



The Mysticism of the Universal Worship

A Geometric Pursuit into its Form and Symbolism

Mysticism from the Concise Oxford Dictionary

- spiritually allegorical or symbolic
- of hidden meaning, mysterious
- religious truth divinely revealed
- beyond *normal* human reasoning

It is through symbolism that the mysterious nature of life itself can be explored and communicated, where words and intellect are not adequate.



The Nataraja (Shiva) dances within the universe of illusion. The locks of his hair stand out in many strands as he whirls around in his dancing frenzy. His locks are decked with a crescent moon, a skull, and are interspersed with the sacred river Ganges. The fiery ring surrounding Shiva represents the universe with all its illusion, suffering and pain. The outer edge is fire, the inner edge the waters of the oceans.



The religious activity of the Sufi Movement is the Universal Worship. It was the hope of all the prophets and the prayer and desire of all great souls that the message of unity within the lineage of religious traditions be known by everyone. The work of the Sufi message is to spread the unity of religious ideals. Without giving up one's own religion or beliefs, the Universal worship is intended to strengthen our own faith and enhance the bond between people of all faiths. This is achieved through the love for all beings, the aspiration for harmonious relations with all beings and the pursuit of beauty in everything we do.

It is the aim of the Universal Worship to exemplify these ideals. The inspiration comes from Hazrat Inayat Khan who created this service in 1924.



I am with you always



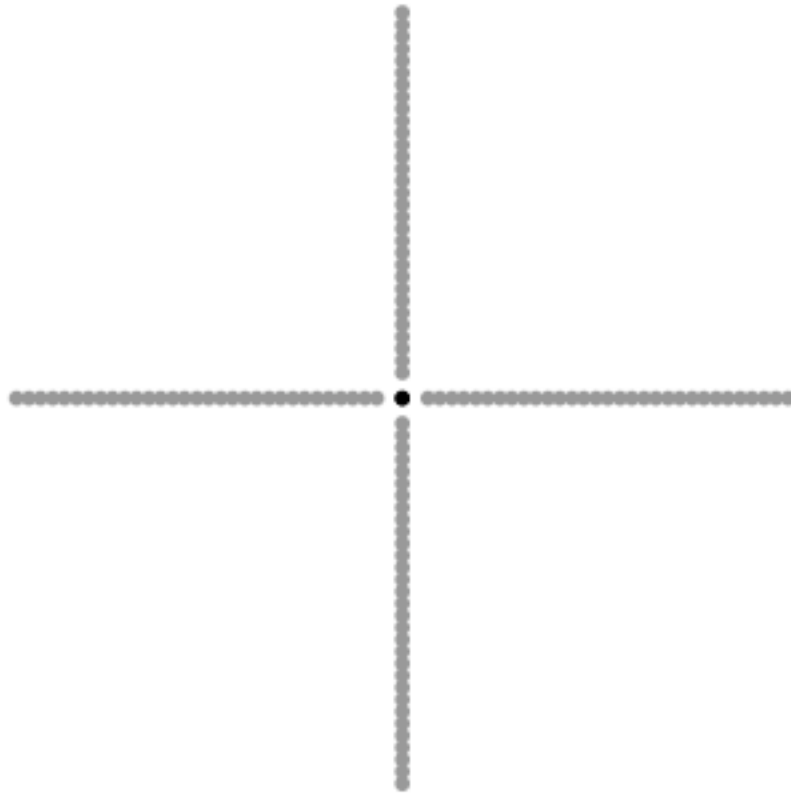
In Sufism, the dot is the most important of all symbolic figures, for every figure is an extension of the dot. It represents the Beginning. It represents the One and All. It represents the concept of unity, the Creator.

Praise be to Thee, most supreme God, omnipotent, omnipresent, all pervading, the Only Being.



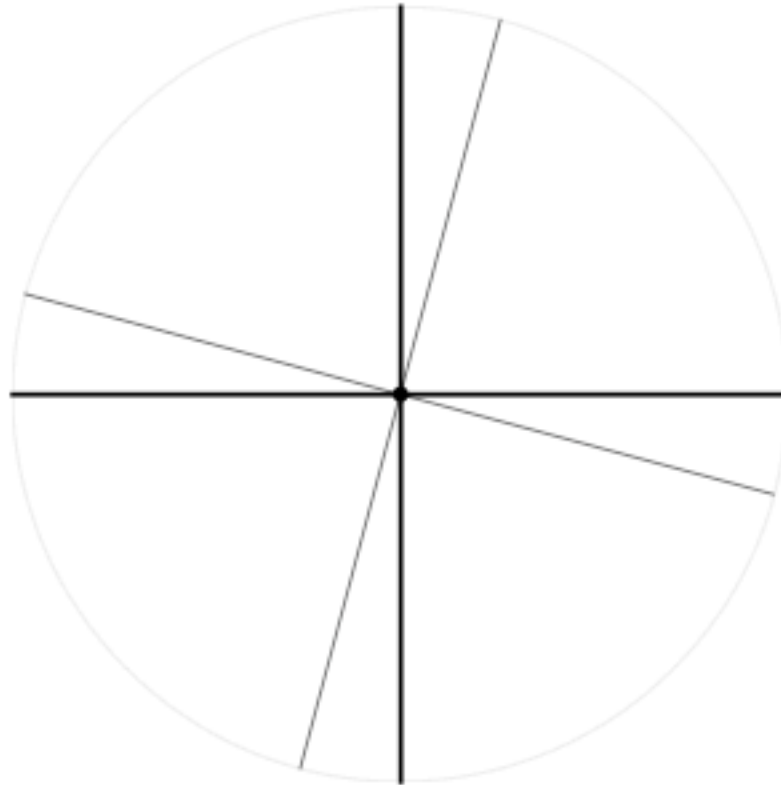
From the dot comes the line. The horizontal line represents material manifestation, the body, the intellect. It represents the body divided into 2 parts, left and right.

Thou art the first cause and the last effect, the Divine Light and the Spirit of Guidance, Alpha and Omega



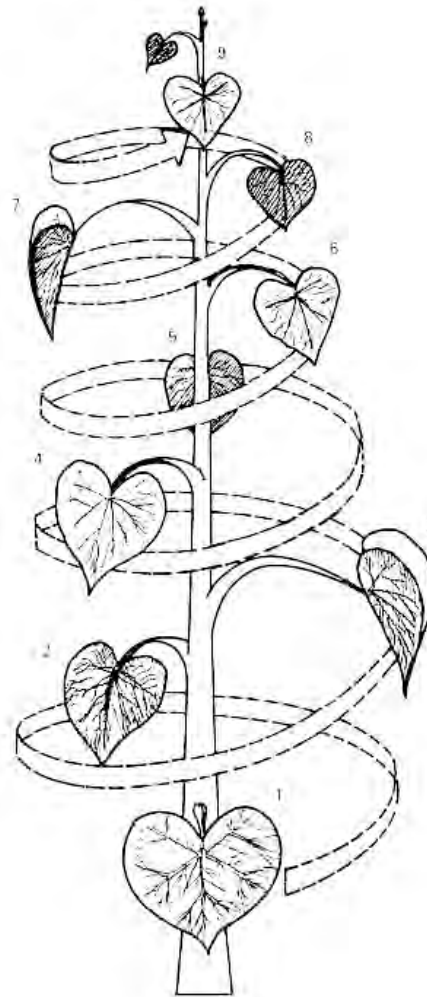
The vertical line represents divine aspiration, the connection of God and the manifest. Together the vertical and horizontal lines create the cross, a symbol which, in sufism, represents the relationship of the manifest to the Divine, in perfect balance.

Take us in thy parental arms, Raise us from the denseness of the earth.



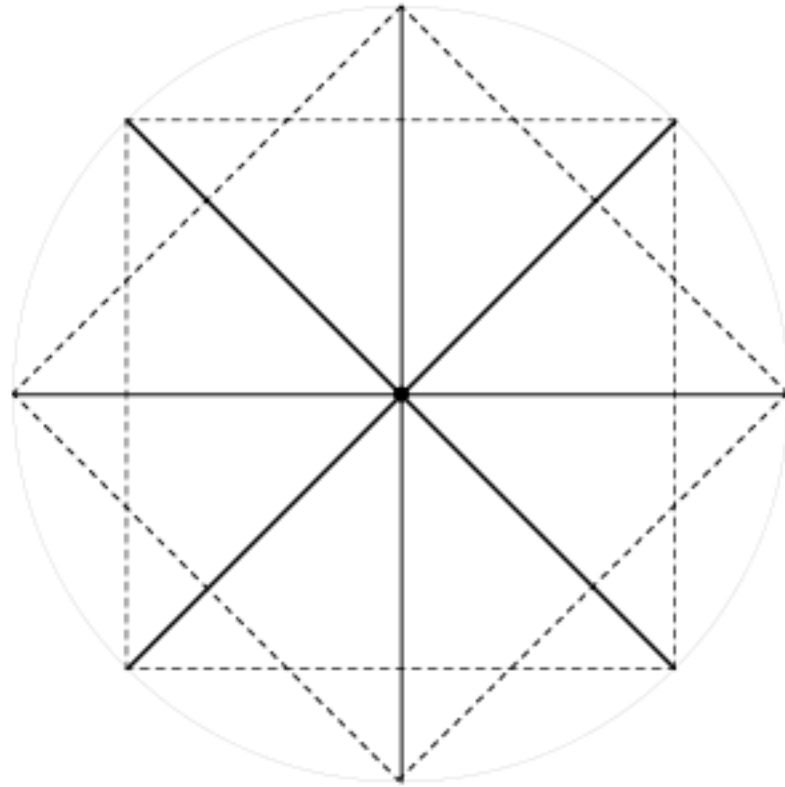
From the cross, when set into motion, the circle is created. What sets the cross into motion? It is our own actions as we strive to eradicate the illusion of duality. The circle is a symbol for the dynamic relationship between the Divine and the manifest. It represents forward movement, progress. In the third dimension a spiral is generated, in and out, symbolizing the breath which is the dynamic realization of aspiration for unity with the Divine.

They words flow as a sacred river. Thy thought riseth as a Divine spring.



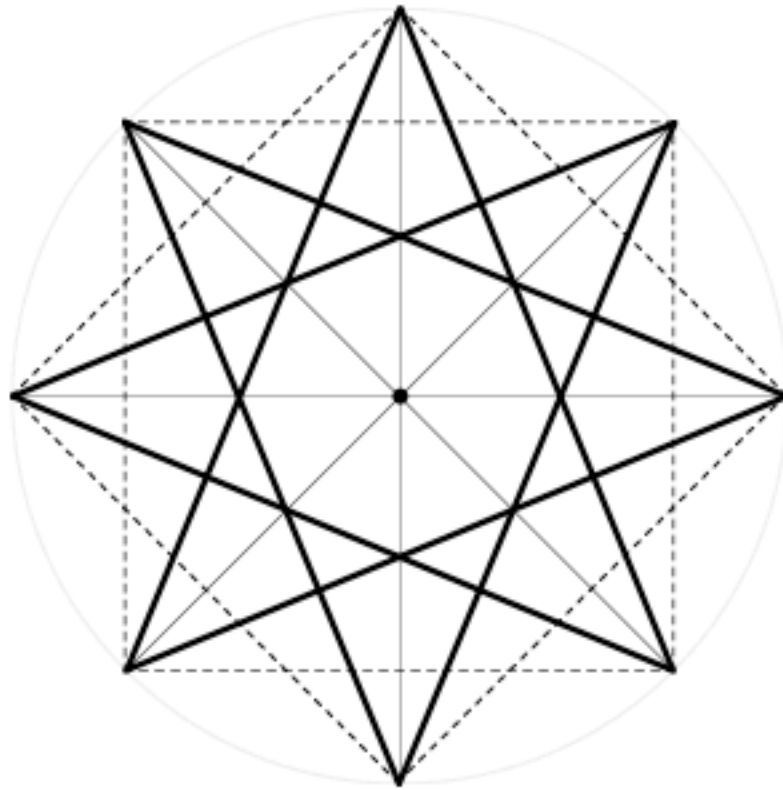
The spiral is a common geometrical form in nature and represents the sense of rising and divine aspiration.

...Thou whose heart constantly reaches upward, Thou comest on earth with a message...



The dot, line and circle are the sources for geometrical representations or mandalas, that symbolically describe our relationship with the Divine.

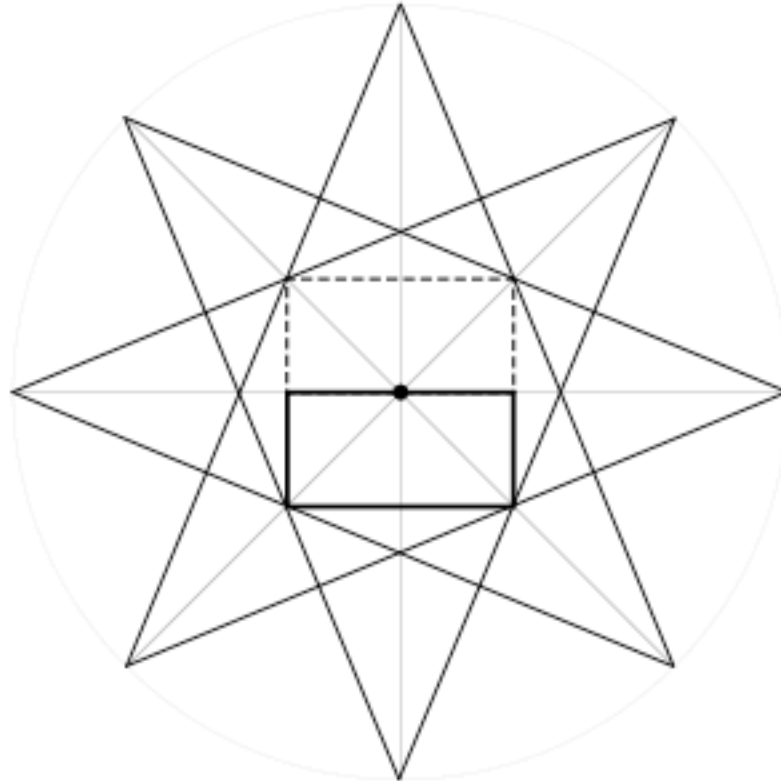
Thou the life eternal, we seek refuge in thy loving enfoldment... Thou art our Divine ideal.



The word "mandala" is from the classical Indian language of Sanskrit. Loosely translated to mean "circle," a mandala is far more than a simple shape. It represents wholeness, and in this case has been developed to symbolically describe the meaning and purpose of the Universal Worship Service. This symbolical pursuit is intended to explore the esoteric foundations and structure of the Universal Worship as a means to attract the mind and instill deeper insight into the service that Hazrat Inayat Khan intended as a depiction of the unity of religious Ideals, the one truth behind all religions.

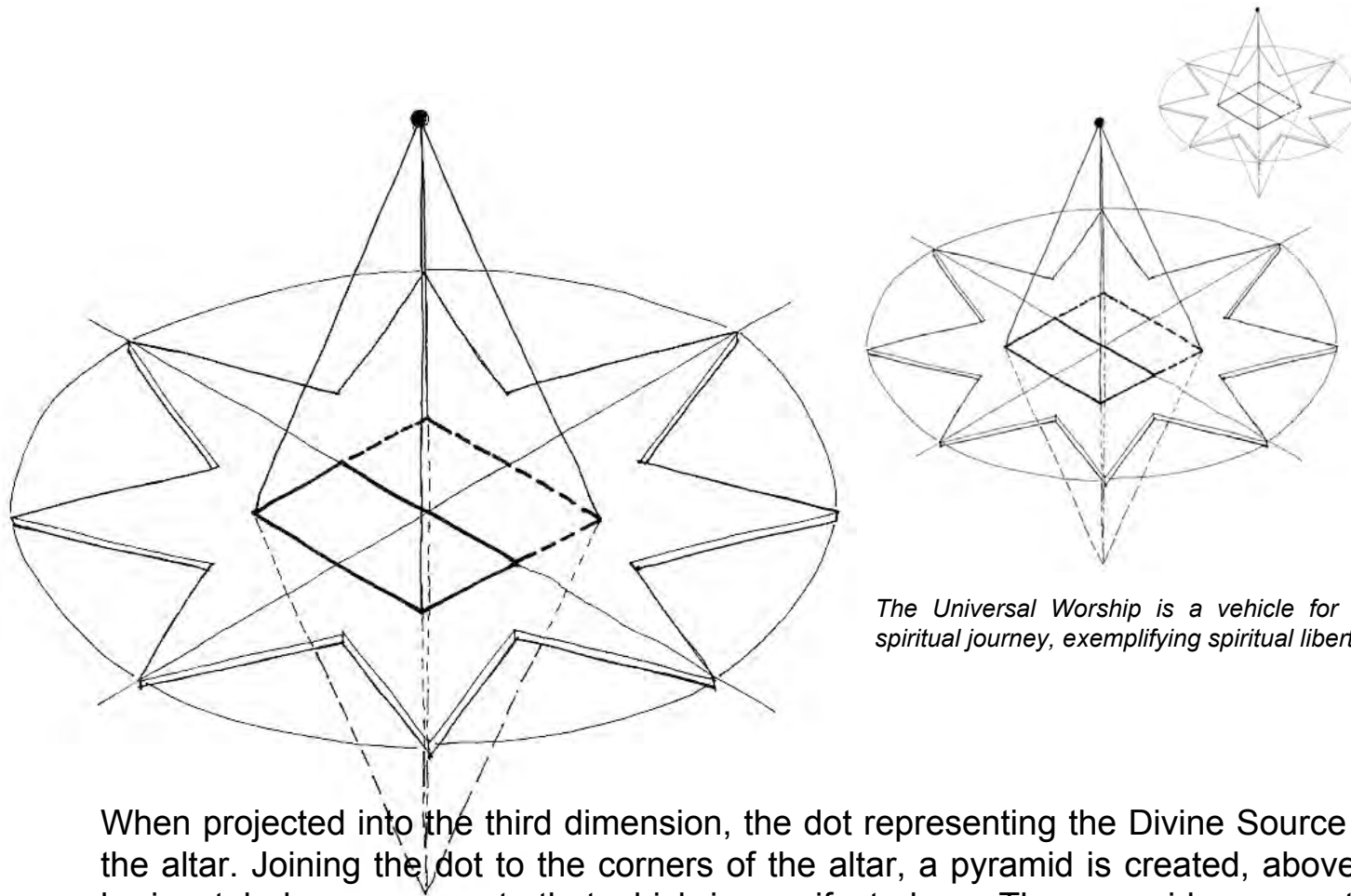
The eight-pointed star is derived from two squares set at an angle to each other, implying revolution and setting this symbol into dynamic motion. It corresponds to the musical scale of 8 notes and represents music as a universal and mystical language. The Universal Worship mandala is a 'vehicle' on which the Universal Worship can travel to its destination.

O Thou, who art the Maker, Moulder and Builder of the Universe, build with thine own hands, the Universel...



Inside the 8-pointed star can be found a square, representing the altar of the Universal Worship. The dot represents the Divine Source and is located in the centre of the of the square, the centre of all things. The square in the centre of the mandala represents the Universal Worship altar and suggests both the known and unknown, the seen and the unseen.


Lord God of the east and of the west, of the worlds above and below and of the seen and unseen beings



*The Universal Worship is a vehicle for a **collective** spiritual journey, exemplifying spiritual liberty.*

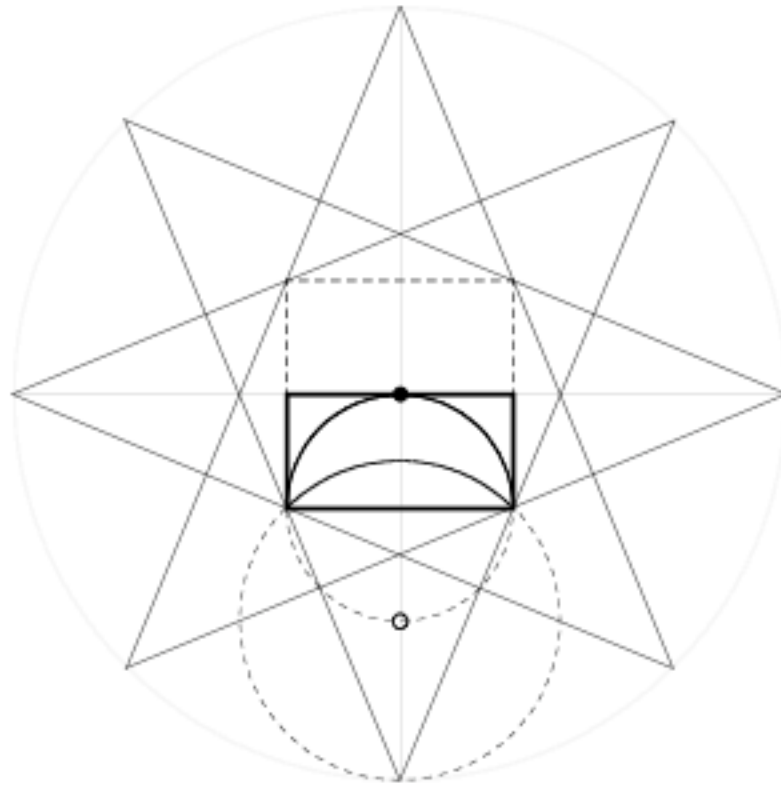
When projected into the third dimension, the dot representing the Divine Source is located above the altar. Joining the dot to the corners of the altar, a pyramid is created, above and below. The horizontal plane represents that which is manifested, us. The pyramid represents the connection between beings and the Divine. While the pyramid which, when solidified, represents the known, the implied pyramid below represents the unknown, all part of Divine unity. The geometry has created a crystal, symbolically encompassing all aspects of the Divine and the material. As a prism, the crystal represents the power of transformation. It transforms pure, white light into the full colour spectrum and vice versa. Thus it is the symbol by which we can understand the One in All, and the All in One.

Take us in thy parental arms and raise us from the denseness of the earth

A translucent purple crystal pyramid is shown resting on a textured, light-colored surface. The crystal has a faceted, geometric shape with visible internal inclusions and a slightly rough, natural appearance. The background is a dark, mottled grey-blue.

The solidifying of the pyramid into a crystal over the altar is an important focus in the Universal Worship. This is how we can understand the ultimate purpose of the service. The crystal symbolizes the means by which the unification of Divine and material occurs. The 3-dimensional mandala represents the Universal Worship as a vehicle intended to transport us on the journey to experience unity.

United with all the illuminated souls who form the embodiment of the master, the spirit of guidance



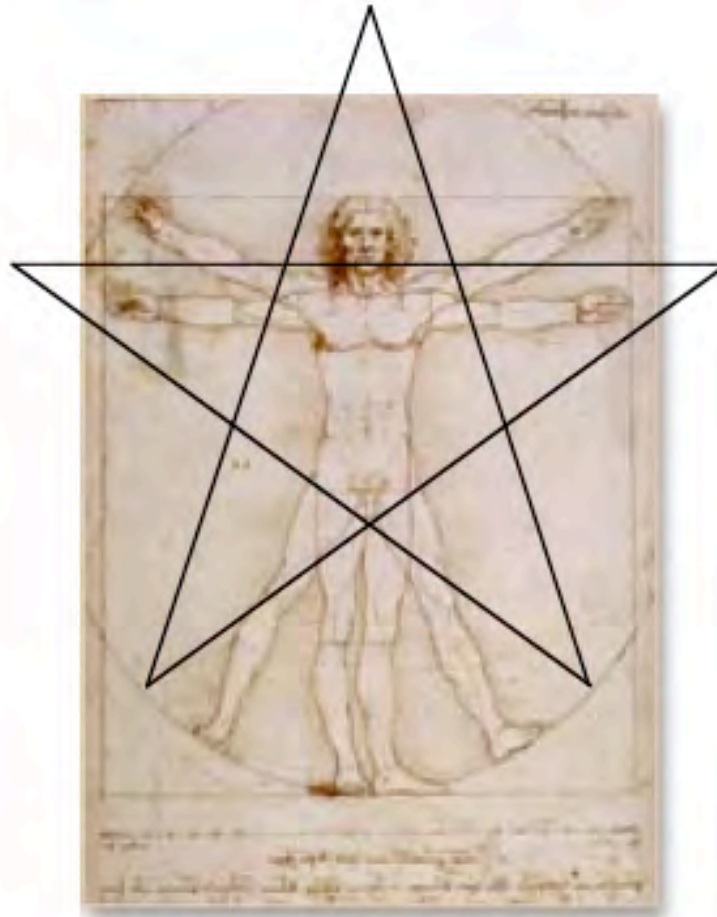
On the surface of the altar is drawn a crescent moon shape that is derived from the geometry of the mandala. It is within this crescent that candles representing the world's major religions are placed. A candle representing the Divine Light is located at the back of the altar, at the point of the Divine Source.

Allow us to recognize Thee in thy holy names and forms...



As the service of the Universal Worship progresses, the pyramid over the altar becomes more solid, the unity of Divine and material closer to realization. In front of the altar, described by the inner circle of the crescent, is a 5 point star, the symbol of Divine illumination and the symbol of the human being. The center point of the star, the heart of 'man', becomes a receptor point for the manifestation of Divine realization. This point is the location from which the blessing is given at the end of the service.

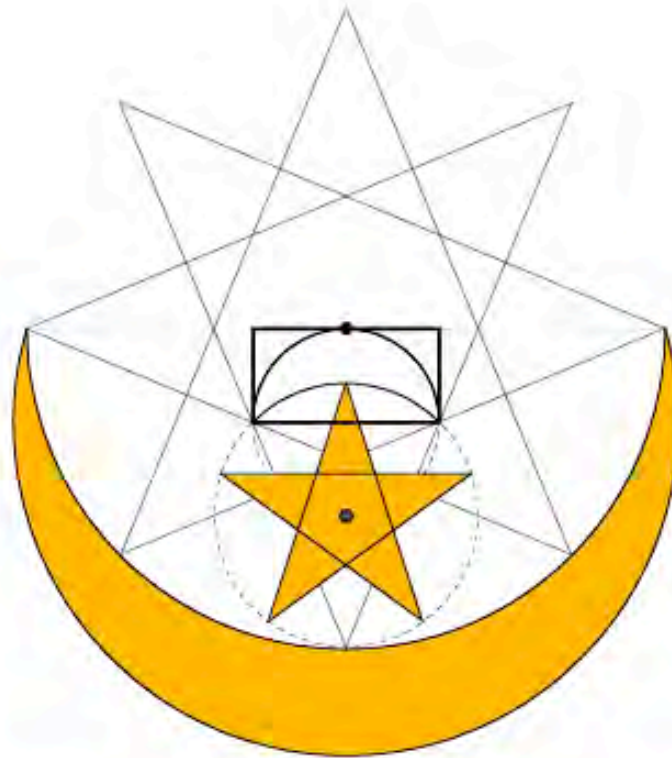
Disclose to us thy Divine Light, which is hidden in our souls that we may know and understand life better.



Vitruvian Man by Leonardo da Vinci, circa 1492

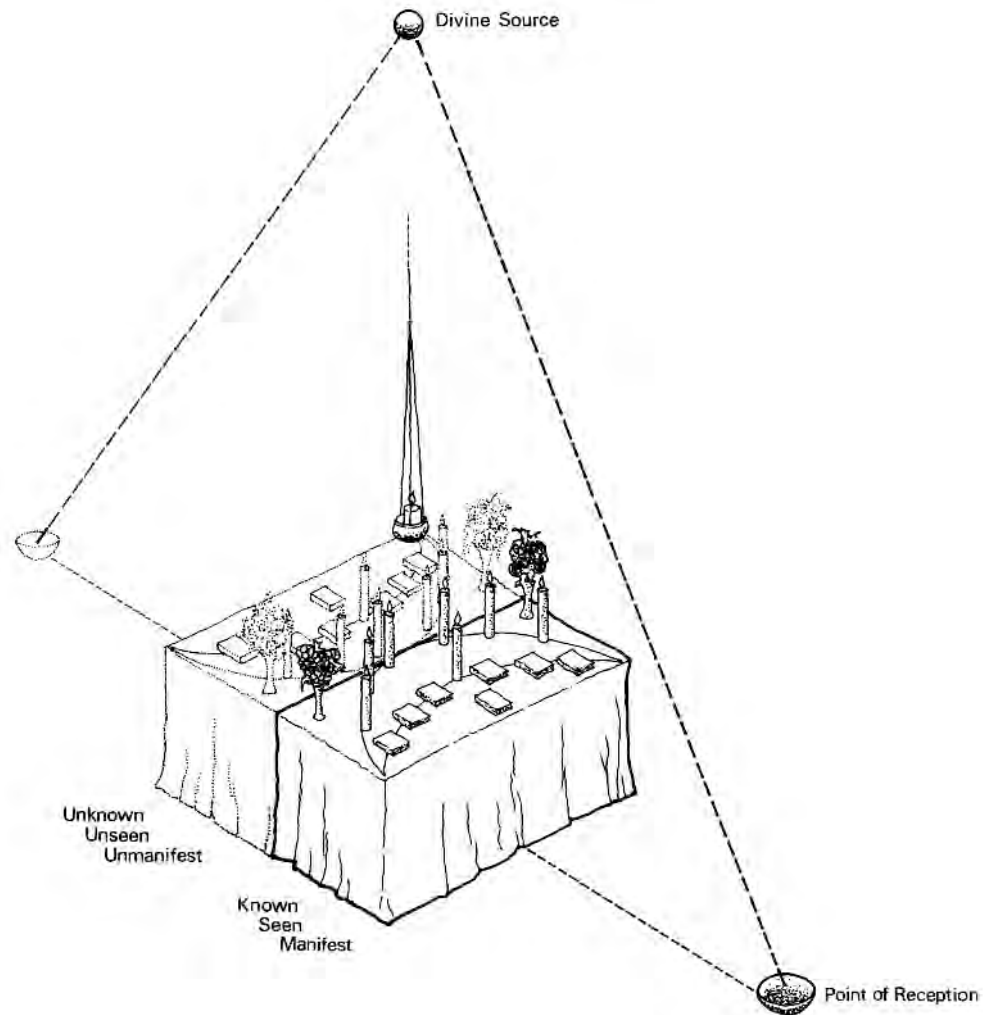
The 5-point star, symbolizing a human with outstretched arms, represents the 5 senses: sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell as well as the 5 elements: earth, water, air, fire and ether - the Divine as represented in human nature. This is the pose of the blessing that is given at the culmination of the service, from the centre of the 5-point star itself.

Thy light is in all forms, they love in all beings



A large crescent, representing those who are attending the service, is drawn on the mandala, and represents the quality of reception. The blessing is given from the 'heart' of the 5-point star. The blessing is received by those attending the service. The cherags are the vehicles for the Divine blessing. The Universal Worship is the means for all beings to have a direct experience of unity with the Divine.

Let the star of the Divine light shining in thy heart be reflected in the hearts of thy devotees.



The practice of all religions in unity has the the power of Divine realization. The Universal Worship of Inayat Khan is one such form and to the Sufi is a symbol of Sufism itself.

Pour upon us Thy love and Thy light.