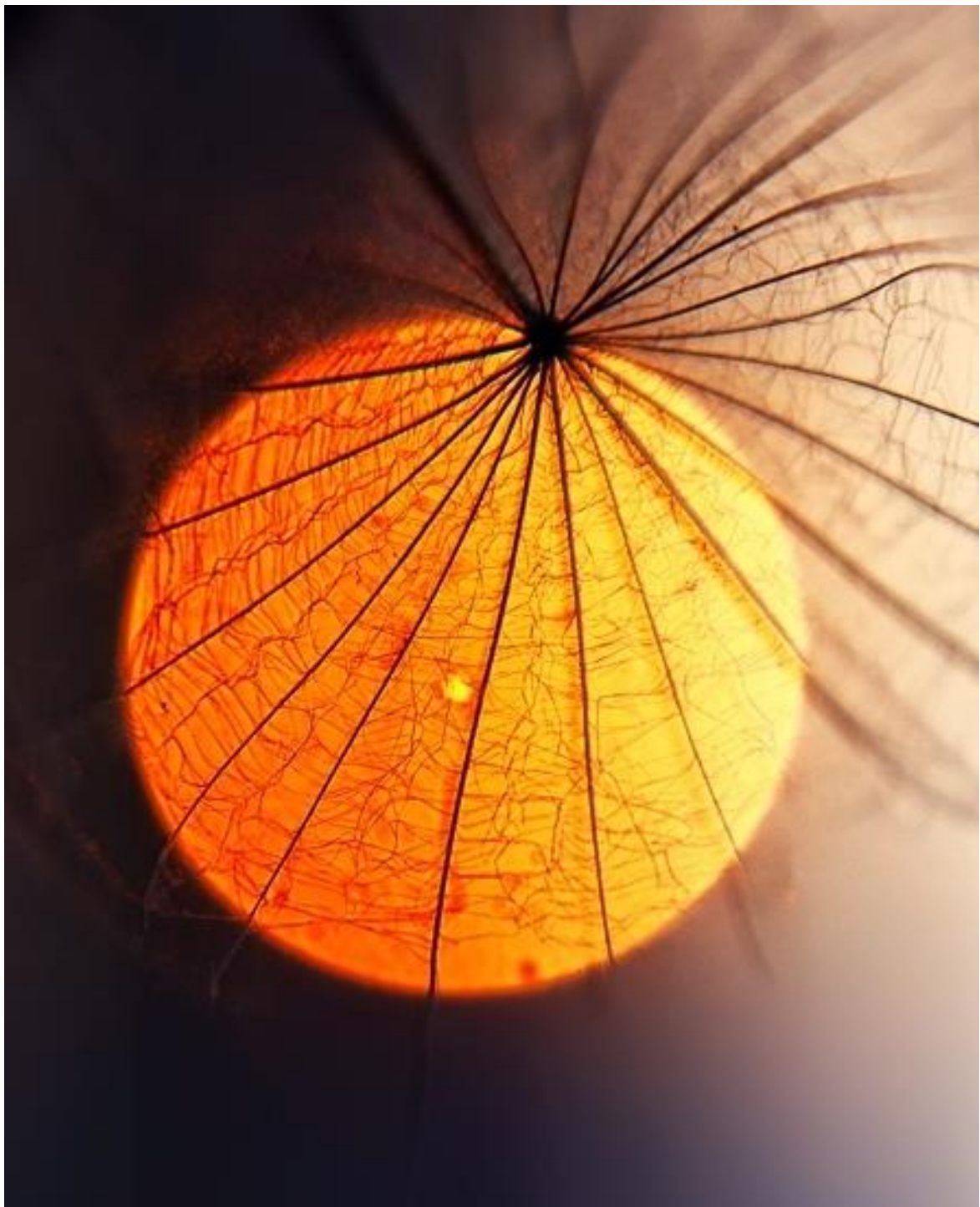


*The Bulgarian Christians have  
preserved Ancient Sun Worship*



## Opening thoughts from Timaeus

Next, He [the Second God] split all this that He had put together into two parts lengthwise; and then He laid the twain one against the other, the middle of one to the middle of the other, like a great cross; and bent either of them into a circle, and join them, each to itself and also to the other, at a point opposite to where they had first been laid together. And He compassed them about with the motion that revolves in the same spot continually, and He made the one circle outer and the other inner. And the outer motion He ordained to be the Motion of the Same, and the inner motion the Motion of the Other. And He made the Motion of the Same to be toward the right along the side, and the Motion of the Other to be toward the left along the diagonal;<sup>1</sup> and He gave the sovereignty<sup>2</sup> to the Revolution of the Same and of the Uniform. For this alone He suffered to remain uncloven,<sup>3</sup> whereas He split the inner Revolution in six places into seven unequal circles, according to each of the intervals of the double and triple intervals,<sup>4</sup> three double and three triple.<sup>5</sup> These two circles then He appointed to go in contrary directions; and of the seven circles into which He split the inner circle, He appointed three to revolve at an equal speed, the other four<sup>6</sup> to go at speeds equal neither with each other nor with the speed of the aforesaid three, yet moving at speeds the ratios of which one to another are those of natural integers.<sup>7</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> He now tilts the inner band, so that it makes an oblique angle with the outer, which is set at the horizontal; from which we see that the Revolution of the Same represents the celestial Equator, moving “horizontally to the right” (from East to West), and the Revolution of the Other represents the Ecliptic, which moves in a contrary direction to the Equator (from West to East), and at an angle to it. The Ecliptic He divides into seven, to represent the seven planets.

<sup>2</sup> [sovereignty]

<sup>3</sup> [not split]

<sup>4</sup> viz. 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 27.

<sup>5</sup> viz. 2, 4, 8 double; 3, 9, 27 triple.

<sup>6</sup> The three are Sun, Venus, Mercury; the four Moon, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn.

<sup>7</sup> Plato, *Timaeus* 36b-d; tr. Lamb

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**P**ERHAPS THE MOST WIDESPREAD and universal among the symbols in the old astronomical systems, which have passed down the stream of time to our century, and have left traces everywhere in the Christian religion as elsewhere — are the Cross and the Fire — the latter, the emblem of the Sun. The ancient Āryans had them both as the symbols of Agni. Whenever the ancient Hindu devotee desired to worship Agni — says É. Burnouf<sup>1</sup> — he arranged two pieces of wood in the form of a cross, and, by a peculiar whirling and friction obtained fire for his sacrifice. As a symbol, it is called *Svastika*, and, as an instrument manufactured out of a sacred tree and in possession of every Brahmin, it is known as *Arani*.

The Scandinavians had the same sign and called it Thor's Hammer, as bearing a mysterious magneto-electric relation to Thor, the god of thunder, who, like Jupiter armed with his thunderbolts, holds likewise in his hand this ensign of power, over not only mortals but also the mischievous spirits of the elements, over which he presides. In Masonry it appears in the form of the Grand Master's mallet; at Allahabad it may be seen on the Fort as the Jaina Cross, or the Talisman of the Jaina Kings; and the gavel of the modern judge is no more than this *crux dissimulata* — as de Rossi, the archaeologist calls it; for the gavel is the sign of power and strength, as the hammer represented the might of Thor, who, in the Norse legends splits a rock with it, and kills the Midgard snake. Schliemann found it in *terra cotta* disks, on the site, as he believes, of ancient Troy, in the lowest stratum of his excavations; which indicated, according to Dr. Lundy, “an Āryan civilization long anterior to the Greek — say from two to three thousand years B.C.” Burnouf calls it the oldest form of the cross known, and affirms that it is found personified in the ancient religion of the Greeks under the figure of Prometheus “the fire-bearer,” crucified on Mount Caucasus, while the celestial bird — the *Śyena* of the Vedic hymns — daily devours his entrails. Boldetti<sup>2</sup> gives a copy from the painting in the cemetery of St. Sebastian, representing a Christian convert and grave-digger, named Diogenes, who wears on both his legs and right arm the signs of the *Svastika*.<sup>3</sup> The Mexicans and the Peruvians had it, and it is found as the sacred Tau in the oldest tombs of Egypt.

It is, to say the least, a strange coincidence, remarked even by some Christian clergymen, that *Agnus Dei*, the Lamb of God, should have the symbols, identical with the Hindu God Agni. While *Agnus Dei* expiates and takes away the sins of the world, in one religion, the God *Agni*, in the other, likewise expiates sins against the gods, man, the manes, the soul, and repeated sins; as shown in the six prayers accompanied by six oblations.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *La Science des Religions*, ch. XIII, pp. 187-88

<sup>2</sup> M.A. Boldetti, *Osservazioni sopra i cimenterj de' santi martiri, ed antichi cristiani di Roma, etc.*, Rome, 1720, Part. I, 15, p. 60

<sup>3</sup> [See J. P. Lundy, *Monumental Christianity*, p. 17. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

<sup>4</sup> H.T. Colebrooke, *Essays on the Religion and Philosophy of the Hindus*, London, 1837, Vol. I, p. 190. [In the one-volume ed. of 1858, this occurs on p. 119. It is an essay originally published in the *Asiatic Researches*, Calcutta, 1801, Vol. VII, pp. 232-85. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

If, then, we find these two — the Cross and the Fire — so closely associated in the esoteric symbolism of nearly every nation, it is because on the combined powers of the two rests the whole plan of the universal laws. In astronomy physics, chemistry, in the whole range of natural philosophy, in short, they always come out as the invisible cause and the visible result; and only metaphysics and alchemy — or shall we say *Metachemistry*, since we prefer coining a new word to shocking sceptical ears? — can fully and conclusively solve the mysterious meaning. An instance or two will suffice for those who are willing to think over hints.

The Central Point, or the great central sun of the Kosmos, as the Kabbalists call it, is the Deity. It is the point of intersection between the two great conflicting powers — the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which drive the planets into their elliptical orbits, that make them trace a cross in their paths through the Zodiac. These two terrible, though as yet hypothetical and imaginary powers, preserve harmony and keep the Universe in steady, unceasing motion; and the four bent points of the Svastika typify the revolution of the Earth upon its axis. Plato calls the Universe a “blessed god” *which was made in a circle and decussated in the form of the letter X.*<sup>1</sup> So much for astronomy. In Masonry the Royal Arch degree retains the cross as the triple Egyptian Tau. It is the mundane circle with the astronomical cross upon it rapidly revolving; the perfect square of the Pythagorean mathematics in the scale of numbers, as its occult meaning is interpreted by Cornelius Agrippa. Fire is heat — the central point; the perpendicular ray represents the male element or spirit; and the horizontal one the female element — or matter. Spirit vivifies and fructifies the matter, and everything proceeds from the central Point, the focus of Life, and Light, and Heat, represented by the terrestrial fire. So much, again, for physics and chemistry, for the field of analogies is boundless, and Universal Laws are immutable and identical in their outward and inward applications. Without intending to be disrespectful to anyone, or to wander far away from truth, we think we may say that there are strong reasons to believe that in their original sense the Christian Cross, as the cause, and Eternal torment by Hell Fire — as the direct effect of negation of the former — have more to do with these two ancient symbols than our Western theologians are prepared to admit. If Fire is the Deity with some heathens, so in the Bible, God is likewise the Life and the Light of the World; if the Holy Ghost and Fire cleanse and purify the Christian, on the other hand Lucifer is also Light, and called the “Son of the morning star.”<sup>2</sup>

Turn wherever we will, we are sure to find these conjoint relics of ancient worship with almost every nation and people. From the Āryans, the Chaldaeans, the Zoroastrians, Peruvians, Mexicans, Scandinavians, Celts, and ancient Greeks and Latins, it has descended in its completeness to the modern Parsī. The Phoenician Kabeiroi and the Greek Dioscuri are partially revived in every temple, cathedral, and village church; while, as will now be shown, the Christian Bulgarians have even preserved the sun worship in full.

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<sup>1</sup> [Cf. Thomas Taylor, *The Works of Plato*, Vol. II, pp. 483, 487 <on *Timaeus*, 36b>]

<sup>2</sup> [Most likely a misprint for either “son of the morning,” or “morning star.” Cf. *Revelation* xxii, 16. — Boris de Zirkoff.]

It is more than a thousand years since this people, who, emerging from obscurity, suddenly became famous through the late Russo-Turkish war, were converted to Christianity. And yet they appear none the less pagans than they were before, for this is how they meet Christmas and the New Year's day. To this time they call this festival *Survaki*, as it falls in with the festival in honour of the ancient Slavonian god *Surva*. In the Slavonian mythology this deity — *Surva* evidently identical with the Aryan *Surya*, the sun, is the god of heat, fertility, and abundance. The celebration of this festival is of an immense antiquity, as, far before the days of Christianity, the Bulgarians worshipped *Surva*, and consecrated New Year's day to this god, praying him to bless their fields with fertility, and send them happiness and prosperity. This custom has remained among them in all its primitive heathenism, and though it varies according to localities, yet the rites and ceremonies are essentially the same.

On the eve of New Year's day the Bulgarians do no work, and are obliged to fast. Young betrothed maidens are busy preparing a large *platiy* (cake) in which they place roots and young shoots of various forms, to each of which a name is given according to the shape of the root. Thus, one means the "house," and another represents the "garden"; others again, the mill, the vineyard, the horse, a cat, a hen, and so on, according to the landed property and worldly possessions of the family. Even articles of value such as jewellery and bags of money are represented in this emblem of the horn of abundance. Besides all these, a large and ancient silver coin is placed inside the cake; it is called *babka* and is tied two ways with a red thread, which forms a cross. This coin is regarded as the symbol of fortune.

After sunset, and other ceremonies, including prayers addressed in the direction of the departing luminary, the whole family assemble about a large round table called *paralya*, on which are placed the above-mentioned cake, dry vegetables, corn, wax taper, and, finally, a large censer containing incense of the best quality to perfume the god. The head of the household, usually the oldest in the family either the grandfather, or the father himself — taking up the censer with the greatest veneration, in one hand, and the wax taper in the other, begins walking about the premises, incensing the four corners, beginning and ending with the East, and reads various invocations, which close with the Christian "Our Father who art in Heaven," addressed to *Surva*. The taper is then laid away to be preserved throughout the whole year, till the next festival. It is thought to have acquired marvellous healing properties, and is lighted only upon occasions of family sickness, in which case it is expected to cure the patient.

After this ceremony, the old man takes his knife and cuts the cake into as many slices as there are members of the household present. Each person, upon receiving his or her share, makes haste to open and search the piece. The happiest of the lot, for the ensuing year, is he or she who gets the part containing the old coin crossed with the scarlet thread; he is considered the elect of *Surva*, and every one envies the fortunate possessor. Then in order of importance come the emblems of the house, the vineyard, and so on; and according to his findings, the finder reads his horoscope for the coming year. Most unlucky he who gets the cat: he turns pale and trembles. Woe to him and misery, for he is surrounded by enemies, and has to prepare for great trials.

At the same time, a large log which represents a flaming altar, is set up in the chimney place, and fire is applied to it. This log burns in honour of *Surva*, and is intended as an oracle for the whole house. If it burns the whole night through till morning without the flame dying out, it is a good sign; otherwise, the family prepares to see death that year, and deep lamentations end the festival.

Neither the *momche* (young bachelor), nor the *moma* (the maiden), sleep that night. At midnight begins a series of soothsaying, magic, and various rites, in which the burning logs plays the part of the oracle. A young bud thrown into the fire and bursting with a loud snap, is a sign of happy and speedy marriage, and *vice versa*. Long after midnight, the young couples leave their respective homes, and begin visiting their acquaintances, from house to house, offering and receiving congratulations, and rendering thanks to the deity. These deputy couples are called the *Survakari*, and each male carries a large branch ornamented with red ribbons, old coins, and the image of *Surva*, and as they wend along sing in chorus. Their chant is as original as it is peculiar and merits translation, though, of course, it must lose in being rendered into a foreign language. The following stanzas are addressed by them to those they visit:

Surva, Surva, Lord of the Season,  
Happy New Year mayest thou send;  
Health and fortune on this household,  
Success and blessings till next year.

With good crops and full ears,  
With gold and silk, and grapes and fruits;  
With barrels full of wine, and stomachs full,  
You and your house be blessed by the God . . .  
His blessing on you all. — Amen! Amen! Amen!

The singing *Survakari*, recompensed for their good wishes with a present at every house, go home at early dawn . . . And this is how the symbolical exoteric Cross and Fire worship of old Āryāvarta go hand in hand in Christian Bulgaria . . . <sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (CROSS AND FIRE) II pp. 143-49