

Diamond as a symbol of human virtues



“Only the truth hidden in the diamond is eternal and supreme” - H.P.Blavatsky (1)

Chapter A – The Symbolic Language

The symbolic language was wide spread in the ancient times. The people of different cultures knew how to use nature as a mirror to internal processes, which are sometimes invisible. It was important due to its ability to synthesize the different aspects of a human and of nature. Animals, plants, precious stones, elements of nature and man-made symbols, were used as carriers of meaning beyond the visible forms. More than once we can find amazing parallels between different cultures which were far apart by time and geography, indicate on similar meaning. The symbolic language is not wide spread today, but maybe it is the richest language made by man, and its remnants fill our reality today.

With deeper observation one can say that wisdom was not created by man but was always there, waiting to be unveiled. It was already said that nature is the greatest book of wisdom. According to the studies we inherit from Jorge Angel Livraga (J.A.L.), the founder of New Acropolis, the word “symbol” originated from the Latin language meaning “holding”, “carrying” or “containing something”. The meaning of the word is emphasized by the content itself: that which is hidden and carried by the symbol. (2)

Wise men and philosophers from ancient times describe the symbol as something basic and important. Dr M. Roso de luna said that a “symbol is an abstraction, synthetic expression which says nothing to the one which is not familiar with the secret, but uncovers a wonderful universe to the wise man.” (1) Plato said 2500 years ago, “God creates all the things and when they appear firstly, they appear on the base of symbols of numbers and geometric forms.” (2)

“That is,” said J.A.L, “why the wisdom of symbols is the wisdom of everything, because everything is just an external appearance of something internal. It is exactly like the footsteps in

the mud which are only the symbol of what was happening in its place before.” (2)

For instance, the fire which in many cultures symbolized wisdom. It is the same fire that Prometheus gave to the people. But is it only a physical fire? Or maybe it is also the fire of the higher consciousness, the fire inside of us which shines and clears the darkness; the fire that burns the illusion and therefore can be dangerous to those who identify with the temporary world. It is the fire that heats and is full of mystery; it is the internal fire that like the external one is always aiming to go upward, to the sky.

Therefore, the symbol is like a mirror, that allows us to look through and identify the values that we need to develop inside us. A mirror that allows us to see the invisible as it pronounces in the visible world. The symbol is what reminds us. It is like a filter, which allows us to imagine and develop intuition of the essence which we can't see.

One can always look at everything with materialistic eyes and deny any meaning that goes beyond the dry facts. Maybe this is the great illness of our world today, but it is an illusion that will pass, just as darkness is the lack of light and has no self-existence. The difference between living in a mysterious world full of meaning, rich with beauty, which moves towards some purpose, and an empty world, without meaning, ugly, without any purpose, is inside our consciousness and our attitude towards all things. And surely there is Truth, which is not dependent on theories.

Our ancestors, who worked with symbols, deeply explored the universe. Indeed they didn't have the technical terminology that we have today, but they did not understand the laws of nature less than we do today.

When I first read about a new patent of the Department of Mechanical Engineering of Ohio University, I was amazed to find out how deep symbols can be. The substance they invented was a hydrophobic surface that imitates the texture of a lotus leaf. The oily leaf is covered with a very thin layer of wax. When looking through a microscope, one may find a very unique surface with small bulges, due to which the water slides and look like drops. This texture allows the plant to stay clean and free from water and dust all the time. (3)

I have no doubt that our ancestors who saw the lotus as a model of cleanliness and purity (the pure flower which can grow in the swamp), didn't know about the microscopic structure of the leaf, but they knew how to deeply observe nature and find there the laws of life as it pronounce in every living creature.

These are just scientific explanations to prove the laws that have always existed in nature and seen only by the eyes of the one who knows how to observe nature.

Moreover, it emphasizes the deep dimension of the symbol and it teaches us that the more we explore more aspects of the symbol, the more reflections of the virtues of life we will find, which are sometimes invisible to us at first glance.

So, a symbol can help us achieve an attitude, even if limited, towards the big enigma which lies

under the surface. A symbol is like a ladder that allows us to climb towards the top of opportunities.

Another good symbol is Gold.

Gold which is a noble metal (resistant to corrosion or oxidation), was represented through the history of human beings, as a very powerful symbol of purity. Gold, like others substances, was compared by many philosophers, especially Plato, to the stage that Man should reach in order to touch happiness.

This man, called the “man of gold”, understands the laws of nature and therefore can act according to them. He is stable and independent and no external circumstances can take him out of the state of perfect balance. He is noble (=whole) exactly as the metal gold is a noble metal. He is shining and illuminates his surroundings all the time. Like the metal gold, he is wrapped with a sacred aura. He is a unique man and he becomes so, after a long process of true alchemy. What the alchemist are trying to do with metals, the man of gold does with his different components until he succeeds to purify himself into a nobleman and purify his soul. This is a long battle to control all the human weaknesses and defects, and strengthening all the noble virtues. (4)

From the endless number of symbols that exist in our world, I will use the symbol of the Diamond in this work, as one of the most beautiful and deep symbols that allows us to understand some of the human virtues that we should develop in our lives.

Chapter B: The Diamond

What is a diamond? A precious stone, inlaid in a jewel in a fashionable way? A unique substance that contains unique physical and chemical characteristics? Valuable merchandise, which is being traded in the world market, moving between the hands of the merchants, the polishers, hard workers, jewelers, excited customers?

I am sure there are additional aspects but maybe the most interesting aspect lies in the symbolism of the diamond as representing the evolutionary process of the human being.

In order to begin and understand what a diamond is, and why in so many civilizations it symbolized the evolutionary process of man, we should begin from the physical-chemical aspect, continue through the historical aspect and lastly go through its characteristics as a symbol.

The physical-chemical characteristics of the diamond

The diamond is a natural mineral composed of one element: carbon.

Carbon is a chemical base that exists naturally in large quantities and it is one of the basic components of all organic materials in the living body (with oxygen, hydrogen and nitrogen).

In nature, carbon exists in two major forms:

1. Diamond – the most solid mineral known to us, that is organized in a tetrahedral structure.
2. Graphite – one of the softest materials, which is organized in a two-dimensional planer structure.

Meaning, two substances, diamond and graphite, made from the same carbon base and therewithal so many differences existing between them, some visible and some invisible. Most of the differences are due to the internal arrangement of the atoms and the electrons.

A diamond is transparent and emits light while graphite is gray-black and opaque. A diamond is hard and solid while graphite is soft and easily can be smeared. A diamond does not conduct electric current while graphite does.

The arrangement of a diamond contains one layer called “covalent atomic grid” (organized crystalloid structure composed of atoms connected with covalent bonds). In this structure the substance is always solid and well organized. Every atom has 4 covalent bonds, which are very strong and cannot be broken easily. In contrast, graphite contains several layers connected by simple bonds (that is the reason why it is easily smeared).

Furthermore, in a diamond, every atom of carbon is at the same distance from its neighbor; therefore the atoms cannot move and the diamond becomes the most solid matter with a very high melting point. In graphite every atom has one electron which is not coupled, and therefore it has a capability of movement, and the substance is very soft.

A diamond crystal, which exists in nature, usually appears in a double tetrahedral structure (octahedron) – this is a refined structure having 8 facets, and looks like two square pyramids with equilateral triangular facets. This structure is very stable and with very low energy level due to the fact that its pairs of electrons in the covalent bonds are far from each other maximally. The stability of the structure is what gives the diamond the solidness and hardness.

The octahedron is one of the five “regular solids”, also called “platonic bodies”. Plato drew a relationship between the first four polyhedrons and the four basic elements (fire, air, water and earth) and said that the tetrahedral (4 faces) is related to fire.

The formation process of the diamond

Diamonds are created in the depth of the earth, 150-250 km under the earth’s surface, and under temperatures of 1000-2000 degrees Celsius. These conditions exist in the mantle of the earth, beneath the most ancient continents. Apparently, diamonds being created from magma rich in carbon, are named kimberlit. After being created, diamonds can exist a long time in the mantle of the earth until they rise to the surface by the explosion of the magma. After the kimberlit is wearing out, the diamonds wander in the rivers and sometimes create secondary sediments in the erosion.

When the diamond exists in nature, it is not at all shining and illuminated. It takes a long process of cleaning and polishing to emphasize its special characteristics.

The history of the diamond

In order to understand the history of the diamond, we need to begin with the name itself. Within the name lies its strength and the symbolism.

The name of this matter in Sanskrit is “Dyu” which means, shiny and illuminated creature - and it was a symbol for wisdom and light.

Some historians say that already since 19th century BC diamonds were well known in India, and for a long time Indians brought them to other parts of the world. There is a Greek story which tells of the intention of Alexander the Great to reach the place where diamonds were being created. It was believed that it was somewhere in the Indus Valley.

The western origin of the name diamond came from the Greek term “Adamas”, meaning “the one which can not be conquered” or “the one that is without defect and which is unbeatable”. Later, the term “Adamas” became “Adamant” or “Diamante”, and then “Diamond”.

Since the beginning of time, precious stones and diamonds were attractive and interesting. Their main use was for religious and mystical ceremonies like one of the “Hoshen stones” worn by the Jewish high priest during ceremonies in the temple. Many of the ancient people used to think that the diamond has greater powers than any other stone, and has a big spiritual and physical influence on man. The diamond represented purity and innocence and was used as a protection against evil. The Romans considered diamonds protectors from madness, and ancient astrologers believed that it was special and influenced mainly people born under the influence of Mars - for them it was effective in strengthening mental concentration and loyalty.

Also, a diamond was considered to be a stone which gave courage, harmony and love, especially when worn on the left side of the body, because it was thought that the growing direction of the diamond is towards the north, which is the left side of the body when man faces East - the side of the rising sun. It was considered a universal medicine, protector against evil, removing fear, bringing victory, protecting against wild animals and helping man control desires and fantasies.

Diamonds became, through the years, the object of dreams, for people who desired happiness and wealth. For many it represented perfection. Kings wore it as a symbol of power, courage and wealth. The most wonderful jewels that were used by the kings and priests of the ancient times were used for different duties; not just for dressing up as we see today. Also, they didn't emphasize the worth of the stone but the opposite - the value of the jewel was in its symbolic content and the special role that it fulfilled when combined with others metals or stones.

The diamond symbolized, and still does, eternal love, and people believe that it has special characteristics of magic and cure. In past days they even used it as a love spell.

In the middle ages, it was believed that diamonds were “chips of the stars” or “the tears of the gods”, and were used as talismans on the battlefield.

The formation process of the diamond which begins from its detection in the depths of the earth, until the final shining shape, created in many cultures, urges deep observation and contemplation in order to explore the ideal archetypes reflected in nature existences.

Many cultures saw the diamond as a symbol for the evolutionary process of the human being. One of the most famous is the Tibetan philosophy which we know as the “Vajrayana”, or The Vehicle of the Diamond.

Chapter C: The diamond as a symbol for the evolutionary process of man and the human virtues he should develop

The movement of evolution and progress

If we believe that our world is moving towards a higher cause, we can see this movement as a progress and evolution. This description of the world is what Hindus call “Dharma”. Dharma , is the one law, the one direction and the one cause for existence. Everything is in an endless movement and change. Man himself is described as part of nature and existence, and therefore also in a process of evolution and change. The process of man is a process of developing self-awareness and human virtues. Man should transfer his identification from the personal and temporary which connect him to transient things, to identification with the eternal part of universal life, which lies in him, as in all living things. This process is undoubtedly, a revolution for man, an alchemic transmutation in which, as Plato said, man remembers the god within himself. He changes himself from the central ego that separates himself from the world, to a universal man that is not a slave of his personal desires.

The diamond, as a symbol, reflects the different levels of the spiritual potential. It begins from the most simple matter and becomes the highest and most majestic substance. Like a diamond, man has a direction and a path that he needs to go through. Like a diamond transforms itself from graphite, man should develop his internal qualities and reveal slowly the majestic potential within himself. When man sees the slow process of the fulfillment of the diamond, he, who is the disciple of life, will look for the nature of his eternal soul in every act and thought. This is a man who has transitioned from egoism to altruism, from self-concentration to self-control. He is the one that is widening himself.

This process is not an easy one. Man should disconnect his attachments with his ego, and become naked, without any defenses against the world. It obligates man to clean, step by step, every desire and every separation from other people. For that he needs time and a will of fire. The man that reincarnates countless times, in which he experiences the human life, polishes his qualities, cleaning his defects and changing his identity.

Like the diamond, which lies in the depths of the earth, hidden under layers of the matter, it appears slowly on the surface, and even then it is not beautiful and shiny. We have to clean it from all the mud that is stuck to it during the years and must reveal slowly its majestic light. In the same way, the human being’s internal qualities are hidden inside the deep envelope of matter, hidden under many layers of mud and dust, and there, like the diamond, it is invisible. It will be revealed only to the one who dares to look through the levels of the matter. It will be

revealed only to the one who dares to remove the layers of mud which are attached to it, only to he who dares to look for the invisible.

The virtue of order

The Greek philosopher Pythagoras teaches that the wisdom of man lies in his ability to learn the right virtues and to put them in the right order in matter.

Carbon begins as graphite and ends in its ultimate expression, as diamond. The main difference between graphite and the diamond is in the internal arrangement and organization. Therefore we can say that the diamond is a carbon that knows how to organize itself in the right manner. In the same way, the eternal light will not go through the ordinary man but through the man that knows to organize his personality and become like a diamond among the people.

Observation of a diamond can also show us the importance of the external shape. The spiritual process can be thought of sometimes, as a process in which to put aside the matter. A process like this will scorn all economic and existes needs, even though without food and other basic needs, we can't maintain a spiritual process for a long time. Or Ignorance from the need to express external beauty and esthetics in the surrounding, like we see some times in the radical's religious societies. It is true that the external form is not the main thing, but it is not insignificant. As every polisher knows, in order to make the diamond shiny and bright, he needs to cut, polish and find the right shape. Thus a man looking for the precious stone of human life shouldn't disconnect himself from his surroundings, but transform it to a more harmonic place. The surroundings is what enables the expression of the internal quality. A dirty container can never contain pure and clean water. Only order and beauty, expressed in the body, food, thoughts, and emotions and in the space of living, will invite internal beauty and harmony.

The crystals of a diamond are naturally arranged in a shape of a double pyramid. This shape reflects in many cultures as a cosmic principle: "as it is above, it is below" - meaning that there is unity in nature. The laws which occur in the macro-cosmos (universe) occur in the meso-cosmos (nature/city) and in the micro-cosmos (man). The laws of nature are the same laws which man needs to explore, and express in his life.

The virtue of purity

In order to emphasize the importance of the diamond as a symbol, we will observe, for a moment, the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Tibetan Buddhism is called "Vajrayana", meaning "the vehicle of the diamond". Directly from the name we can see that Tibetans gave great importance to the diamond as a symbol of the evolutionary process of the human being. The word "vajra" is from Sanskrit and has the same meaning as "dorje" in the Tibetan language. Both words are used when referring to a weapon which lies in the hands of God, and gives him the mysterious powers to push away bad influences. It is described like a "diamond wand", same as the wand of the Hindu god Indra which has the shape of the lightning. This is a mysterious wand of initiation and the man that can hold it is the man which has control on the "Sidhis", the high human capabilities. The man

that controls his capabilities was called “dorjesempa”, meaning the man that holds the diamond, or a man with the diamond soul. It hints that this is a man that expresses the capabilities of stability, solidness and transparency of the diamond.

This means that the “Vajrayana”, the diamond way of the Tibetan Buddhism, uses the diamond as an example of the evolutionary process of man. A process of cleaning and purification. A process of transmutation and change, in which man becomes transparent and illuminated. The diamond begins as black and changes its characteristics until it becomes transparent. The light which meets the diamond, meets the atoms which combine with it. These gentle vibrations are transferred inside the structure from one atom to another. The special structure of the diamond allows the white light which goes through it, to break and show a whole spectrum of wavelengths, which looks like a colorful rainbow. In the same way, man in the process of widening his consciences, turns from black, that swallows all light, to transparent which transfers the full light. In this way, one light flows always through the disciple which becomes like a shining diamond and that light is shown through every thought, emotion or act.

Sri-ram said in his book *The Way of Wisdom*, “We have to prepare ourselves, to develop our understanding and to raise our consciences. We need to become pure in order to attract this nature which lies inside of us. Then, this nature will express itself. We can’t enforce it by external acting and also we can’t hold it by specific action other than purify.” (5)

The purification is from egoism and from the lower self. Those patterns penetrate into human nature in an unconscious way and operate him in an indirect manner. But when everything that we call lower self, like ambitious, self glorify, desires, deceiving and others are disappearing, then the sky becomes bright and the nature of the human soul is shown with its beautiful qualities. Even if we are aware of one of these qualities, all the rest will follow. Because all of them awaken from the same state of mind. Therefore, when one has the tendency for beauty everything he will do, will be beautiful. In the same way, the tendency can be towards other values like justice, and then when it comes to action everything that this man will do, think and feel, will be right, beautiful, and just.

The Virtue of Lasting

A diamond is the most solid material in nature. This fact teaches us about a man who controls himself and becomes resistant to the material world around him. “Be like a headland of rock on which the waves break incessantly; but it stands fast and around it the seething of the water are sink to rest,” said the Caesar Marques Aurelius. (6)

The lasting of the diamond represent symbolically the lasting and unchanging quality of the archetypes of nature; eternal archetypes, eternal virtues, the eternal path which was always true and will always stay a true path for human beings. Diamonds exist in the depth of the earth but also on several distant meteorites, which leads to an understanding of the one cosmic evolutionary process.

The lasting of a diamond is characterized by its special ability to exist in very high temperatures, to be stable under the effect of any kind of acid or other corrosive material. One small diamond

localized under a small electric bridge, promises that it will never get warm and stop working. Because of that, we can find diamonds in many devices of NASA space agency. For example, a relatively large diamond, in a disc shape, was placed in a camera lens of a satellite sent to Mars. This means that almost without wearing out, the diamond keeps its quality and illuminates its surroundings. In the same way, the man that purifies his soul conquers a stable awareness. The inner potential begins to express and he illuminates his internal essence.

In the Tibetan book “Voice of Silence”, which is a manual for the disciple on the path, it is written:

“The light from the one master, the golden light of the spirit, which never extinguish, shines with its radiance rays on the disciple from the beginning. Its rays penetrate through the dark and dense clouds of the matter. Here and there, the rays illuminate him as the sun illuminates the earth through the thick jungle vegetation. But, oh disciple, if the flesh won’t become tolerant, the head become clear and the spirit become stable and pure like a shining diamond, the radiation won’t reach to the chamber of the heart. The light of the sun won’t warm the heart, and the ears will not hear the mystical voice of the height of the akashik...” (7)

The Diamond, is a very precious stone, not only in terms of value, but as a metaphor to the magic hidden in life. Its shining light can give us a reminder and proof of the inner alchemy, which allows man to reach his peaks. According to some philosophical theories from East and West, man by himself can change and emphasize his high qualities and beautifulness. It’s the diamond that gives us a reminder that such miracles exist, even though it is not a miracle in the sense that it is not natural, but that it is the miracle of life itself.