

The Cosmic Egg *A Universal Symbol of the World and Man*

AMONG THE MANY cosmic symbols which have been handed down to us from antiquity, none is more common than the symbol of the egg. Carefully concealed in this sacred symbol is the whole mystery of the origin and destiny of the world and man. The egg symbolizes the Cosmos in its most abstract conception of the inner-most state of existence, prior to the periods and processes of involution and evolution. It teaches that though life is able to mold matter, it does not depend upon it for its existence. It is self-existent, and having no beginning it can have no end. This is symbolized by the ovoid shape of the egg. The Absolute Being is always represented as ovoid in form, without beginning, and therefore without end.

Within the periphery of the egg is living Power, male-female, which is the Divine Spirit. This great Power has been called by the Greeks, *Phanes*, the God of Light, for on its shining forth the whole universe shone by the light of fire, the most glorious of the elements. And so the egg, the first and last of all things, heated by the Divine Life within it, breaks open. A great Spirit then comes forth in all His glory and splendor.

In the legend of Orpheus, *Phanes* is called the father of all the gods because He was the first to appear as "Light." In the Bible we read that in the

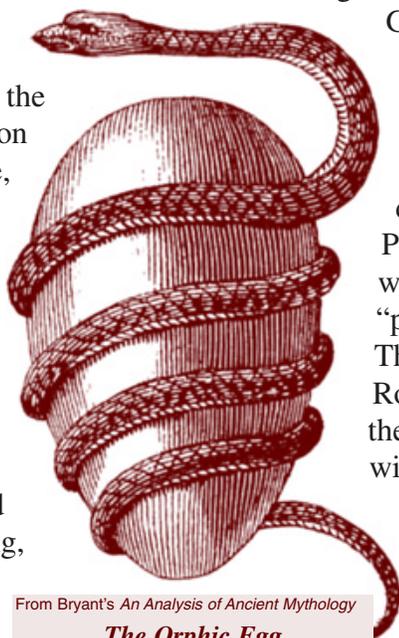
beginning God said: "Let there be light, and there was light." In the Rosicrucian philosophy it is taught that "God is Light" and this phrase is taken as the main thought in our meditation periods.

Light is the first principle manifested by God; this is followed by love as the second principle, and by service as the third.

This glorious Being, born from the egg, was triune, and as described in the terminology of Plato, of the three aspects, *Phanes* was the "Father," *Ericapeus*, the "power," and *Metis*, the "intellect." This terminology corresponds to our Rosicrucian concepts which are called the Father, the Christ, and Jehovah; or will, wisdom, and activity.

In the literature of the ancients it is written that in the beginning the universe was "water," or "chaos." The waters desired intensely; they toiled and became heated with fervent devotion. When this heat and devotion became sufficiently intensified, a Great Egg was produced. This egg rested for one

Great Day, and at the expiration of this period it broke in half. Of the two hemispheres the upper was of gold and the lower of silver. The silver hemisphere became the world, or mundane creation, and the golden half became the heavens, or celestial expanse. In some accounts the golden yolk of the egg is represented as the sun, or the center of the universe; in others as the heart of



From Bryant's *An Analysis of Ancient Mythology*

The Orphic Egg

Signifying the Cosmos encircled by the fiery Creative Spirit in the Orphic mysteries, the egg also represents the soul of the philosopher; the serpent, the Mysteries.

man, surrounded by all his latent faculties and vehicles. By still other authors of ancient metaphysical works it is viewed as the earth, surrounded by the terrestrial waters, which are symbolized by the albuminous portion, or white of the egg. Within

The egg is an image of God and of the universe, which engenders and contains everything in its bosom. Being made in the image of God, man's aura and desire body are ovoid in shape.

this egg were also the continents, the seas, and the mountains, the planets and stars, the gods, demons, and mankind.

The Greek Phanes is symbolical of the first born, the Heavenly Man, resplendent as the sun. He is named the "egg golden," the father of Metis and all the gods. For the benefit of these gods of the universe He created the heavens and the earth, that they might go forth in a new day of manifestation. In another description of the world it is said that the sky, and earth, and water, and whatever else is within them, are egg-like. The sky is arranged above the earth, like an egg, by the handiwork of the Creator, and the semblance of the earth in the midst of the sky is similar to the yolk within the egg, and the water within the earth and the sky is the same as the water within the egg.

Among the writings of that illustrious Rosicrucian and immortal spirit known as Paracelsus, we find quotations which throw a beam of light upon the age-long mystery of the egg. He declares that "the yolk of an egg rests in the albumen without sinking to the bottom of the shell. The yolk represents the earth and the white represents the invisible surroundings of the earth. The invisible part acts upon the visible one, but only the philosopher perceives the way in which the action takes place."

In this statement Paracelsus refers to the albuminous part of the egg as representing the invisible, superphysical planes of nature from which flows the life by which all things earthly are sus-

tained. The egg is an image of God and of the universe, which engenders and contains everything in its bosom. Man was made in the image of God, his aura and desire body being ovoid in shape, and where the mind body has developed into a form, it also is an ovoid. Every living cell and atom, every spark that emanated from or had its origin in the world of God, is ovoid in shape, with no beginning and no end, showing that it, too, is eternal, even as our Father in heaven.

The egg has been used as a symbol from ancient times. There was the Mundane Egg of the Egyptians which proceeds from the mouth of the "unmade and eternal Deity" and which is the emblem of generative power. The Egg of Babylon was supposed to have hatched Ishtar and was said to have fallen from heaven into the Euphrates. Colored eggs were used yearly during spring in almost every country, and in Egypt they were exchanged as sacred symbols in the springtime. This was the emblem of birth and rebirth, cosmic and human, celestial and terrestrial.

We learn from the writings of Madame Blavatsky that the word Easter evidently came from Ostara, the Scandinavian goddess of spring. She was a symbol of the resurrection of all nature and was worshiped in early spring. It was then a custom with the pagan Norsemen to exchange colored eggs, which were called the eggs of Ostara. These later became Easter eggs. This old custom has been connected with the feast of the Resurrection of the Savior, who, like the hidden life in the egg, slept in the grave for three days before He awakened to new life. This was natural because Christ is identified with that same spring sun which awakens in all its glory after the dreary, long days of winter.

The sacred symbol of the egg was preserved by the Druids and used by them as the distinguishing mark of the several grades of the Druid Order. These eggs were of various colors, some blue, others green or white, while some had stripes of different colors. The color gave a clue to their status in the Order, for the colors worn by the members were the same as on the eggs.

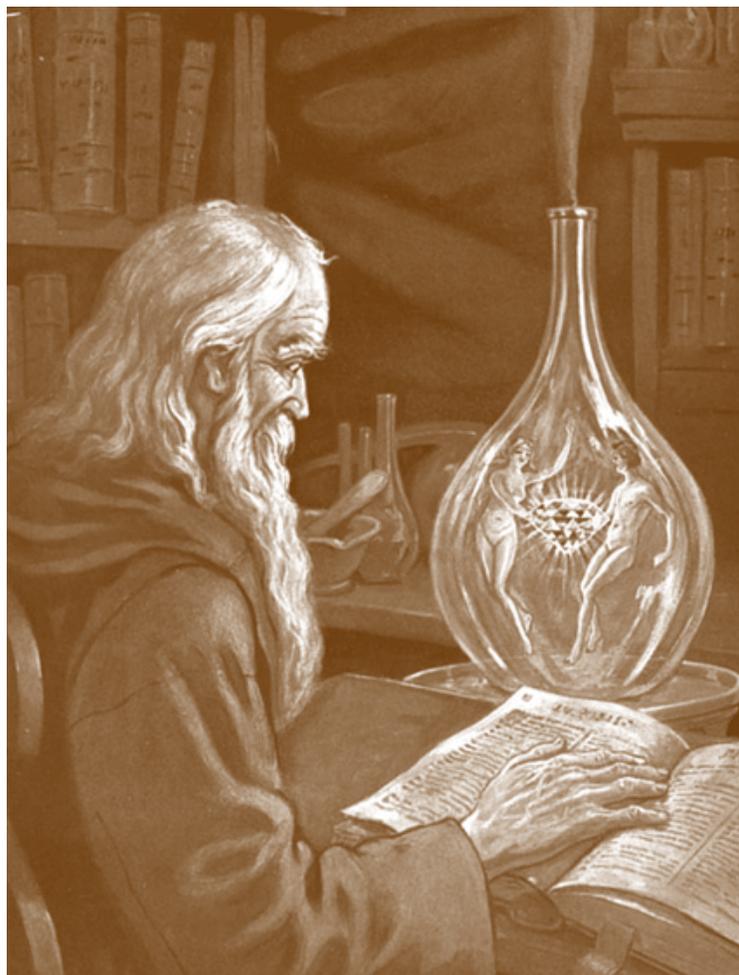
In the mystical symbolism of the early Rosicrucians we find that the philosophic egg was

incorporated, and it has a very significant interpretation. “The Fraternity of the Rose Cross,” says John Heydon, “is maintained by a group of mysterious adepts who perpetuate themselves from age to age by returning periodically into a philosophic womb, where they rest for a prescribed time, and then come forth once more renewed in life and years.” The same writer also tells of Brother C. R. C., and in describing one of his so-called rest periods, or rather a stage of inactivity on the earth plane, he speaks of the Brother as “in a proper womb quickening.” This womb is a glass casket or container, an alchemical vessel in which the Brothers were buried. It was named the philosophic egg. At regular intervals the adept, breaking the shell of the egg, took up the various duties of life, later to retire again into his shell of glass. Between lives the Brother was said to be sleeping in his egg.

Periodically the philosopher breaks the shell and emerges from his egg, having a new external form in which he abides temporarily. This is comparable to man, who between earth lives exists in the invisible worlds, and in his own invisible bodies. There is a great difference, however, in that man has to be born by way of the physical womb of the mother, whereas the adept, or Brother, is able to materialize a body in which to function on this earthly plane without the necessity of being born.

The breaking of the egg represents the victory of the spiritual nature of man over the personality or lower animalistic nature. Man is a miniature universe and his physical personality is an egg, or ovoid-shaped auric body, in his present stage of development.

As the seed is nurtured by Mother Earth until it bursts forth in splendor; as the egg is warmed by the mother bird, and the alchemical processes take place, so that the little chick literally grows out of the shell with its new garment of feathers; as the babe is nurtured in the womb of the mother until it is launched forth on the sea of life; so does the man, who has suffered sufficiently and learned the futility of catering to the appetites and desires of



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From Manly P. Hall's SECRET TEACHINGS OF ALL AGES

The Consummation of the Magnum Opus

Modern initiation involves a transmutation in the vital body (egg-shaped glass flask), creating a golden wedding garment from the light and reflecting ethers. The stage of Christian transfiguration designates the alchemical process by which the physical body becomes a living (Philosopher's) stone. While the intellectual or occult path generates the ruby soul, and the Christian mystic path forms the diamond soul, transfiguration is not complete until both paths and souls are one.

the lower nature, and is ready to surrender all to the God within, cry out to that Divine Spark within him to take complete charge of all his vehicles and faculties, to control them and diffuse the qualities of the Spirit throughout his whole being.

It is then that the human egg is warmed from within by the Spirit, the transmuted and perfected spiritual qualities of love burst the shell and a newborn and glorious being comes forth with all the radiance and beauty of Phanes, the God of Light. Then he may shout triumphantly as did the Christ: “It has been accomplished.” □

—C.R. Bryan