

Hermetic Masonry in the Gnostic Tradition – Notes 3

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The Tools of the Trade in the Great Work: Arcana 7, 8 and 9

The Arcana 7, 8 and 9 are the Three Degrees of the Master and they are the tools of the trade in the Great Work. Arcanum 7 is Qualities and Capacities which are indispensable for the Magisterium. Arcanum 8 is Justice, emblem of Strength/Force Equilibrated (Balanced) in all directions: it teaches us Justice and Rectitude in our Thoughts, Words and Actions; the human being must live with Rectitude. Arcanum 9 is Fundamental, it is Authentic Mastery, Arcanum 9 is in the whole Cosmos, observe the construction of the Universe and you will see it everywhere: Above and Below...

In Arcanum N^o 7 we find the Chariot drawn by two Sphinxes, one White and the other Black. It is necessary to yoke the Inferior Nature, which is symbolized by the two Sphinxes who pull the Chariot. The yoking signifies to dominate, to control the passions, to yoke the beast. The Chariot is our own life. The two Sphinxes signify the Pair of Opposites, Hatred and Love, Light and Darkness. These are the Yin & the Yang of Western Esotericism. Triumph, Arcanum 7, is attained through the self-dominion of the Chariot of Life, by dominating oneself, by knowing how to manage one's own life or by intelligently guiding the Chariot of Life. Arcanum 7 teaches us to Control ourselves.



Considered carefully, Arcanum N^o 8 signifies Vigilance and Justice. We need to be correct in our Thoughts, our Words and our Actions. The left hand of the woman supports the Scales of Equity, Equilibrium/Balance, Precision; this is represented by the Scales of Justice. In her right hand, the Sword points upwards signifying Rectitude. Arcanum 8 represents Rectitude, Justice, Firmness or Steadfastness, and Equilibrium. Firmness is the Sword; Equilibrium is the Scales. This Firmness must convert itself into the very axis of life, the central gravitational point of life and of our existence.

Arcanum N^o 9 is the Hidden Light which manifests itself in Initiation, and which vivifies the Powers. In order to be able to see this Light, one must become a Master, and it is clear that every aspirant must attain the Magisterium. Arcanum N^o 9 speaks to us of the Hermit who carries the Staff in the right hand and the Lamp in the left. The important thing is to lift this light up, to raise it is vital in order to illuminate the Path for others.

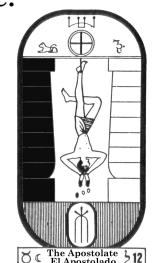


The 11th and 12th Commandments



The Eleventh and Twelfth Commandments are intimately related with Arcana 11 and 12 of the Kabbalah. Arcanum 11 has its classic expression in the Sanskrit *Dharma-Kârya*: “DO YOUR DUTY”. Remember brethren that you have the duty to SEEK THE STRAIGHT, NARROW AND DIFFICULT PATH WHICH LEADS TO THE LIGHT. Arcanum 11 illuminates this duty: the marvelous force which can dominate and subdue the Lions of adversity is essentially Spiritual. Persuasion is a force of subtle Spiritual order and has more power than violence. Intensify the Flame of the Spirit with the Force of Love.

There is a relationship and intertwining of the 11th with the 12th Commandment of the Law of God, illustrated by Arcanum 12: “MAKE YOUR LIGHT SHINE”. So that the Light (which constitutes the Essence, bottled within the "I") can really shine and be resplendent, it must be liberated and this is only possible through the Buddhist Annihilation, by dissolving the Ego. It is necessary for us to die from moment to moment, because only with the death of the Ego does the new come about.



Jonah and the Fish or 'Whale'

Jonah is ordered by God to go to the city of Nineveh and to prophesy against their great wickedness. But Jonah seeks instead to flee from "the presence of the Lord" by going to Joffa and then sailing to Tarshish, which is in the opposite direction. A huge storm arises and the sailors (realizing this is no ordinary storm) learn that Jonah is to blame. Jonah admits this and states that if he is thrown overboard, the storm will cease. The sailors feel forced to throw him overboard, at which point the sea calms. The inspired sailors then offer sacrifices to God.

Jonah is miraculously saved by being swallowed by a large *fish* (or whale) specially prepared by God where he spends *three days and three nights*. While in the great fish, Jonah prays to God and commits to paying what he has vowed (see the 'Prayer of Jonah' Ch.2:2-9). God commands the fish to spew Jonah out.

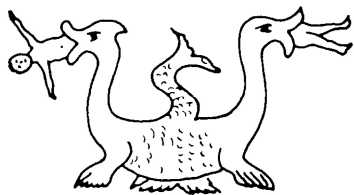


God again orders Jonah to visit Nineveh and to prophesy to its inhabitants. This time he goes and enters the city crying, "In *forty* days Nineveh shall be overthrown." After Jonah has walked for a day across the city, the people begin to believe his word and proclaim a fast. The king of Nineveh puts on sackcloth and sits in ashes, making a proclamation to decree fasting, sackcloth, prayer, and repentance. God sees their works and spares the city. But this displeases Jonah because the people repented because of Jonah's warning and not because of God. So Jonah leaves the city and goes to the East. "And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief..." (Jon 4:6)

[Also see Ch.48 of *Parsival Unveiled* and Ch.3 of *Igneous Rose*]

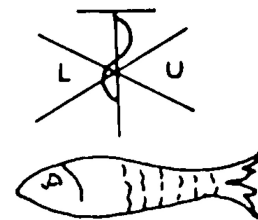
Esoteric Symbolism of Jonah and the Fish or 'Whale'

According to the physics of the Ancients, the fish symbolizes physical life in its first element, which is water. The Leviathan of the *Book of Job* is the great magical agent, which contains all things, absorbs all things and fills all things. In the symbolism of India, the first incarnation of Vishnu is as a fish. Egypt revered the universal agent under the form of the fish of Oannes. The hieroglyphic fish differs from the serpent in that the serpent (with its burning bite) represents the igneous or active principle of the universal agent, while the fish represents the watery or passive and absorbent element.



Thus in the mythical figures of the catacombs of Rome, the fish of Jonah (which first absorbs, and then projects or rejects) reunites the two forms, that of the fish and that of the serpent. It is given two heads: one which devours and the other which vomits, and thus this figure completely expresses the great arcanum of occult physics and of natural magic. The fish is also a symbol of occultism because it is mute.

The first christians (initiated into the mysteries of the Kabbalah) also found in the Greek word for 'fish', Ιχθυς or IXTUS, not just the name of Jesus and the monogram of the labarum, but also the initials of the words: IESOVS XPISTOS THEOU UIOS SOTER, meaning "Jesus Christ Son of God the Savior". It is because of this that one often finds upon the tombs of the old martyrs the following signs (on the right).



The Legend of the Death of Osiris

Osiris having become king of Egypt, applied himself to civilizing his countrymen by *turning them from their former barbarous course of life*. He taught them how to cultivate and improve the fruits of the earth, he gave them a body of laws whereby to regulate their conduct, and instructed them in the reverence and worship which they were to pay to the gods. With the same good disposition, he traveled over the rest of the world, causing people everywhere to submit to his discipline, not compelling them by force of arms, but persuading them to yield to the strength of his reasons, which were conveyed to them in the most agreeable manner, in hymns and songs, accompanied with instruments of *music*.

While Osiris was away from his country, his evil brother Set (aka Typhon) plotted against the Sun God to destroy him. Gathering seventy-two persons as fellow conspirators, he attained his nefarious end in a most subtle manner. He had a wonderful ornamented box made just the size of the body of Osiris. This he brought into a banquet hall where the gods and goddesses were feasting together. All admired the beautiful chest, and Set promised to give it to the one whose body fitted it most perfectly. One after another lay down in the box, but then rose again in disappointment, until finally Osiris tried it. The moment he was in the chest: Set and his accomplices nailed the cover down and sealed the cracks with molten *lead*. They then cast the box into the Nile, and it floated down to the *sea*.



Isis learned what Set's accomplices had done with the body, and eventually discovered that the chest had floated to the coast of Byblos. There it had lodged in the branches of a *tree*, which in a short time miraculously grew up around the box. This so amazed the king of that country that he ordered the tree to be cut down and a pillar made from its trunk to support the roof of his palace.

Isis went to Byblos, and sat down silently to weep by the side of a fountain, when she was accosted by the damsels of the queen, who happened to arrive at the same place. On this occasion, it is related that the goddess suddenly diffused from her person a miraculous odor, of wonderful fragrance, all around her. The queen heard of this supernatural phenomenon and sent for her, and then appointed her to be a nurse to one of the king's children. Isis fed the infant by giving it her finger to suck, instead of her breast; *she likewise put him every night into the fire, to consume his mortal part*. At the same time she transformed herself into a swallow, and hovered round the pillar, and lamented her sad fate.

It happened that some circumstance excited a suspicion in the queen respecting the conduct of the nurse. So she secretly observed Isis, and, upon seeing the infant surrounded by flame, was seized with terror, cried out, and thus deprived the child of immortality. Being discovered, the goddess then requested that the pillar which supported the roof of the palace be given to her. She takes it down, cuts it open with care, and takes out the enclosed sarcophagus of Osiris... She then returns to Egypt, with her husband's body. At some time after her arrival, she deposited the chest in a remote place; but Set, hunting by moonlight, happened upon it, and (recognizing the corpse) divided it into *fourteen pieces*, which he scattered about the earth.

Isis, in despair, began gathering up the severed remains of her husband, but found only *thirteen pieces*. The fourteenth part (the phallus) she reproduced in *gold*, since the original had fallen into the river Nile and had been swallowed by a fish. Isis then took the form of a bird and fanned the body of Osiris with her feathers, and produced air, and this caused the inert members of Osiris to move, and drew from him *his essence*, wherefrom she produced her child. Isis brought forth from her union with Osiris, after his death, Harpocrates [this name is Heru-pa-khart in Egyptian and means 'Horus the Younger']. After these things Osiris returned from the other world, and appeared to his son Horus, and encouraged him to fight, and at the same time instructed him in the exercise of arms (or how to use weapons). He then asked his son what he thought was the most glorious action a man could perform, to which Horus replied, "*To revenge the injuries offered to his father and mother*".