

This symbol, the circle surmounting the equiarmed cross, is one of the oldest known to us and is still, of course, in regular use in astrology as the sign for Venus and in biology as the sign of the female. In astrology, the planetary signs are composed of three symbols; the circle, the crescent and the cross, associated respectively with Divine Spirit, human spirit and matter. Speculation can begin from this basis.

Clearly the first idea derived from the symbol is that of the complete domination of Deity over the world of matter - the highest state of existence and the goal of every human soul.

In another sense, the symbol stands for the Goddess as Mother and Creatrix. The circle - equivalent to the full moon - signifies completion, fullness, life and light, and is thus appropriate to the Mother, Who is the breath or manifestation of the absolutely Divine. The equiarmed cross can suggest universality - again associated with the Mother - and also matter in its highest form, as Her divine creation. The symbol as a whole thus represents the state existing before the turning of part of creation from the Creatrix - that state of complete communion to which we aspire to return. It is difficult for us to recognise the reality of Perfection and to know that each soul has participated in Perfection and rejected it. Easier by far is it to believe that we have been continually ascending from our first beginnings, that the human soul and human society have evolved and are evolving by their own momentum towards perfection. The recognition of a past involvement in Perfection teaches us that the journey of the soul is a personal one and determined by our choices. Only then can we make our choices freely.

The symbol thus represents the true hope of the human soul; the certainly of personal union with our Blessed Lady. For what has existed beyond time and space exists forever - separation from the Goddess is only on the material plane, which will exist only as long as it takes for every soul to transcend it into that perfect union beyond.

The circle over the cross also symbolises the Goddess as Vaid - Princess of the World and Queen of Heaven. The moon is the particular symbol of the Daughter, and its invisible control over nature is a shadow of Her sovereignty over us all. This idea is beautifully expressed in the words of the prayer: "Your hand governs the tides of the sea and Your glance commands the tempest. At the sound of Your voice the stars move in the course that you have appointed to them, and each season reigns over the earth in its turn." The equiarmed cross represents the death of our Lady in the descent into the material, and the spreading of Divine manifestation in all four directions of fallen creation which was softened by that death. The complete symbol celebrates Her resurrection and return to full majesty.

This symbol, which has such a deep meaning when applied to spirit or Deity, has for a long time been used to represent the female principle. The female principle is the triumph of spirit over matter, and it is this principle which we must develop in ourselves and in the community. Its opposite, the male principle, is represented by the sign of Mars - the equiarmed cross (now transformed into an arrow) above the circle. This is significant of the dominance of matter over

spirit. A complete domination would be impossible, but there is a partial one, as the cross is set at an angle. It is this that we see when the male principle is highly developed; an increasing acceleration towards materialism and alienation; the tendency to objectivise, to impersonalise the world; the valuing of abstracts such as the state, society, the 'people,' and universalistic systems; the worshipping of physical strength, size, violence and a technologically oriented science. The other main masculine symbol also represents matter in its lowest aspect, its spiritual dimension eliminated. This is the Tau (?) in which the upper portion of the cross is missing, and the lower portion extended. The Latin or Christian cross with its long lower arm also reflects this symbolism. Both of these are regarded as symbols of death. The changing of the equilateral cross to an arrow in the sign of Mars (in Roman myth a god of war) is similar; the upper portion again is missing, the lower portion extended and the arms angled downwards. It is interesting to remember the contrast between Crete and her patriarchal neighbours on the subject of violence and war, and the complete lack of evidence for violent death or warfare in the excavations of Neolithic matriarchal Catal Huyuk.

There is great need for the feminisation of individuals and society; the male principle must be rejected in both. It must also be recognised that this is not a rejection of strength, energy, intelligence, capability - all those things which have been falsely identified exclusively with the male principle in a masculinist society. On the contrary, on identifying these qualities with the female principle we see them in their most positive aspects, and not distorted into brutality, aggression, barren intellectualism and so on, which are typical manifestations of the masculinist structure. We must all work to make the symbol of Venus a symbol of the coming spiritual era.