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Symbols of the Sacred, Louis Dupré, Eerdmans 2000 (0-8028-4748-X), pp. viii + 131, $ 20.00

Before I accepted the invitation to review this book, I had a look at Eerdmans’ website. There I read that ‘Symbols of the Sacred gathers four classic essays by Louis Dupré on the role of symbols in our understanding of the sacred and on their fundamental importance to religious consciousness.’ That induced me to accept the invitation. Collections of ‘classic essays’ are among the books I like to have on the shelves. To my disappointment, the book does not live up to the expectations raised by Eerdmans’ website (and by both the book’s cover and the back of its title page). Instead, it is a slightly revised edition of the core chapters of The Other Dimension (Doubleday 1972). The short treatment of religious art in the earlier edition has been replaced by a more extensive one, based on a chapter from Transcendent Selfhood (Seabury Press 1976), and a conclusion (which, according to the Press Information leaflet that came with the book, has been reprinted from the Christian Century) has been added. Though this is a slightly revised reprint rather than the new collection of classic essays that I was made to expect, it remains a splendid study of religious symbolism. It traces the development from a culture in which symbols are God-given – and therefore intrinsically meaningful – to one in which they are man-made. What is the effect of this development on our understanding of religious symbols? Can they still have meaning for us? Dupré argues that they can, but only when we assume ‘that the mind itself possesses a transcendent dimension which enables it to share in the transcendence from which it receives its revelation’ (p. 125). Where did I hear about such a divine spark in human beings before?

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Curious about the power of archetypal images? TASCHEN's Book of Symbols combines essays about particular symbols with over 800 full-color images. “You can’t ask for more than that.” Creative Review. “A potentially transformative reference work.” World of Interiors. The Book of Symbols. Reflections on Archetypal Images. Hardcover, 16.8 x 24 cm, 1.80 kg, 808 pages. Â£30. This encyclopedia explores the hidden meanings of visual symbols across time and geography, from the sun to whales and the human hand. Spanning different eras and cultures, over 800 beautiful images combine with expert illuminations of symbol history, meanings, and psychic associations, offering readers a precious and fascinating resource for thoughtful interpretations of life, art, and spirituality. Most of the symbols in the book are practical, everyday things and can only be applied in the most general context. While there are many symbols in the book, the descriptions are common sense based on practical knowledge that most of us already know. Masonic symbols, or those on the dollar bill (seeing eye), are not in the book. Much of the text is a description of the item. The book speaks about hundred of symbols but does not say much of anything. I kept reading through it and found that I lost interest in the book the more I read. I think it could have been written better. Read "Sacred Signs & Symbols Awaken to the Messages & Synchronicities That Surround You" by Sherrie Dillard available from Rakuten Kobo. Improve your life by embracing the guidance that Spirit sends you each day. Everyone receives sacred signs, messages, an... Featuring a glossary of hundreds of signs and their meanings, this comprehensive guide helps you build a personal oracle system for invoking messages in your daily life. Explore a variety of methods for increasing your awareness, including exercises and divination techniques that you can personalize to your needs. You'll also discover ways to connect with loved ones in the spirit realm and expand your perception of the world.