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Mandala Symbolism

A mandala is defined by the dictionary as any of various geometric designs (usually circular) symbolizing the universe; used chiefly in Hinduism and Buddhism as an aid to meditation. While this definition is accurate, it is incomplete. Mandala sand paintings can be found in the United States produced by the Navaho Native Americans.



The picture above is a Tibetan sand painted mandala. The circle containing the square or four directions is a universal practice. The deity, or a symbol of the deity is represented in the exact center or middle of the mandala. Notice the Navaho mandala shown in the next column. The circle with the four cardinal directions is again depicted, this time by a Navaho shaman.



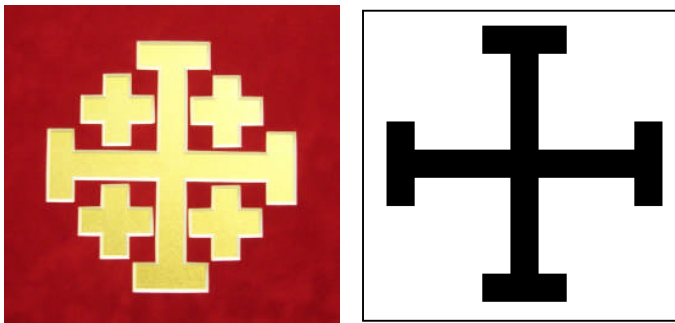
The first person to begin to notice this universal pattern in a modern sense was Swiss psychiatrist Dr. Karl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Jung realized that beyond the religious implications, these mandalas represented psychic symbols of wholeness and health. They were geometric symbols of psychic circuitry. They were equal lateral in nature rather than elliptical or distorted imbalanced shapes, which would otherwise suggest psychic conflict.

Jung noticed that during dream therapy with his patients, many times amounting to three hundred dreams or more, that when a conflict was resolving forever, a mandala appeared within the dreamscape. This archetypal pattern could be four people sitting at a square table, not a rectangle, with a round bowl of liquid in the middle of the table all perfectly balanced equilaterally. At this point the psychic problem was healed

for life and would never return. The patient did not have to be aware of this to receive its benefits and very likely never noticed the symbol itself.

The Christian Mandala

Jung discovered that this mandala like psychic balance or distortion represented in dreams was also present in architecture and religious iconography. In fact, Jung proposed that the historical elongation of the Christian cross in Western history was directly related to the struggle between spirit and matter in Western theology and psychology.



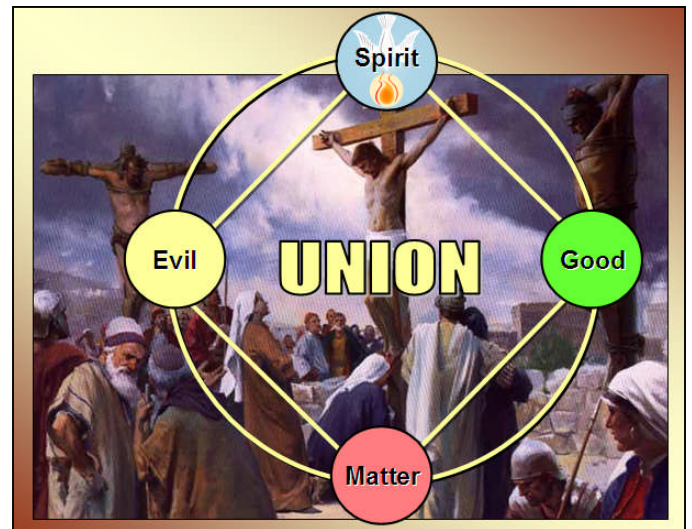
These two examples of the Jerusalem cross-shown above represent symbols of psychic and spiritual wholeness. They are the oldest and original shapes of the Christian cross and from an equilateral geometric perspective they are balanced. They represent a balance between the opposites: spirit/matter, good/bad.

As Western humanity developed, the exaggeration between spirit and matter became personified and expressed itself in time as an elongated cross. The elongated cross, projected itself away from the earth and towards the sky or heaven. The examples shown in the next column show this quite clearly. As philosophy, science, and religion began to evolve, Western mind

body dualism could be found in the iconography of history.



This exaggeration between spirit and matter was directly translated to culture with the suppression of women: the human representatives of matter to the Western psyche. You see this most clearly with the crucifixion of Christ graphic shown below.



This painting expresses the resolution to the *conflict of the opposites* that plagues the Western psyche. Christ remains suspended between heaven and earth, and between good and evil. We have the Mary's and other women at the foot of the cross representing matter and the Earth below. At the zenith of the cross we have the father in heaven looking down and representing spirit separate from matter.

Representing the polarity between good and evil we have the good thief and the evil thief on either side of the cross of Christ. This painting does not represent the victory of good over evil or spirit over matter. Rather, this painting graphically represents the *Union of the Opposites*. This is the true victory of Christ restoring to the Western psyche the One Presence behind all reality. This is why he is suspended between the opposites. Christ symbolically unites all the opposites through his sacrifice on the cross.

Atonement = At One-Ment

This is the great truth that has been taught universally for ages. This is the true meaning of the atonement. It is the reconciliation of the illusion of all opposites to the pre-existent eternal unity of all things, the One Presence, the At One-Ment of all things.

Behind all conflict is the one truth, which is: *we are one*. This unity of all things is reflected in the great entanglement at the beginning of all creation known as the big bang by our scientist. The whole universe comes from a point in space that is 10^{-33} centimeters in size, smaller than the point of a straight pin!

Finally, the reason for the Christian axiom to, "Love your enemies" may be further understood by realizing the great presence underlying the unity of all things. That great presence is your true self. Thus we are the Creation, the Creator, and the Created, a Holy Trinity united as one. Armed with this understanding, the circle is closed and the Christian Mandala is formed

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