

Symbols of the Soul: 3 - The Soul as a Flame

Chapter 12 of Mysteries and Symbols of the Soul

A sacred fire is burning in the cosmos. The spiritually prepared man who makes contact with it, will be fundamentally renewed. He or she will then be recreated, by the light of the spiritual sun, into an entirely new man, a man of light. That sacred fire is indispensable for the pupil of the soul, who is creating the conditions that will enable [transfiguration](#) in him or her.

The material sun – that gigantic ball of fire that rises and sets every day and whilst continuously giving life, light and warmth – is one out of the countless manifestations of the spiritual sun. In turn, it is one of the numerous expressions of the unknowable primordial light that the Kabbalah Ain Soph Aur and the gnostic gospel of the Pistis Sophia refer to as the Light of Lights.

The sacred fire that ensures the necessary inspiration on the spiritual path is one and threefold at the same time. The Rosicrucians therefore wrote in their first manifest, issued in print in the year 1614, about the trigonum igneum, the flaming erect triangle that has three equal sides. This fire triangle is represented by the three highest sefiroth in the tree of life of the, and situated beyond the veil: Keter, Chokmah and Binah (see [essay 2](#), chapter 11).

Christianity refers to the three fires of mercy as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and in ancient Greece they were called Osiris, Horus and Isis. They successively relate to the divine will, divine love-wisdom and divine activity. This trinity is transcendent and immanent at the same time, it surpasses man and is in him at the same time.

In natural man the divine trinity is only latently present. It cannot simply become active in him, because it is behind the veil. We should be grateful for that, for a person who is not thoroughly prepared, is not able to endure the high energies of the fire triangle. That is because we are able to distinguish three dimensions within the human soul. They partially overlap one another; the personality-soul, the soul and the spirit-soul.

Candle flame

In the Zohar, the most important book of the Kabbalah, the human soul is compared with a candle flame. The wick represents the physical body. The dark light around the wick is comparable to the personality-soul. The white light on top of it is a symbol for the soul while the light above it, not entirely visible, refers to the spirit-soul. This image of the human soul not only expresses the multiplicity of the soul, but also that it is characterised by continuous dynamics.

The flame may seem to be a constant factor, but in reality it is renewed at each moment by the incineration process. A candle flame can also be regarded as a symbol for a sacrifice; the candle sacrifices itself to spread light. Naturally, only the personality-soul is vivified in man. However, when the soul too is born and growing in man, the divine will, the divine love-wisdom and the divine activity is gradually able to become manifest in the personality-soul. That principle also applies to higher dimensions. When the spirit-soul is stirring within man, the forces of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit will engage the soul as well as the personality-soul. In essay 7 this will be further clarified.

The classical alchemical text [Tabula Smaragdina](#) attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, clarifies how the alchemical process of renewal requires a focused activity from the pupil of the soul. For that text holds the assignment: *'Separate the earth from the fire, the subtle and thin from the crude and coarse, lovingly, with great insight and wisdom.'* This refers to the weaving of the resurrection body, the soma psychikon.

It is important to be aware of the fact that not only a sacred fire burns in both cosmos and man, but also an unholy fire, a fire ignited by the downfall of the rebellious angels and enhanced by the fall of man. This ongoing process, from second to second – is maintained by (among others) people and unholy power formations referred to as archons and eons by the gospel of the Pistis Sophia.

Humanity and individuals are chased by that unholy fire and thus creating regrettable situations that certainly do not comply with the divine creation plan. That blazing fire expresses itself, for instance, in fanaticism, intolerance, violence and exploitation.

The astral sphere of both the earth and man is heavily contaminated. You might picture this as a thick fog practically impenetrable for the sunbeams. In order to offer man the opportunity to liberate himself from that grey and lightless reality, divine envoys regularly descend to earth to bring the fire of the gods to the people, just like Prometheus. They incarnate on earth and thus allow themselves to be chained, to breach the astral sphere and make way for the outpouring of light forces, energies that enable people to wake up inside, and embrace the spiritual path. Like a candle, they sacrifice themselves to release light.

Saviours

According to some Hindu movements (particularly within Vaishnavism) the god Vishnu incarnates ten times on earth to give mankind the opportunity for liberation. Vishnu is part of the Hindu trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, respectively symbolising god the creator, god the maintainer and god the destroyer.

The scripture Bhagavata Purana mentions the ten incarnations of Vishnu. They are, in succession: the fish (Matsya), the tortoise (Kurma), the man-lion (Narasimha), the boar (Varaha), the dwarf (Vamana), the warrior (Parasurama), Tama, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. The first seven are mythical by nature, Krishna and Buddha are historic world teachers and Kalki still has to incarnate, according to Hindu teachings. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says that he will take on a physical form again when people have forgotten the dharma, that we could also call the universal wisdom teachings. He speaks:

'Whenever the dharma has been forgotten, when injustice prevails, I take on a physical form. I shall return every era, for the purpose of liberating seekers for truth, for destroying the powers of the depraved, for re-establishing dharma.'

This reminds us of a statement by Jesus about himself, in Luke 19:10: *'For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what is lost.'* Jesus is a saviour too, and according to most Christians he even is the only one. Within esoteric Christianity several saviours are acknowledged, but that does not alter the fact that the orthodox-Christian interpretation is correct as well.

Indeed, the power of Christ united itself with the man Jesus at the time of baptism in the river Jordan. During the mystery of Calvary the power of Christ united itself with the earth, principally enabling every human being to journey back to the paternal home, in self-authority. Christ has never left mankind, but has been working for two thousand years already, through his disciples and inspired men and women of every faith and of every conviction.

Stories on the life of Krishna and the biblical gospels about Jesus' life show surprising similarities. Krishna was born to a virgin some 5000 years ago in a grotto or stable. His birth – like Jesus's – was announced by a star. Krishna's birth too, preceded infanticide to make him vanish from the face of the earth, and he too, accomplished miraculous healings.

Krishna gave his blood for mankind; he is – just like Jesus – depicted, hanging on a cross. He, too, descended to hell, rose after his death and ascended to heaven. The names Krishna and Christ have the same purport. Christ is called the good shepherd, Krishna is called the shepherd. Krishna too, was tempted by the devil. He, like Jesus, experienced a glorification. He too, gave a sermon on the mount and figures in miraculous fish catches.

All this might be an indication that mankind is repeatedly given a more or less similar message. We are able to conclude that universal wisdom teachings are timeless, but its forms are culturally defined.

Cravings and desires

How might someone act on a practical basis, when they want to follow the living examples of world teachers who have conveyed the message of the spiritual path? The pupil of the soul might heed the advice given in the booklet *'The voice of silence'* and regard the fire of desire not as the sunlight of life (1:28). Desire may indeed be experienced as a fire, a fire that provides the strength to reach what is desired, but also a fire that destroys, if it is not restrained.

Fire can be used to produce steam, and steam can be used to make a steam machine run, making it more or less automatically work for you. If you are not attentive and careful, you can easily become hurt by the fire, the steam or the running machine.

In religious and spiritual circles, desire is often seen as something unwanted, as something that should disappear. That is, in a sense, correct because a pupil of the soul must indeed extinguish his desires brought on by the polluted astral sphere. But that does not mean you must suppress your desires and cravings, for if you do that, tensions will arise in yourself. These tensions will discharge in a disharmonious and destructive way, like a volcanic eruption. The challenge is to manage your desires and steer them in the right direction, guided by the impulses of the spirit-spark.

The power to crave or desire is a divine gift. It is one of the seven aspects of the personality-soul, and of the soul, and of the spirit -soul. It is to be considered as one of the seven candelabras that should be ignited by the fire triangle (see Revelations 1:20).

Desire is not something that only exists in animals and human beings. We are able to read how the highest angels, the seraphim, praise their creator continuously, not because God asks them to do so, but because it is their highest desire. The apostle Paul wrote that creation waits in eager

expectation for the children of God to be revealed (Romans 8:19). This revelation becomes possible when the children of God follow the desire instigated by the activity of their spirit-spark.

Magnet

Your desire is a magical instrument, it works as a magnet. When you desire something, you transmit a vibration that is defined by your desire, your intentions and your consciousness. This vibration evokes an activity in a corresponding vibration realm in the cosmos, in accordance with the law of attraction. You will receive a reaction to your desire from that realm. So be careful with what you wish for, as you just might get it!

There are lots of self-help books, instruction videos and trainings for sale to teach you the techniques you can apply to receive what you desire. A perfect love relationship, a dream home, a top job, spiritual enlightenment or whatever. The book 'The Secret' and the film by the same name are very well-known in this respect.

Mostly, these methods come down to visualising what you wish to achieve on a daily basis whilst experiencing the image and the positive emotions that belong to it as vividly as possible in the here and now. Subsequently, you will have to take action to bring the desired goal closer. These techniques will work indeed. When you apply them, you might receive what you desire, but you will have to pay a price for it and it remains to be seen whether or not it will make you happier. If those methods prove to be unsuccessful, you may be better off, as it could indicate that your desire does not fit the path that life has mapped out for you.

Perhaps you will own your favourite car one day, but you might have a traffic accident with it. Maybe you will live in your dream home one day, but as you do so your relationship breaks down. You might get an offer for your top job, but suffer from a burnout some time later. Perhaps you attain a state of great bliss and large crowds come to you for your wise counsel, but you will totally identify with the persona that you have created yourself, thus bringing you back to your starting point or even past it.

Maybe everything will go exactly as you wish for a long time because you, just like Faust in Goethe's story, sold your soul to the devil. Your false ego will grow enormously, smothering the voice of the soul. By then, your sevenfold personality will have built a thick wall around your deepest inner self. The wall is only able to collapse after several round tours or earthly lives, like the walls of Jericho came down.

It would be a misconception to think that your strongest power lies in your personal thoughts, feelings and desires. Your strongest power will become able to manifest itself if you will walk the spiritual way to which you are called, if you start living out of the soul.

Hierarchy of needs

Every human being has certain basic needs and it is important that they are met. In 1943, the American clinical psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) published a theory on the motivation of man that has become well-known. The so-called hierarchy of needs by Maslow – also called the pyramid of Maslow – shows that a minimum of fundamental inborn human needs must be satisfied to be able to develop a healthy personality. First of all, according to Maslow, your basic needs must be fulfilled, before you are able to focus on more luxurious needs. Once

you have met the four levels of basic needs, you will be able to begin with self-realisation or self-actualisation – the fifth and highest level – resulting in a mentally healthy state. The five basic needs consist of:

1. primary biological needs or physical needs like food, drink, clothing and shelter;
2. livelihood security or personal security;
3. social needs, including a sense of belonging, togetherness and love;
4. recognition, including self-respect, self-esteem and reputation;
5. self-realisation or living in accordance with your desire to create.

This model by Maslow shows surprising similarities with what is known about the seven large chakras of man in esoteric and therapeutic circles. Chakra's are invisible energetic centres in the human personality that are regarded as transformation stations between the etheric body and the astral body. They are connected to the energy in the spinal cord, also referred to as the serpent fire.

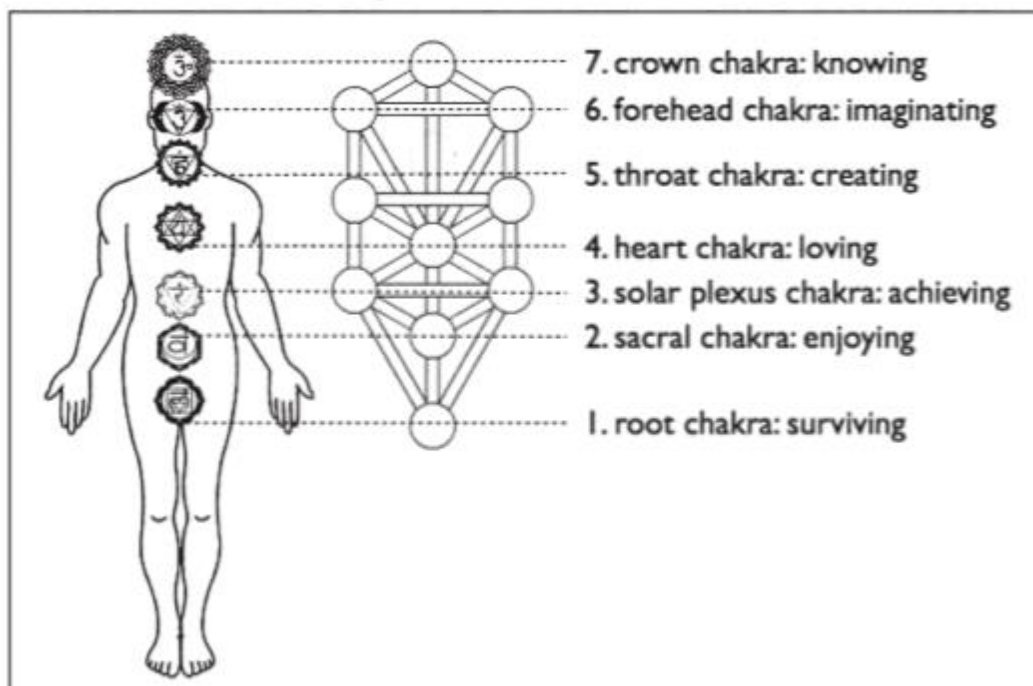


image 12: the seven large chakra's, their characteristics and their correspondences with the tree of life

Image 12 shows the positions, the qualities and the names of the seven large chakras and their correspondences with the tree of life from the Kabbalah. Already in ancient India already, a lot of knowledge existed about the chakra system of man, especially in various yoga traditions. Several decades ago it was hard to find information about chakras in the western part of the world. That is not the case anymore now. An enormous amount of easy to read books and articles have been written on the subject.

However, you do not need to have knowledge about the chakras in order to walk the spiritual path. If a personality lacks balance, it is often the result of too strong or too weak functioning the activity of certain chakras being too strong or too weak and insufficient coherence in the activity of the chakras. Experienced therapists who are familiar with the chakras are usually able to

restore the balance in a disturbed chakra system with certain treatments, but the question is whether this will take away the cause of the imbalance.

The life energy of people who mainly live through their feelings, is usually concentrated in the chakras under the heart. Those people are often said to be earthly and to 'live well within their bodies'. The life energy of people who mainly live through their thinking faculty, is often concentrated in the chakras above the heart. They mainly live out of an intellectual, mental energy.

The proper functioning of the whole chakra system is important for developing spiritually. The heart centre, consisting of the physical heart and its etheric counterpart, the heart chakra and the spirit-spark, plays an indispensable connecting role. It is essential to pay attention to the physical body, as it is the matrix for building the immortal resurrection body or, alchemically formulated, the retort for making the philosopher's stone. But that is not enough. Therefore, Max Heindel used the threefold motto: a sane mind, a soft heart and a sound body.

Health

In his mystery school Pythagoras taught his pupils according to the golden verses that are attributed to him: *'In no way neglect the health of your body, but give it drink and food in due measure, and also the exercise it needs. Accustom yourself to a way of living that is neat and decent without luxury.'*

From this point of view we are also able to interpret certain statements in the Bible. Paul wrote: *'It is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.'* (1 Corinthians 15:46). And Jesus said: *'Render to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's.'* (Matthew 22:21). In this statement we may regard the emperor as the personality and the body.

We, as human beings, naturally tend to shape our lives within the five need levels that have been formulated by Maslow. We could dedicate our whole life to the self-realisation of the personality-soul. In that case we would give the emperor the things that are the emperor's, but we would not give God the things that are God's. There are other kinds of self-realisation, that is the one of the soul and the one of the spirit-soul. These are spiritual needs beyond the fifth level of Maslow, beyond the top of the pyramid of needs.

If your needs develop a strong selfish nature, you are rekindling the unholy fire in yourself. At that moment, you are desiring things that are not in compliance with your inner assignment. Sooner or later you will have to adjust, for the universe knows better what is good for you than you do. While walking the spiritual path you are driven towards a state of surrender that is expressed in a phrase in the Lord's Prayer: *'Not my will, but thy will be done.'*

At that moment, the focus will shift from self-interest to the interest of the greater whole, that is served by a complete spirit-soul development. Then, the old personality-soul will burn in the sacred fire and the new man re-emerges out of its ashes like the firebird phoenix. That man will then be able to let the light of his inner flame shine in silence, for everything and everyone.