universe or of the self represented by those neters.

One neter of obvious importance is Set. In dealing with this symbol, we try to identify the original meaning of the symbol, and try to eliminate the corruptions of the symbol imposed by the later rule of Osirian religion.

Rather than take space here to discuss the corruptions and distortions that were applied to the symbol of the neter Set through the Osirian culture, we'll simply refer the interested student to appropriate books in the reading list: 2A, 2E, 2G, 2W, and 2AA.

It is rather clear that the use and peripheral meanings of the neter Set changed over time. The study of Set must therefore include the careful consideration of the source of whatever writings are being studied. Fortunately most other Egyptian symbols/god forms did not change significantly over time, and such care need not be used in studying and working with them.

The neters were used and viewed as symbols. But the Egyptian temples _were_ temples, and were recognized as religions, not simply as centers of enlightened philosophy. This brings up the

question: Do/did the Egyptian Neters actually exist? Were these religions founded to worship or work with beings that actually existed? Or were they simply the creations of the ancient Egyptian priesthoods?

Rather than tackle immediately the question of whether the Neters actually existed, workshop participants first chose to examine ...

Egyptian Priesthoods

The first statement made about these priesthoods was that each temple in Egypt taught a different area of philosophy or knowledge.

Those temples dedicated to a major neter or god taught that their primal Form was the First Cause. These were the major temples of the land, and an initiate who studied at temple after temple would be presented with the opposing claims that each god was the god, The Creator.

We noted in our discussion that the priesthoods of several of the "minor" neters did not make any such claims. Thoth as a single neter never seemed to be treated as the creator god; nor was Geb. However, many of the major neters were treated as creator gods, and many gods were intentionally combined into units (such as Amon-Thoth-Ra) in order to form a god which would be powerful enough to qualify as The creator god.

1572

Neters as Symbols

We returned to discussing the neters as ways of viewing possibility and potentiality, and ways of viewing different aspects of the universe and of the individual.

For example, Ra, the sun god, was a most pervasive and powerful being, since every single day, there he is in the sky. Ra was consistent, reliable, and therefore powerful.

Similarly each force in nature was given a personality, because each force in nature has a personality (or seems to, to those who humanize such things). This is the basic principle behind most spirits of most animistic religions.

These personalities are generally reliable. A rain cloud is going to rain; it isn't going to add to the day's heat. The Nile was not going to dry up -- it was going to overflow once a year, and deposit good, rich, fertile earth upon the ground. Each force of nature, each personality, was given a name, a face, and a story.

The most powerful stories, faces, and names are those that belong to the creator gods. There are so many creator gods, that it's really difficult to pin down an actual order of precedence.

This brings up the fact that there are many apparently conflicting stories within the Egyptian mythology.

The Grand Master pointed out that in several Egyptian myths, Shu and Tefnut are self-created. In others they were created by tears of the master creator god (whoever he happened to be according to the story teller). In yet others they were created by the master god's masturbation.

Shu and Tefnut by definition are the first male and female. The master god's masturbation in these latter stories was always male masturbation, but Shu is the first male. Shu and Tefnut begat Geb and Nut, but Nut was the all-pervasive universal sky that preceded the first god...

This confusion is the result of centuries of Egyptian story telling, and while some of it appears to be contradictory, most of it is useful. We certainly must hesitate to consider this mythology as one consistent symbolism, and must be careful if we wish to communicate consistent meanings using these symbols, but we have found value in this mythology.

Each story is a different way of looking at the world, a different way of looking at the first cause, and of looking at the symbols. By using these symbols, we can then indicate not only a symbol, but also which way we are looking at the world.

Hence, if in ritual or other communication we call upon Ptah-Geb-Nu, we are calling upon the creator of the earth and sky, the god who created the physical universe. If instead we call upon the Neter Ra-Ptah-ankh, we are calling upon the god who brought light and life to this planet.

Having discussed these differing views of the world as expressed by the many symbolic neters, we felt that this was a good point from which to launch into a discussion of one of the ways in which we look at Neters.

Set, the prime source of intelligence and the ageless intelligence himself, is a wee bit complex for someone a mere 20 or even 200 years old to understand, regardless of whether we look at Set as an actually existing being or instead as a master symbol.

So rather than try to encompass all of Set, intellectually or emotionally, rather than try to understand all of Set, we can work with neters which are facets of Set's being, facets of Set's symbolism. Each neter can be thought of as a specific element of Set.

As examples, Shu is one set of symbolism, one set of ideas, that an initiate can work with to "get somewhere" with, to accomplish certain initiatory goals. Tefnut is another set of ideas, as is Geb, Isis, etc.

Rather than trying to encompass and work with the entire universe simultaneously, grab whatever you can hold onto, work with that handful, study that symbol or symbols, and see what it leads to.

We had originally intended to discuss whether or not the Neters might or might not exist in their own right. Having discussed the above, it seemed somewhat unimportant as to whether the Neters actually exist. That topic will be left for a later discussion.

Bibliography

While the following books and papers were not necessarily discussed nor referenced during the workshop discussion (or in completing this article), the initiate interested in studying symbolism as a subject on its own would be well advised to begin with this bibliography. Additions to this bibliography are welcome, and should be sent to the Grand Master. (*RT* entries are from *The Ruby Tablet of Set*.)

Barrett, Ronald K., "Book of Opening the Way (Key #4)". *RT* IT.II.A.5.b.(1).(d).

Barrett, Ronald K., "Stele of Xem". *RT* IT.II.A.4.a.(3).

Cavendish, Richard, *The Black Arts*. 4C (TS-3).

Crowley, Aleister, *The Book of Thoth*. 9L (TS-4).

De Lubicz, Isha Schwaller, *Her-Bak*. 2L (TS-1).

De Lubicz, Isha Schwaller, *Symbol and the Symbolique*. 2V (TS-4).

Fisher, Leonard Everett, *Symbol Art: Thirteen Squares, Circles, and Triangles from Around the World*. NY: Four Winds Press, MacMillan Publishing Company, 1985.

Helfman, Elizabeth S., *Signs and Symbols Around the World*. NY: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., 1967.

1574

Jung, Carl G., *Man and his Symbols*. Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1964, 1968. Also NY: Dell Publishing Co., 1968, and London: Aldus Books, 1964.

Menschel, Robert, "Remanifestation: A Symbolic Syntheses", *RT IT.II.B.3.e.(2)*.

Menschel, Robert, "Tarot Primer", *RT IT.II.B.3.e.(3)*.

Norton, Lynn, "Golden Section Tarot Working", "Atu XV: The Devil", and "The Dialogue". *RT IT.II.A.3.k.(1)*, *4.h.(1)*, and *4.h.(2)*.

Regardie, Israel, *777 and Other Qabalistic Writings of Aleister Crowley*. 9M (TS-4).

Schaefer, Heinrich, *Principles of Egyptian Art*. 2R (TS-4).

=====

Footnote:

=====

1. The Grand Master wishes to digress temporarily from the workshop's discussion, and to comment at this time on one of the first statements offered during this discussion.