

Chapter 2

Lily

The lily, the rose, and the lotus are traditional symbols for our deepest spiritual self, our only true and immortal self, our inner God.

The imagery speaks clearly. A seed falls into the dark, slimy, rotting earth. A plant rises up and one day produces a breathtakingly beautiful and dazzlingly pure white flower that is in such complete contrast to the environment the seed was planted in.

This is not very flattering for us personally, but the idea is that we are the rotting earth and the flower is the potential Inner God in the heart. That's Lily Potter - Harry's mother.

The divine flower in the heart has been symbolised in many other ways in stories through the centuries. For example a familiar one is the Philosopher's Stone. The legend about this stone is that it can produce the elixir of life and can turn all other metals into gold. Here the symbolism is clear too. The elixir of life alludes to the property of the spiritual bud in the heart to give the bearer eternal life - if he uses the stone properly. Turning other metals into gold symbolises the same thing as the flower above, i.e. turning something worthless into something very beautiful. Gold is a very powerful symbol because it doesn't oxidise and so doesn't tarnish. There is an additional meaning to gold, because advanced seekers on the path of liberation have told us that when the flower in the heart has opened up fully and its heavenly fragrance has spread throughout the body, the aura of the seeker takes on an exquisite golden radiance. This is especially so around the head, and this is where the idea of the aureole or halo began. We can see this depicted in medieval paintings.

In my opinion Jo Rowling uses the symbol of the Philosopher's Stone in quite a different way than the above, though. She uses it to make the very opposite point! She uses it as occult symbolism and the elixir of life here means life in the physical body, and gold means wealth on earth. This is quite an unexpected use of symbolism, but extremely effective.

Another effective symbol for the immortal life in the heart is the seed. I quote from Meister Eckhart: *The seed of God is in us. Now the seed of a pear tree grows into a pear tree; and a hazel seed grows into a hazel tree; a seed of God grows into God.* What an effective symbol that is! We know that a seed is full of potential and that a small acorn can grow into a mighty oak which needs ten men to girth it.

The seed is especially interesting in discussing *Harry Potter*, because we know

that to create a plant, a seed has to die. Perhaps this is the message of why Lily sacrificed herself for Harry, symbolically speaking. The potential dies so the actuality can live.

If we compare *Harry Potter* to other stories we can see Lily represented in various ways. For example in Grimm's fairy tale, "Briar Rose", also known as "Sleeping beauty", we see another flower. Hidden behind impenetrable briars is a castle with a sleeping princess and a whole court, all asleep. If we can just accept that our self-centred life is the briars, we can awaken the "royal" life asleep in our heart. Royalty is another powerful symbol for the divine potential within. Many seekers have a suspicion that there's something special about them; that secretly they're royal. From an alchemical point of view that is actually true, for the child asleep behind the briars of our temporary existence is a prince or princess: a child of the King of Creation.

Another of Grimm's fairy tales, "The Glass Coffin", is similar to "Briar Rose". There the divine potential is a princess asleep in a glass coffin, and jars around her contain a miniature castle, servants and everything to do with life in a palace. When the lid is lifted the princess awakens, and the castle grows back to its real size, all symbols of the "Kingdom in the midst of you". This particular fairy tale is even more relevant to *Harry Potter*, for guess what brings the hero to the glass coffin? A stag! We'll come to that when we discuss James.

The inner God can also be symbolised by things like a diamond or another jewel. The diamond is very apt because its hardness and hence near indestructibility is a wonderful symbol for the immortality of the inner prince or princess.

Abstract things can be understood better (or only) by symbols. But please remember that symbols are just comparisons; they're not the thing itself!

The inner God is LIKE a seed in that it can "germinate" and grow according to its "genes". The inner God is LIKE a castle in that it's capable of self-supporting life full of richness, grandeur and beauty. The inner God is LIKE a prince or princess because it's a child of the King or Architect of the universe. It's LIKE a bud because out of it can unfold a flower of dazzling purity and beauty. But it's none of these.

Obviously it's not physical because we have had it through every incarnation. It's invisible, undetectable by science, and its existence is possibly denied by millions of people. Only its owner can detect it. How? By feeling that deep down he is royal. By suspecting that life on earth is not all there is. By being incessantly urged from within to seek for the purpose of life, for the causes behind the physical causes, for self-realisation as a spiritual being.

So what is it really? I think it can best be described as a Divine Thought-spark.

Anything God creates is everlasting and indestructible. However there is the possibility of a Divine Thought-spark developing according to the thought contained within, or of atrophying if its potential is not realised. Millions and millions of years ago the Spirit of God flashed like a lightning bolt through the universe and in its wake it left a sea of Thought-sparks. Each one of these is unique yet able to develop into a mighty god, an everlasting father, a Prince of Peace. Through a process that took an unimaginably long time, the sparks developed, and many of them grew into Sons of the Father in mind-boggling glory. But others chose to follow an experimental plan instead of the one written within their own beings. They "fell" into another universe and the thought-sparks atrophied back to a bare minimum. For those who like technical explanations; the Thought-spark is actually the mathematical centre of the microcosm we inhabit.

We all have within us something so ineffably precious, so utterly sublime, so inexpressibly supernal that it should make us feel our heart is filled with a swelling balloon as JK Rowling puts it. Just think: no matter what our physical circumstances, no matter what our role in life or where we live, we have the potential to open our hearts to the Lily within and give birth to Harry, who will go on a long and painful struggle to defeat the Voldemort within us, ending in total liberation and the restoration of the inner Prince as heir to the everlasting Kingdom.