

## The Tau Cross

**In our ritual demonstration of the H. A. B., attempt to escape, the course followed by the candidate forms a cross.**

**What is the significance of this cross?**

It is quite obvious that the movements of H. A. B. take the form of a Tau Cross. The Tau Cross plays a most important part in the whole of our ceremonies and is represented by the three Tau Crosses on the apron of the Master.

It symbolizes the creative power in God and man. As such it implies rulership and authority and in the case of the Master, it implies that inherent creative power within him of calling the Lodge out of nothingness into existence. This is its nobler side, but the lesson to be drawn from its other interpretation is just as important. Here it stands for the animal passion in man which must be trampled underfoot if the Soul is to progress toward the Light. The Tau Cross is a cross in the form of a Creek T. It was among the ancients a hieroglyphic of eternal life. It was the form of a Nilometer, or measure of the Nile, used to ascertain the height of the inundation upon which the prosperity of the Country and the life of the inhabitants depended.

It was a favourite symbol of the Egyptians and was to be seen in all their Temples very often held in the hands of their dieties or suspended from their necks. In the initiation, in the Hindustan mysteries the Tau Cross was marked upon the body of the candidate as a sign that he was set apart for the sacred mysteries. The same mark was familiar to the ancient Hebrews; for, in the vision of Ezekial, it is thus aluded to "Go through the midst of the City and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof."

This mark was to distinguish them as persons to be saved on account of their sorrow for sin, from those who as idolators, were to be slain; and its form was that of the Hebrew letter Tau which in the ancient Phoenecian alphabet and on the coins of the Maccabees has the shape of a cross.

Among the Druids it was the custom to consecrate a tree by cutting the form of a Tau Cross on its bark. In ancient times it was set as a mark on those who had been acquitted by their judges and by military commanders on such of their soldiers who had escaped unhurt from battle, and hence it was considered to be an emblem of life.

Finally, we observe that the Tau is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet as the Aleph is the first, and that the Tau assumes in the ancient Phoenecian and Samaritan alphabets the form of the cross; and we see another consecration of this symbol in the expression, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end", which spoken in the Hebrew language would be, I am the Aleph and the Tau."

It is not surprising that the Tau Cross has been adopted as one of the symbols of Freemasonry; and that in the form of the Triple Tau it constitutes the most sacred emblem of the Royal Arch, symbolizing the fact that the possessors of that degree are consecrated and separated, or set apart as the recipients of a sublime but hidden wisdom.