

# **Contemporary Mystic Christianity**

## **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

### **Serpent Symbology**

*Genesis 3:1-5*

*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

*And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:*

*But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die,*

*And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*

*For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*

The serpent, a symbol common to all world religions, represents the serpentine or kundalini fire-force coiled and sleeping in the body of man. In this universal application it signifies an inner power which caused his original downfall and also the power by which he accomplishes his regeneration. It is the power which may lead him to greater light and life or to death and destruction according to whether it is used wisely or unwisely.

When the serpent force is directed downward for the gratification of sensual desire, the inevitable result is sorrow, pain, disease and death. Directed upward to the head, the spinal fire brings regeneration and builds the deathless body of the soul. While wandering in the wilderness the Israelites suffered from the poisonous bites of serpents that crawled in the dust (earthly sensualism) but were healed by the selfsame serpents when uplifted (regeneration through spiritual aspiration).

Thus the serpent symbol, in itself, represents neither good nor evil but a dual power that can be used for either. In ancient Mystery Schools it was used as a symbol of wisdom for this reason. It for the same reason signified priestly powers. Druid priests were called serpents. The Grecian Cadmus and his wife, whose lives in many ways parallel those of Abraham and Sarah, became serpent Initiates. According to Clement of Alexandria, the word Heva, meaning female serpent was used in magical incantation. Many pre-Christian symbols depict Eve accompanied by a male serpent.

The role which the Lucifers played in causing the Fall of man, with its consequent sorrow and suffering, is one reason for an otherwise unaccountable conscious and subconscious aversion that almost everyone has toward the entire serpent genus.

In Egyptian Temples Lucifer was represented by figures half serpent and half human. These representations were sometimes grotesquely hideous. In this respect they share characteristics of the Satanic guise in which he is usually depicted in the gallery of Christian demonology.

Mythology embodies many references to the serpent mystery. The Greek legend of Persephone relates how the love God, Cupid, prevails upon the innocent maiden to gather the narcissus assuring her that by so doing the wisdom of the gods would be revealed to her. No sooner had she done so than the underworld opened before her and Pluto, the God of death and purgatory, snatched her away to become queen of his netherland.

The way of freedom from captivity by the senses, as symbolized by Persephone's emergence from the underworld of Pluto, was taught to the Greeks through the Temple Teachings of the Eleusinian Mysteries. It conveys the same symbolic truth as does the serpent story in Genesis. As long as love was a pure expression of soul communion, man lived in a heavenly state of consciousness. When this love became

tinged with desire and passion, spiritual consciousness was darkened and man descended into lower, denser states of matter wherein he experienced pain, poverty, and death. Whereas in his innocence he was "naked" and "not ashamed", he "hid from the presence of the Lord" as soon as this innocence was lost.

The degrees of Initiation outlined in the life of the Master Christ Jesus rest upon this regenerative work. The principal incidents in His life correspond to the awakening of certain psychic centers in the body as a result of lifting the spinal spirit-force. When this fire-force touched His heart, He knew the joys of the Baptism; when it passed farther upward to His head, He carried the cross up Golgotha; and when it ascended into the pineal and pituitary glands, He entered into the glory of the Resurrection.

— ***Corinne Heline***