

THE ANCIENT & UNIVERSAL SYMBOL OF THE SWASTIKA



According to H. P. Blavatsky “There was a time, when the Eastern symbol of the Cross and Circle, the Swastika, was universally adopted. With the esoteric (and, for the matter of that, exoteric) Buddhist, the Chinaman and the Mongolian, it means “the 10,000 truths.” These truths, they say, belong to the mysteries of the unseen Universe and primordial Cosmogony and Theogony... It is found on the heart of the images and statues of Buddha, in Tibet and Mongolia. It is the seal placed also on the hearts of the living Initiates, burnt into the flesh, for ever, with some. This, because they have to keep those truths inviolate and intact, in eternal silence and secrecy to the day these are perceived and read by their chosen successors—new Initiates—“worthy of being entrusted with the ten thousand perfections.” From the article *The Cross and the Pythagorean Decade*.

In *The Secret Doctrine* H. P. Blavatsky writes:

Throw a retrospective glance, and see it used alike by the Initiates and Seers, as by the priests of Troy (found by Schliemann on the site of that old city). One finds it with the old Peruvians, the Assyrians, Chaldeans, as well as on the walls of the old-world Cyclopean buildings; in the catacombs of the New world, and in those of the Old (?), at Rome, where, because the first Christians are supposed to have concealed themselves and their religion, it is called *Crux Dissimulata*. SD 2:585-586

The *Crux Dissimulata* or Swastika is an equilateral cross with its arms bent at right angles, in either right-facing (卐) or its mirrored left-facing (卍) form.

The Sanskrit word *svastika* स्वस्तिक, meaning any lucky or auspicious object, and in particular a mark made on persons and things to denote auspiciousness. It is composed of *su-* meaning "good, well" and *asti* "to be." *Suasti* thus means "well-being." The suffix *-ka* either forms a diminutive or intensifies the verbal meaning, and *suastika* might thus be translated literally as "that which is associated with well-being," corresponding to "lucky charm" or "thing that is auspicious."

It is considered to be a very sacred and auspicious symbol in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, and it was regarded the same in the Nordic tradition.

The Svastika is found heading the religious symbols of every old nation. It is the "Worker's Hammer" in the Chaldean Book of Numbers, the "Hammer" just referred to in the "Book of Concealed Mystery" (Ch. I., §§ 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.), "which striketh sparks from the flint" (Space), those sparks becoming worlds. It is "Thor's Hammer," the magic weapon forged by the dwarfs against the Giants, or the pre-cosmic Titanic forces of Nature, which rebel and, while alive in the region of matter, will not be subdued by the Gods, the Agents of Universal Harmony, but have first to be destroyed. This is why the world is formed out of the relics of the murdered Ymir. The Svastika is the Miolnir, the "storm-hammer"; and therefore it is said that when the Ases, the holy gods, after having been purified by fire (the fire of passions and suffering in their life-incarnations), become fit to dwell in Ida in eternal peace, then Miolnir will become useless. This will be when the bonds of Hel (the goddess-queen of the region of the Dead) will bind them no longer, for the kingdom of evil will have passed away. SD 2:99

According to Mme. Blavatsky this symbol is formed. . .

. . . by adding to the cross proper + the symbol of the four cardinal points and infinity at the same time, thus卐, the arms pointing above, below, and right, and left, making six in the circle...¹ article *Classification of "Principles"*, HPB

¹ The mirror-image forms are often described as "Left-facing" and "right-facing", referring to the direction in which the upper arm of an upright swastika faces, either to the viewer's left (卍) or right (卐). The descriptions as clockwise or anticlockwise is ambiguous as it is unclear whether they refer to the arms as leading or being dragged or whether their bending is viewed outward or inward. However, "clockwise" usually refers to the "right-facing" swastika. The terms are used inconsistently in modern times, which is confusing and may obfuscate an important point, that the rotation of the swastika may have symbolic relevance, although ancient vedic scripts describe the symbolic relevance of clock motion and counter clock motion. From <https://theosophy.wiki/en/Swastika>

[Both the right-facing and left-facing variants are employed in Hinduism and Buddhism however, the left-facing is more commonly used in Buddhism than Hinduism and the right-facing is more commonly used in Hinduism than Buddhism.]

The swastika is one of the elements present in the Theosophical Seal, and according to Mme. Blavatsky:

The “double sign” is, as every student of Occultism knows, the symbol of the male and the female principles in Nature, of the positive and the negative, for the Svastica or  is all that *and much more*. SD 2:29

She also points out that the hermaphrodite goddess Adanari shows "the Svastica, the 'male and female sign', right in the central part, to denote the pre-sexual state of the Third Race", this being a symbol of "'the source of generation' or of the descent of man". SD 2:31

In Esoteric Philosophy, the most mystic and ancient diagram. It is “the originator of the fire by friction, and of the ‘Forty-nine Fires’ . . . and in Occultism, it is as sacred to us as the Pythagorean tetraktys, of which it is indeed the double symbol.

Theosophical Glossary p 315

On a macrocosmic level, this is a symbol for the activity of the cosmic energy or Fohat:

Few world-symbols are more pregnant with real occult meaning than the Swastica. It is symbolized by the figure 6; for, like that figure, it points in its concrete imagery, as the ideograph of the number does, to the Zenith and the Nadir, to North, South, West, and East; one finds the unit everywhere, and that unit reflected in all and every unit. It is the emblem of the activity of Fohat, of the continual revolution of the “wheels,” and of the Four Elements, the “Sacred Four,” in their mystical, and not alone in their cosmical meaning; further, its four arms, bent at right angles, are intimately related, as shown else where, to the Pythagorean and Hermetic scales. One initiated into the mysteries of the meaning of the Swastika, say the Commentaries, “can trace on it, with mathematical precision, the evolution of Kosmos and the whole period of Sandhya.” Also “the relation of the Seen to the Unseen,” and “the first procreation of man and species.” SD 2:587

The Svastica is the most philosophically scientific of all symbols, as also the most comprehensible. It is the summary in a few lines of the whole work of creation, or evolution, as one should rather say, from Cosmo-theogony down to Anthropogony, from the indivisible unknown Parabrahm to the humble moneron of materialistic science, whose genesis is as unknown to that science as is that of the All-Deity itself. Verily many are its meanings! In the Macrocosmic work, the “Hammer of Creation,” with its four arms bent at right angles, refers to the continual motion and revolution of the invisible Kosmos of Forces. In that of the manifested Kosmos and our Earth, it points to the rotation in the cycles of Time of the world’s axes and their equatorial belts; the two lines forming the Svastica  meaning Spirit and Matter, the four hooks suggesting the motion in the revolving cycles. Applied to the Microcosm, Man, it shows him to be a link between heaven and Earth: the right hand being raised at the end of a horizontal arm, the left pointing to the Earth. In the Smaragdine Tablet of Hermes, the uplifted right hand is inscribed with the word “Solve,” the left with the word “Coagula.” It is at one and the same time an Alchemical, Cosmogonical, Anthropological, and Magical sign, *with seven keys to its inner meaning*. It is not too much to say that the compound symbolism of this universal and most suggestive of signs contains the key to the seven great mysteries of Kosmos. . . . It is the Alpha and the Omega of universal creative Force, evolving from pure Spirit and ending in gross Matter. It is also the key to the cycle of Science, divine and human; and he who comprehends its full meaning is for ever liberated from the toils of Mahamaya, the great Illusion and Deceiver. SD 2:98-100

Mme. Blavatsky also pointed out that "the four bent points of the Swastika typify the revolution of the Earth upon its axis". She wrote "With the esoteric (and, for the matter of that, exoteric) Buddhist, the Chinaman and the Mongolian, it means "the 10,000 truths." These truths, they say, belong to the mysteries of the unseen Universe and primordial Cosmogony and Theogony. . . . This is why the Swastika is always placed—as the ansated Cross was in Egypt—on the breasts of the defunct mystics. It is found on the heart of the images and statues of Buddha, in Tibet and Mongolia."²

In the Glossary, Blavatsky defines the "Fylfot (Scand.). A weapon of Thor, like the Swastika; or the Jaina, the four-footed cross; generally called 'Thor's Hammer'." and quotes "that very learned work, 'The Natural Genesis', by Mr. Gerald Massey" who writes: "Thor throws his weapon, the Fylfot, a form of the four-footed cross (Swastika) and a type of the four quarters." In *Isis* there's this:

There is both religion and science in the Scandinavian songs of heathendom. As an example of the latter, take the conception of Thor, the son of Odin. Whenever this Hercules of the North would grasp the handle of his terrible weapon, the thunderbolt or electric hammer, he is obliged to put on his iron gauntlets. He also wears a magical belt known as the "girdle of strength," which, whenever girded about his person, greatly augments his celestial power. He rides upon a car drawn by two rams with silver bridles, and his awful brow is encircled by a wreath of stars. His chariot has a pointed iron pole, and the spark-scattering wheels continually roll over rumbling thunder-clouds. He hurls his hammer with resistless force against the rebellious frost-giants, whom he dissolves and annihilates. When he repairs to the Urdar fountain, where the gods meet in conclave to decide the destinies of humanity, he alone goes on foot, the rest of the deities being mounted. He walks, for fear that in crossing Bifrost (the rainbow), the many-hued Æsirbridge, he might set it on fire with his thunder-car, at the same time causing the Urdar waters to boil. Rendered into plain English, how can this myth be interpreted but as showing that the Norse legend makers were thoroughly acquainted with electricity? Thor, the euhemerization of electricity, handles his peculiar element only when protected by gloves of iron, which is its natural conductor. His belt of strength is a closed circuit, around which the isolated current is compelled to run instead of diffusing itself through space. When he rushes with his car through the clouds, he is electricity in its active condition, as the sparks scattering from his wheels and the rumbling thunder of the clouds testify. The pointed iron pole of the chariot is suggestive of the lightning-rod; the two rams which serve as his coursers are the familiar ancient symbols of the male or generative power; their silver bridles typify the female principle, for silver is the metal of Luna, Astarte, Diana. Therefore in the ram and his bridle we see combined the active and passive principles of nature in opposition, one rushing forward, and the other restraining, while both are in subordination to the world-permeating, electrical principle, which gives them their impulse. With the electricity supplying the impulse, and the male and female principle combining and recombining in endless correlation, the result is — evolution of visible nature, the crown-glory of which is the planetary system, which in the mythic Thor is allegorized by the circlet of glittering orbs which bedeck his brow. When in his active condition, his awful thunderbolts destroy everything, even the lesser other Titanic forces. But he goes afoot over the rainbow bridge, Bifrost, because to mingle with other less powerful gods than himself, he is obliged to be in a latent state, which he could not be in his car; otherwise he would set on fire and annihilate all. The meaning of the Urdar-fountain, that Thor is afraid to make boil, and the cause of his reluctance, will only be comprehended by our physicists when the reciprocal electro-magnetic relations of the

² According to Mme. Blavatsky Swastika is "the most sacred and mystic symbol in India".

innumerable members of the planetary system shall be thoroughly determined... The clear and cool waters of Urdar were required for the daily irrigation of the mystical mundane tree; and if they had been disturbed by Thor, or active electricity, they would have been converted into mineral springs unsuited for the purpose. Such examples as the above will support the ancient claim of the philosophers that there is a logos in every mythos, or a ground-work of truth in every fiction. *Isis Unveiled* 1:160-161

The ansated Egyptian cross, or *tau*, the Jaina cross, or Swastica, and the Christian cross have all the same meaning. *SD* 1:657

Our wise men represent the two Globes, Venus and the Earth, one over the other under the double Sign (the primeval Svastica bereft of its four arms, or the cross).” The “double sign” is, as every student of Occultism knows, the symbol of the male and the female principles in Nature, of the positive and the negative, for the Svastica or is all that and much more. *SD* 2:29

The Svastica, the most sacred and mystic symbol in India,³ the “Jaina-Cross” as it is now called by the Masons, notwithstanding its direct connection, and even identity with the Christian Cross, has become dishonoured in the same manner. It is the “devil’s sign,” we are told by the Indian missionaries. “Does it not shine on the head of the great Serpent of Vishnu, on the thousand headed Sessa-Ananta, in the depths of Pâtâla, the Hindu Naraka or Hell”? It does: but what is Ananta? As Sessa, it is the almost endless Manvantaric cycle of time, and becomes infinite Time itself, when called Ananta, the great seven-headed Serpent, on which rests Vishnu, the eternal Deity, during Pralactic inactivity. What has Satan to do with this highly metaphysical symbol? *SD* 2:98

We may find, in searching, a more poetical origin for the “fire-bringer” than that displayed in its Sanskrit origin. The Svastica, the sacred sign and the instrument for kindling sacred fire, may explain it better. “Prometheus, the fire-bringer, is the Pramantha personified,” goes on the author, “he finds his prototype in the Aryan Matarisvan, a divine . . . personage, closely associated with the fire god of the Veda, Agni. . . .” Mati, in Sanskrit, is “understanding,” and a synonym of mahat and manas, and must be of some account in the origin of the name: Promati is the son of Fohat, and has his story also. *SD* 2:413- 414 fn

Study meeting Sunday 11th October 2020
at the United Lodge of Theosophists, London UK
www.theosophy-ult.org.uk

³ Not only in India: to Native American Indians, the Swastika is a symbol of the sun, the four directions, and the four seasons. There is evidence that the Swastika symbol featured in the ancient Mississippian culture of the Mound Builders (1000 AD – 1550 AD) in North America. They associated great mystical value to the symbol and it was part of their beliefs and sacred rites. For them the 'broken cross' symbol was a type of Cross in the Circle and Solar Cross symbol, with arms bent at right angles, suggesting a turning or whirling motion, commonly known to many native Indians as the “whirling log”; while in the Navaho language it is “that which revolves”. <https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-symbols/swastika-symbol.htm> [These dates are strictly exoteric; HPB states in several references that the N. American Mississippi culture may be 50,000-100,000 years old.]

Initial reading

from the *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 11

SANJAYA:

O king, having thus spoken, Hari,[^] the mighty Lord of mysterious power, showed to the son of Pritha his supreme form; with many mouths and eyes and many wonderful appearances, with many divine ornaments, many celestial weapons upraised; adorned with celestial garlands and robes, anointed with celestial ointments and perfumes, full of every marvelous thing, the eternal god whose face is turned in all directions. The glory and amazing splendor of this mighty Being may be likened to the radiance shed by a thousand suns rising together into the heavens. The son of Pandu then beheld within the body of the God of gods the whole universe in all its vast variety. Overwhelmed with wonder, Dhananjaya,^{*} the possessor of wealth, with hair standing on end, bowed down his head before the Deity, and thus with joined palms[†] addressed him:

ARJUNA:

"I behold, O god of gods, within thy frame all beings and things of every kind; the Lord Brahmâ on his lotus throne, all the Rishies and the heavenly Serpents.[‡] I see thee on all sides, of infinite forms, having many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes. But I can discover neither thy beginning, thy middle, nor thy end, O universal Lord, form of the universe. I see thee crowned with a diadem and armed with mace and chakra,[§] a mass of splendor, darting light on all sides; difficult to behold, shining in every direction with light immeasurable, like the burning fire or glowing sun. Thou art the supreme inexhaustible Being, the end of effort, changeless, the Supreme Spirit of this universe, the never-failing guardian of eternal law: I esteem thee Purusha,^{**} I see thee without beginning, middle, or end, of infinite power with arms innumerable, the sun and moon thy eyes, thy mouth a flaming fire, overmastering the whole universe with thy majesty. Space and heaven, and earth and every point around the three regions of the universe are filled with thee alone. The triple world is full of fear, O thou mighty Spirit, seeing this thy marvelous form of terror. Of the assemblage of the gods some I see fly to thee for refuge, while some in fear with joined hands sing forth thy praise; the hosts of the Maharshis and Siddhas, great sages and saints, hail thee, saying 'svasti,'^{††} and glorify thee with most excellent hymns.

[^] Hari, an epithet of Krishna, meaning that he has the power to remove all difficulty.

^{*} Arjuna.

[†] This is the Hindu mode of salutation.

[‡] These are the Uragas, said to be serpents. But it must refer to the great Masters of Wisdom, who were often called Serpents.

[§] Among human weapons this would be known as the discus, but here it means the whirling wheels of spiritual will and power.

^{**} Purusha, the Eternal Person. The same name is also given to man by the Hindus.

^{††} This cry is supposed to be for the benefit of the world, and has that meaning.