

Rosicrucian Angelology

by

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In the opening prayer of our assembly, there is contained within it the words: "Sanctify our desires and purify our thoughts, so that we may become worthy to commune with the Holy Ones whom Thou hast created; ..." Who are the Holy Ones mentioned here? Can they be any other than what we refer to as angels? Is this a literary device within a prayer or is it serious? If it was an isolated reference then we might gloss over it in our devotions or even dismiss it altogether. But we find it again and again in the material both within our own society and in supporting documents of the Rosicrucian tradition.

In the description of the jewel of the society we find this explanation: "The Jewel of the Society consists of a cross, the arms of equal length, on a curved shield having the form of a lozenge or rhombus. The arms of the Cross exhibit four times 18, that is 72 lines, having reference to the 72 rounds of the Ladder of Jacob; ..." (SRICF: p. 5) And in the initiation ceremony of the *Zelator* grade, the lecture mentions in the section on the number 12 that: "No. 12 alludes to the 12 Apostles of the Messiah, and to the 12 signs of the Zodiac, expressing the cosmogony of Nature, spiritually and materially. The square of 12 - namely 144 - was once the limit of each Rosicrucian circle, and reminds us of the 72 attributes of God, which form the names of the 72 angels who occupy the 72 degrees of the ladder of Jacob, which is mystically said to reach from earth to heaven." (p. 26)

In the lecture of the second grade of *Theoricus*, the candidate is instructed that the Four Ancients represent the four classical elements and are attributed to four specific colors, to the four Hebrew letters of the Holy Name (I.H.V.H.) and are further attributed to a division of the world into four divisions: "... they refer also to the Four Worlds of Existence, the Divine, Angelic, Formative and Material." (p. 41) One of the four divisions then is specified as angelic. In the next and third grade, that of *Practicus*, another reference to the angels can be found at

the end of the lecture regarding alchemy. In reference to the practice of spiritual alchemy, we are told that it is devised to cause a change in man, a reformation, and it will make us "fit to commune with the Holy Ones whom God has created." (p. 68) That statement clearly reflects the previous mentioned phrase of the opening prayer.

In the Second Order of our Society, reference to the angels is again articulated to the candidate in the lecture given during the *Adeptus Minor* grade. This time it is through an explanation of the Second Order Jewel which portrays the Pythagorean "Tetractys". This tetractys symbol should be well known to Scottish Rite masons. It is the equilateral triangle made up of 10 dots or stones. Sometimes it is seen as 10 of the Hebrew letter "yod" in a triangular formation. Sometimes it is seen to have just the one Hebrew letter "yod" instead of 10 inside of an equilateral triangle as in the 14th degree ring. That is because if the Hebrew letter "yod" is used as a number, it is the number 10.

In that same lecture, the *Adeptus Minor* or shall we say - child Adept - is informed of the connection between the Pythagorean tetractys and the Unutterable Divine Name of God symbolized in Hebrew as I.H.V.H. The Hebrew letters of the Divine Name (or Tetragrammaton) replace the individual dots or stones in a special manner (see attachment). As you know the Hebrew letters are numbers and if you sum all the letters placed upon the tetractys it results in the number 72. The lecture continues by saying: "The total is seventy-two, the number of steps of the Ladder of Jacob which reached from earth to heaven; upon each step, says the Talmud, was an Angel bearing one of the names of God. These letters are derived from the words and letters of the 19th, 20, and 21st verses of the 14th chapter of the book of Exodus, ... The Seventy-two lettered Divine Name was called the Shemhamphorash." (see attachments for the Biblical verses).

Shem ha-Mephoresh basically means "Name of Extension". Therefore in this symbolism, the Ineffable Name IHVH has become the Extended Name. Sometimes it is referred to as the Great Divided Name or the 72-Fold Great Name of God.

The question arises as to what is the importance of such instruction. What is the point in knowing these angelic names and how does it relate to our society? The

first thing one might expect is to go to the founding documents themselves: the Rosicrucian manifestoes. But in the original Rosicrucian manifestos, angels are only mentioned three times that I can find: once in the *Fama* and twice in the *Confessio*.

"... he seeth the Heavens open, the angels of God ascending and descending , and his name written in the book of life."
(*Fama*, TIRO, p. 17)

"...we hold that the meditations of our Christian Father on all subjects which from the creation of the world have been invented, brought forth, and propagated by human ingenuity, through God's revelation, or through the service of Angels or spirits, ..." (Confessio, Chapter IV; TIRO p. 21)

"... to the silent he sendeth his angels to hold speech with them, ..." (Confessio, Ch. XI)

Although interesting, these passages do not really give us any further insight into why the tetraktys and the Shem ha-mephorash are so prominent in our society. On the contrary, one may wonder how they did become so important being that they are not particularly specified in the original documents. But for the purpose of this talk, I do not want to go into the history of the emergence of these symbols in any detailed way. My interest here is their meaning to us.

In short, the emergence of references to the 72-word Name of God is correlated with the development of the Kabbalah. One of the great Jewish mystics of the 13th century - Abraham Abulafia - used it as one of his main meditations and prayers. There are references to his even coordinating breathing, musical tone and color in his techniques. We also find the 72-Word Name of God later utilized in medieval magical texts. These angels have been assigned one to each of 5 degrees of the zodiac (360 divided by 5. This is not to be unexpected as the mystical connection is given to the four fixed signs of the zodiac (Leo, Taurus, Aquarius, Scorpio) to the Ineffable Name (IHVH). See *Ezekiel* 1:10 and *Revelations* 4:6-7. One connection is that the "house" placement sums to the sum of the Name (both equal 26).

The Pythagorean Tetractys seems to be at least as old as Pythagoreas which is about 590 B.C.E. This was a major teaching of that fraternity and is even used in one of

their oaths: "I swear by the discoverer of the Tetraktys. Which is the spring of all our wisdom. The perennial fount and root of Nature."

Later we find it discussed in some great detail in Plato's *Timaeus*. Many things are discussed in both the Pythagorean and Platonic material in regards to this interesting mathematical device. These include a type of creation story and certain musical qualities.

The Tetraktys is used extensively in other Masonic rites: In the material on the 31st degree of Scottish Rite: Inspector Inquisitor "The peculiar and principal symbol of this Degree is the Tetractys of Pythagoras, suspended in the East, where ordinarily the sacred word or letter glitters, like it, representing the Deity." (Pike, *Morals & Dogma*, p. 826)

Regarding the Master Mason degree from Albert Pike:

"The Tetractys thus leads you, not only to the study of the Pythagorean philosophy as to numbers, but also to the Kabalah, and will aid you in discovering the True Word, and understanding what was meant by "The Music of the Spheres." (Pike, *Morals & Dogma*, p. 88)

This symbol is of major importance to the Scottish Rite: "Pike intended that candidates have a thorough understanding of the Tetractys of Pythagoras before they receive the instruction of the Council (19-30) and Consistory (31-32) degrees. For this reason a lecture on this important symbol may be found as the end of the Rose Croix ritual." (Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light*, p. 113)

The combination of the classical philosophical device with the theology of the Judeo-Christian has provided the Rosicrucian society with a powerful symbol of our spirituality.

How is this the case? In one sense, one has to revert back to other relationships hinted at in the material. Such things as the 72 rungs of the Ladder of Jacob. If we look at other words, as we do in Kabbalah exegesis, we find an interesting correlation: that of the Latin word *abiegnus* which numerates to 72. The word means "clad in fir" but the word is used in conjunction with another Rosicrucian symbol: Mount Abiegnus or the Mountain of Initiation. The connection here is that these symbols give very strong

hints at a type of Rosicrucian spirituality whose aim is nothing less than the Beatific Vision or a mystical union with the Divine.

Appendix

Biblical verses from which the Shem ha-Mephorash is derived:

"19. And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud moved from before them and stood behind them:

20. And it came between the army of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was cloudy and dark all the night, but it gave light all the night to the children of Israel, so that they could not draw near one the another all the night.

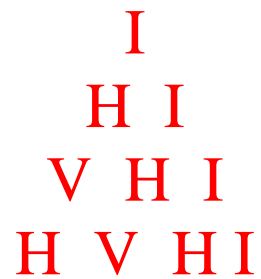
21. And Moses lifted up his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided." (*Exodus 14:19-21*)

The Tetractys and the Shem ha-Mephorash

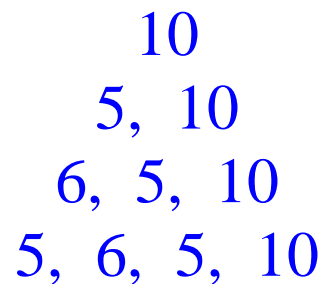
The Pythagorean Tetractys:



Substituting Hebrew letters of the Tetragrammaton: YHVH (or, IHVH)



The numerical values are...



$$10 + 10 + 10 + 10 + 5 + 5 + 5 + 6 + 6 + 5 = 72$$

Thus is the numerical value for the Shem ha-Mephorash.