

The Cosmic Tree and the Cherub as Agents of God's Glory in Ezekiel

An investigation into the ways archetypes connect the modern reader to the experience of Ezekiel and the Israelites during exile.

Sign vs. Symbol



Symbol



Symbol

Because there are innumerable things beyond the range of human understanding, we constantly use **symbolic terms** to represent concepts that **we cannot define or fully comprehend**. This is one reason that **all religions employ symbolic languages or images**.

--Carl Jung (Rollins, p. 99)

Archetype & Archetypal Image



Mary Cassatt – Mother and Child
<http://www.marycassatt.org>

Archetype & Archetypal Image

Whoever speaks in **primordial images** speaks with a **thousand voices**...he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and transitory into the real of the **ever-enduring**. He transmutes our personal destiny into the **destiny of mankind**....

-- Carl Jung, *Collected Works*, vol. 15, par. 129.



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Hero

The Divine Child

The Great Mother

Transformation

Death

Rebirth

Shadow

Wise Old Man/Wise

Woman

The Self

Tree Archetype



Cosmic Tree in the Old Testament

“The Lord God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the **tree of life in the middle of the garden**, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” (Gen. 2: 8-9)

COSMIC TREE



Cosmic Tree of Life

© Sue Wookey

<http://galleyhillart.blogspot.com/2012/05/cosmic-tree-of-life.html>

Walter Wink, *On Wrestling with God: Using Psychological Insights in Biblical Study.*

SACRED TREE -- ASSYRIA



Cedar of Lebanon



Ezekiel 31

5

So it **towered high**
above all the trees of the field;
its boughs grew large
and its **branches long,**
from abundant water in its shoots.

6

All the birds of the air
made their nests in its boughs;
under its branches all the animals of the field
gave birth to their young;
and **in its shade**
all great nations lived.

10

Therefore thus says the Lord God: **Because it towered high** and set its top among the clouds, and **its heart was proud of its height,**

11

I gave it into the hand of the prince of the nations; he has dealt with it as its wickedness deserves. I have cast it out.

12

Foreigners from the most **terrible of the nations have cut it down** and left it. On the mountains and in all the valleys its branches have fallen, and its boughs lie broken in all the watercourses of the land; and all the **peoples of the earth went away from its shade and left it.**

14

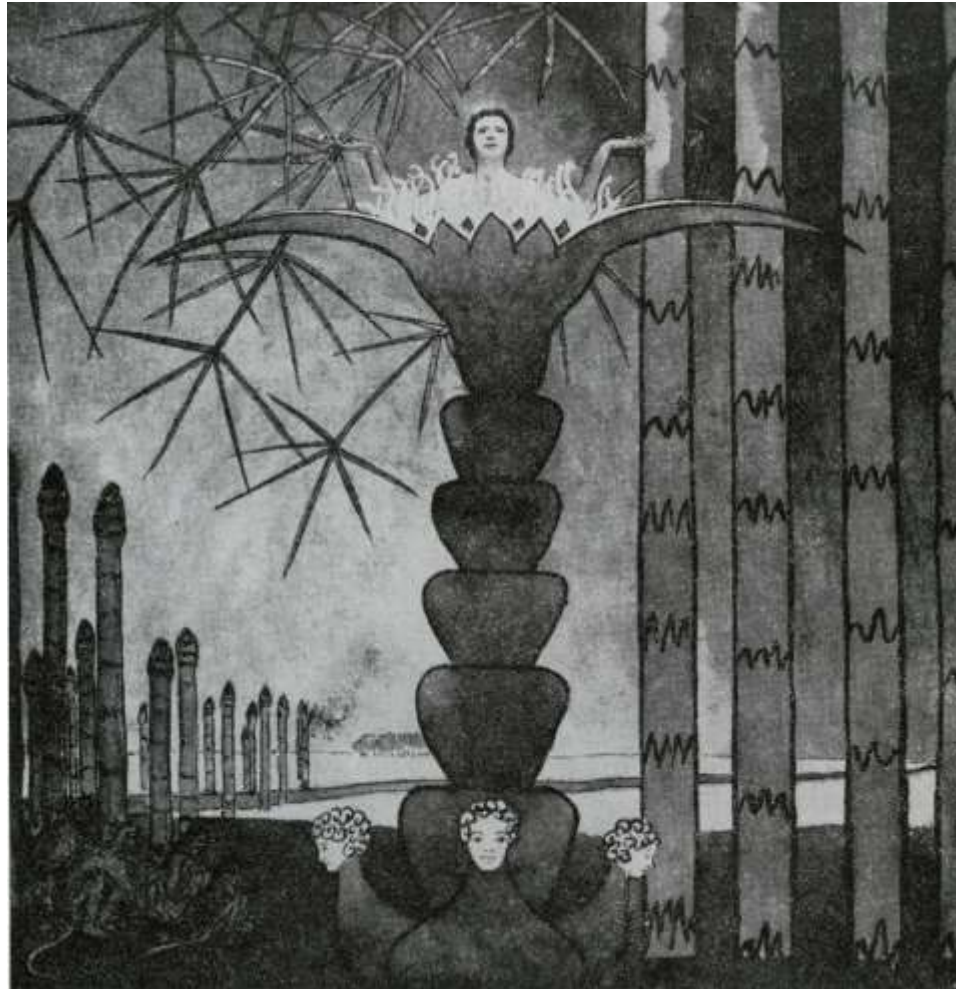
All this is in order that **no trees by the waters may grow to lofty height or set their tops among the clouds, and that no trees that drink water may reach up to them in height.**

Cherub Archetype



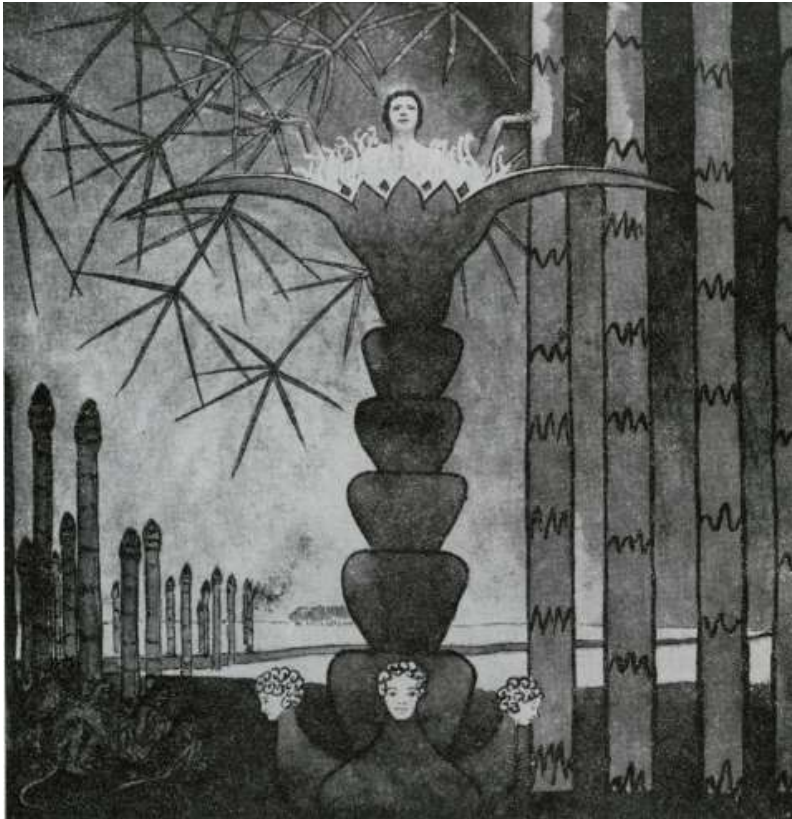
Syrian Cherub, 9th C BCE

Archetypes: Cherubim Guard Tree



Dream Drawing by Jung Patient

Cherubim Guard Tree – Genesis 3:24



“He drove man out and stationed the **cherubim** and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to **guard the way to the tree of life.**”

Dream Drawing by Jung Patient

Cherubim in Ezekiel



Ezekiel 1: 4- 14

6 Each had four faces, and each of them had four wings.

7 Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot; and they sparkled like burnished bronze.

8 Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands.

13 In the middle of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving to and fro among the living creatures; the fire was bright, and lightning issued from the fire.

14 The living creatures darted to and fro, like a flash of lightning.

Ezekiel 10: 4-5

4 Then **the glory of the Lord rose from above the cherub to the threshold of the temple.** The temple was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the brightness of the Lord's glory.

5 The sound of the cherubim's wings could be heard as far as the outer court; it was like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks

God's Glory is Among Us – but Protected

20 These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Chebar Canal, and I recognized that they were cherubim.

21 Each had **four faces and each had four wings**, with the form of human hands under their wings. Ex. 10:20-21

