THE ESOTERIC
TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH
F. & A. M.

Papers Covering Esoteric Topics from Our Annual Proceedings and Our Book, Traveling East
# The Esoteric Tennessee Lodge of Research

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ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF MASONIC CHARITY

by
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Abstract

Charity is both an act and an attitude. The former is commanded by the Great Architect. The latter prescribed by him. In this paper, we explore the foundation of charity as commanded and prescribed by the Great Architect and relate one of our more esoteric rituals with these foundations.

Introduction

Masonic degrees are characterized by the unexpected. In particular, a candidate for the first degree is asked, without preparation, in whom he trusts. Later, the brother is asked to produce a small coin or piece of metal. With regard to trust, the candidate who has no faith in the supremacy of the Great Architect would be found lacking; though in all fairness no such person could be a candidate in the first place.

Knowing that the brother is unable to fulfill the request, we provide for his want and then ask that he be as charitable to his brethren and to do so freely (happily).

Our ritual requires that we be prepared as our operative brothers were prepared to enter the house of the Great Architect, but our rituals don’t often provide the motivation for that preparation. In this paper, we connect Masonic charity to the foundations of the Judeo-Christian tradition and specifically to our Kabalistic root.

Foundations

The Kabalah teaches that Torah (the law) is founded on charity. And we see that the shared traditions of both Judaism and Christianity are also founded on charity. Without debate, let us accept these traditions but let us ask, from whence the traditions came.

The Mishnah teaches that Great Architect asked the children of Israel to build the temple and to make contributions in his name. Specifically, Ve'yikhu li teruma, which means to “make for me an offering” but which the Kabalah teaches means to “give in G-d’s name” since there is no spiritual difference between making an offering and giving a donation. Buried deep in the Hebrew is a confusing possessive: the offering being made is “owned” (possessive) by the one to whom (G-d) the offering is being made. Thus, the Kabalistic teaching to “give in G-d’s name.”

What does it mean to give in G-d’s name? What is G-d’s name? The shared Judeo-Christian name is Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh (Hebrew letters) which is most often rendered YHWH in English, though YHVH is closest to the source. The Hebrew letter Yod (י) not only represents G-d; it also represents metal and/or money. One recalls that small pieces of metal were often used as money whether or not such “coins” carried an Emperor’s imprint.

The Hebrew letter Heh (ה) has the numerical value 5 and symbolizes the hand. Vav (ו) symbolizes an outstretched arm and the final Heh (ה) again represents a hand. Thus, in G-d’s name,
we find a small coin or piece of metal passed from one person’s hand to another person’s hand. The importance of kavanah (intention) in fulfilling our obligations is illustrated by the following story.

A just and upright man (we shall call him A.B.) is interrupted by his assistant who tells him that a destitute man, at his door, is in need of charity. A.B. upon seeing the poor man is overcome by great pity and hands over a very valuable gold coin. The poor man is amazed and thinking it is a mistake, points out the value of the coin to A.B., who tells him it is not a mistake. The poor man thanks A.B. and literally flees so that A.B. can’t change his mind. After a few minutes, A.B. calls his assistant and asks him to bring the poor man back. As the poor man walked back he thought to himself that it was too good to be true and he returned broken hearted. Upon his return, the poor man was surprised that A.B. welcomed him and was more surprised when A.B. pulled out another gold coin and gave it to him.

Later, after the poor man was gone, A.B.’s assistant asked for an explanation. A.B. explained that he gave the first coin out of pity from seeing the poor man in such bad shape. A.B. then realized that he needed to give a donation purely to fulfill the obligation.

Conclusion
Masonic charity is fundamental to Masonry. Our ritual teaches charity. And asks that should we find a brother in need to help him; in particular, not to wait for the brother to ask nor embarrass him concerning his need. In G-d’s name we give charity. In honor of G-d, we give charity with happiness (we are fulfilling G-d’s commandments) and we do so feely, just as our wants once required.

Acknowledgements
I am grateful for Nick Gatlin’s careful review. I am solely responsible for errors.
THE SACRED GEOMETRY OF THE POINT WITHIN A CIRCLE

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INTRODUCTION

“A point which in the circle goes, which in the square and three angles stands, gives you the whole science and you cannot go wrong.” – “The Stone Mason’s Speech,” ca. 1500 A.D.

The first and only abstract symbol the Entered Apprentice encounters in his Masonic lectures is a “certain point within a circle.” The stereopticon lecture in the First Degree gives a very brief explanation of the moral significance of this strange symbol, and quickly moves on. Nowhere else in all of Craft Masonry is this symbol encountered or even mentioned.

The symbol consists of a point within a circle (circumpunct), with two parallel lines tangent to the circle (perpendicular to the radius), with a book perched atop the circle. We know that the circumpunct is an ancient symbol of the sun and a religious symbol for the old sun god worship of western and southern Asia. However, like most other ancient symbols adopted for use in Freemasonry, this one has evolved to have several other meanings. For a number of reasons which follow, I believe this is the single most important symbol in all of Craft Masonry. From this symbol, all other geometric figures can be constructed in more ways than one; from it, also in more ways than one, the Entered Apprentice begins his Masonic journey.

Much has been written in the past two centuries about this symbol. Dr. Tom Driber offered a very enlightening essay entitled “Why the Holy Saints John?” published in Traveling East, Selected Essays from the Tennessee Lodge of Research 1985-2005. Albert Pike devoted an entire book to it. My contribution here will attempt to add to theirs, my hope being that the importance of this symbol will come forth and be more widely known and understood.

THE CIRCUMPUNCT

The circumpunct is, of course, a geometric construction and a literal translation of geometry is earth-measure, which today we call surveying. During my 30-plus years as a surveyor and mapmaker and throughout the ages in those professions, we practitioners have noted the symbol § being drawn on maps and plats to represent a boundary point, or a point of beginning. Its Operative meaning, “Point of Beginning,” may have a source in one or more of the many mystic meanings attached to the symbol. The circle itself is a symbol of boundary (as implied in Masonic ritual), enclosure, completion, and of returning cycles.

In ancient religions, the symbol was used to represent the Sun, the point representing the Earth and the circle the ecliptic. The Sun itself, in turn, was a representation of God. Even the Holy Bible, in numerous places, uses the Sun as an illustration of the unfathomable awesomeness of God. (Numb. 24:17; Psalm 19; 84:11; Mal. 4:2; Matt. 2:2; 17:2; Judges 5:20; Job 25:5; 38:7; Dan 12:3;
Jude 13; Rev. 1:16; 10:1, etc.) This was logical; because people could see and feel the Sun and knew that it was necessary to life itself, it was the most perfect representation of the glory and power of God. In all those old religions, however, almost without exception, over time the object of worship shifted from the Deity to the Sun itself. (Brown, p. 48)

In ancient Indian spiritualism, the symbol represented the reproductive aspects of the humanity, with the point representing the phallus and the circle the womb. To the Pythagoreans, it was the “Monad” and represented God, whose “center is everywhere and the circumference nowhere.” (Voltaire, p. 116). For the Kabbalist, a circumpunct is the beginning and the end, a Supernal Zero Point or the First Manifestation, and as such is viewed as an egg at the instant of fertilization, representing the primordial point from which all creation springs. The circle is called Ayin, which means ‘No-thing” and represents Absolute Nothingness, while the point, En sof, means the “Endless” and represents Absolute All. Tradition states that “God willed to see God and so God’s will, symbolized by light, shone everywhere and nowhere.” The Point in this context is known as En Sof/Aur, the Endless Light of Will, and represents the instant when light first penetrated the Absolute Nothingness. (Halevi, pp. 7-8) (Schollem, pp. 102-103)

Another Kabbalistic view (which rings of an Operative origin) is that the single point is called the omphalos in Sacred Architecture, representing the sharp point of a plumb bob, which marks the vector connecting the zenith to the center of the earth.

Early esoteric Christianity viewed the symbol as a Point within a Sphere, the circle representing the outer limits of the sphere. The Point was the First Person in the Trinity, the area within the circle represented the vast sphere of the field of His work, limited only by His Will and His Power, represented by the Circle. (Besant, p. 94)

One interesting concept that this construct symbolizes is described in the Vedic Upanishads. Again, it has a connotation of duality and quite possibly contains a very profound truth. The point, Bindu, represents the infinitesimally small point into which the sphere of the universe, Satkona (represented by the circle) collapses into itself in the “Great Dissolution” (Woodruff, pp. 34-35). This echoes the Kabbalistic view of the “beginning and end,” and again very profoundly illustrates the duality of “As above, so below” and “As within, so without.” Could this be extrapolated to “As the beginning, so the ending”?

HOW MANY ALLEGORIES?

Pike viewed the point as the Creative Energy of the Deity and the circle as “immensity.” To him it was also a symbol of duality with the fixed limb of the compass remaining ever stationary on the point, while the other revolves around it, describing the circle.

Mackey explained it as a relic of phallic worship that originally represented the hermaphroditic nature of the Supreme Deity, but in Masonry symbolically represented the Master and Wardens of a lodge. According to Mackey, the Master and Wardens are symbols of the sun and the lodge is a symbol of the universe. Thus, in the ritual, the Master is said to rule the lodge as the sun rules the day. The two parallel lines he explains as the greatest northern and southern declination of the sun, which the sun reaches on the solstices, which are near the dates on which the Church set the Feasts of the Saints John. (Symbolism of Freemasonry, pp. 111-116) More on this below.

Dr. Oliver believed the parallel lines represented the upright members of Jacobs Ladder, which he further allegorized as a symbol of the duality of Christ: one pillar represented his divine, eternal nature, the other his earthly and temporal nature. He viewed the point within a circle as “the most perfect figure possible” and acknowledges that all other perfect figures emanated from this one.
(Oliver, p. 133) To Duncan, the Point within a Circle was the symbol of an Entered Apprentice Mason.

With Mackey’s explanation, Charles T. McClanachen suggests the symbol refers to the circumambulation of Masonic candidates around the altar, and that the two lines represent the parallel lines in which the brethren stand or sit on either side of the altar. (Mackey’s Encyclopedia of Freemasonry) This is an interesting and probably the most correct blend of several of the allegories here presented. The Masonic lodge is an astronomic map, tracing the path of the Sun from rising in the East through the meridian in the South to setting in the West. And even though we cannot see it, the Sun travels in darkness through the North from West to East (from our perspective on the opposite side of the Earth) to complete the circle.

Modern Masonic ritual describes the point within the symbol as an individual brother, and the circle as the boundary line of his duties to God and man, beyond which he should never let his passions betray him. In other words, it is a symbol of controlling personal conduct. The two parallel lines are said to represent St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, with no explanation offered. Similarly, there is no explanation given for the book of Holy Scriptures. The only mention of it is, “. . . we necessarily touch upon these two lines as well as the Holy Scriptures . . .” (Tennessee Craftsman, p. 30)

**SACRED GEOMETRY**

Let us first look at how the symbol is constructed. In geometry, all figures are constructed from one or more of three basic elements: a point, a line (which connects two or more points) and a plane (which is composed of any number of points and/or lines). All of these are drawn using only the compasses and a straightedge. A circle is unique among all the geometric plane figures in that it is constructed of a single line from a single point. A fundamental truth about the circle is that the distance from the center to any point along the circumference is equal to that from the center to any other point on the circumference.

![Diagram](image)

The point within a circle is constructed using only the compasses (1). The parallel perpendicular tangent lines are constructed with the straightedge and the compasses in this manner: one line is drawn tangent to the circle, the ends extending beyond the limits of the circle (2); using the compasses set to the diameter of the circle (3) and placed anywhere along the line, an arc is struck on the other side of the circle from the line (4); finally, using the straightedge, a line is then drawn...
tangent to the circle and tangent to the struck arc (5).

When any random line connecting the two parallel lines is drawn tangent to the circle, lines connecting the ends of that line to the center of the circle form a right angle at the center of the circle.

Another method of constructing a square using this construction as a foundation invokes a Euclidian Proposition: “At every point on a circle, the tangent is perpendicular to the radius and to the diameter.” (Euclid, Elements III.XVI)

The “Secret of the Square” was a closely guarded secret and was another of primary methods of proving a square in the days of Operative Masonry. Thales’ Theorem, “An angle inscribed in a semicircle is a right angle” was proven by Euclid (Elements, III.XXI). But since Euclid’s proof relied upon a simple radius connecting the center of the circle to the circumferential vertex of the angle, it is doubtful that it has any relation to the Masonic symbol of the Point Within a Circle.

Using only the compasses, it is possible to use the Point within a Circle (minus the parallels) to construct the figure known to ancient cultures in all corners of the world as the “Flower of Life.” By connecting the points of intersection of the circles, every regular geometric figure can be developed from this construction, such, as in this case, a hexagon and a cube.
THE PILLARS – THE SAINTS JOHN

The very first thing the new Entered Apprentice learns in the esoteric work deals with the Lodge of the Holy Saints John at Jerusalem. In the ritual, we are told that the two perpendicular parallels in the point-within-a-circle symbol represent the Saints John but is there perhaps another, more profound connection with this first abstract symbol the new initiate encounters and the first thing he memorizes? In the days of Operative Masonry, the different crafts and guilds had their patron saints, whose feast days they celebrated. The patron saints of masonry were St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Scottish Masonic lodges were called “Saint Johns” lodges well into the Speculative period of masonry. Incidentally, it was the Saints John who were at Jerusalem, not the lodge . . . but more on Jerusalem later.

In the Second Degree, we are admonished to study astronomy, the importance of which, Masonically, eclipses even that of geometry. But what has that to do with our discussion?

In the 4th Century, the Romans, in an effort to save the crumbling empire, saw Christianity as a potentially unifying force. Under the Emperor Constantine’s influence, Roman church leaders codified church doctrine, established the canon of sacred law and created a religion from what up until that time had been merely a way of life. It superimposed Christianity over and smothered out the old pantheistic religions of Rome. Constantine’s mother Helena even made a two-year journey to the Holy Land to identify and make shrines of the places Jesus had supposedly visited. In just a few short years, the Romans created a universal (and ultimately, compulsory) State religion, replete with all the trappings. It had familiar elements of all the old religions, so it was an easy pill for the populace to swallow. The Romans also created feast days for saints that coincided with the high holy days of the old religions. The Feast of Ishtar became Easter. In a double-whammy, Mithra’s birthday became Christmas, smothering out that last vestige of Mithraism, together with the pagan Feast of Saturnalia, which was also around that time. The feast day for Saint John the Baptist was set near the summer solstice and that for Saint John the Evangelist, near the winter solstice, supplanting the old sun-worship celebrations that had always taken place at those times of year.

During the course of the year, the apparent path of the sun traces a sine wave, never going north of the Tropic of Cancer, which it approaches the closest at the summer solstice—near St. John the Baptist’s Day, nor south of the Tropic of Capricorn, which it approaches closest on the winter solstice—near St. John the Evangelist’s Day. (Mackey, Ch. 15) The Tropics are parallels of latitude running East and West on modern maps, yet the perpendiculars in the Masonic symbol seem to be oriented to the North and South. Or are they?
THE POINT WITHIN THE CIRCLE—BACK TO JERUSALEM

A common modern myth is that during medieval times the world was thought to be flat. The reality is that at least from the time of Ptolemy, the earth was known to be round. Maps from about 200 A.D. on reflect this. Around 630 A.D., Isidore of Seville wrote,

“There is a circle, the orbis, that contains the whole world . . . Indeed, the Ocean that flows around it on all sides encompasses its furthest reaches in a circle. It is divided into three parts, one of which is called Asia, the second Europe, the third Africa.” (Barney, 2006).

Jerusalem was believed to be the center of the world (“This is Jerusalem: I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries about her.”—Ezekiel 5:5) and most maps of the known world were drawn circular with Jerusalem at the center—a Point Within a Circle. (See attached maps below.) Distances depicted on maps, itineraria, which were measured in days, began at Jerusalem—a Point of Beginning—much in the same way that ancient Romans began all distances from Rome. (Glick et al., p. 117) Interestingly enough, maps of the time were very often drawn with East at the topmost part of the map and usually depicted the Garden of Eden at the top center. Maps did not change from this basic form until around 1450, when the discoveries of Marco Polo forced the move of the center from Jerusalem and the increasing use of the north-pointing compass rotated maps 90° to the right. (Della Dora, 2010) . . . which brings us to . . .

THE BOOK

The Book atop the circle seems to be a relatively new addition to the symbol with no explanation for its presence offered in Masonic Ritual other than saying it represents the Holy Scriptures, and that being at the edge of the circle, the bounds of our passions must necessarily touch upon it. Yet, why is the book located at the top? Why not inside the circle? The evidence we have examined so far is instructive.

1. The circumpunct is a very ancient symbol of the sun.

2. A book is a universal symbol of Knowledge.

3. The path of the sun does not go north of the point it reaches near Saint John the Baptist’s Day, nor further south than the point it reaches near Saint John the Evangelist’s Day.

4. There is a reference to Jerusalem, which was typically depicted as the center point of medieval maps of the world, which were usually circular.

5. The circumpunct is also a very old Operative symbol of a Point of Beginning.
6. In the Middle Ages, distances on maps were measured from Jerusalem, a Point of Beginning.
7. In the old sun-worship, the symbol also represents the Deity—the point of origin of all things.
8. The symbol, though not named, is echoed in the answer to the very first question of the catechetical lecture of the First Degree.
9. The Point Within a Circle is the Point of Beginning in an Entered Apprentice’s study of the symbols of Masonry.
10. Most maps of the Middle Ages were oriented with East at the top.
11. In Masonry, the East is the place of Light, or Knowledge.

RETURN TO THE EAST

Using the stated symbolism (that of an individual brother) grafted onto the traditional symbolism (sun worship), we find that the path to enlightenment is toward the East. Since the sun follows a cyclical apparent path through the sky in the form of a sine wave, and as the sun returns to the East every morning to enlighten the day, so does the brother follow a path to truth and enlightenment that is neither straight nor linear, compelling him to return repeatedly to the East for further instruction and enlightenment.

However, when undertaking a study of any Masonic symbol, the student must keep Pike’s words in mind: “Masonry . . . conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it.” (Pike, p. 89-90) “Each symbol is an enigma to be solved and not a lesson to be read.”
Hereford Mappa Mundi, ca. 1300
Erbstorf Map, ca. 1235
REFERENCES


THE ASHLARS

By
Gerald W. Brooks, Past Master
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In Freemasonry we are taught that we are to make a good man better. In this activity we must seek to find some measure to gauge our efforts. As we are using the working tools of the stonemason to give our instructions, then we should look at the material they work with to judge or measure the desired end. The stonemason uses stone to build a strong and enduring edifice that will endure. Our goal is to build the structure that will be strong and endure through time. The ideal building was the Temple of Solomon, which is said to be the perfect building as it was erected to the one true God. The overseers were instructed to accept only those stones that were true and square. The stones presented to them for inspection had to be “good and square work, just such work as would stand the test of the Grand Overseer’s square.” It had to be an oblong or a square. It has been said that when completed the Temple “fitted together with such exact nicety that it resembled the handy work of the Supreme Architect of the Universe.” In my estimation we should use stone that is perfect—a perfect stone, as I see it is the cube. It is equal on all sides, its corners are square and the surface is smooth. If the cube is the perfect stone then the perfect man should be equal to it. That cube or block of stone that is perfect we call a “Perfect Ashlar.” The stone cut rough from the quarries that we start with must be good quality stone that will not crack or crumble. Not any stone can be used for building a building, just as not every man is capable of becoming a Mason. The quality of the stone, or man, must be of good quality. One, stone or man, should be able to endure across time and still be solid. This rough-cut stone of good quality, which comes from the quarry, we call the “Rough Ashlar.”

Man is by his nature imperfect. And in his imperfect state he is sometimes ruled by his passions and he has to deal with them from day to day. Our passions sometimes run high and we must learn to control them. We are informed in our teachings that the “compasses are used to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds.” Once that is done we can begin to use the other tools of Freemasonry to chip off the “rough and superfluous parts of the stones to better fit them for the builder’s use.” We take the tools with which we are taught to use for our moral teachings and make ourselves like that builder’s stone. It is our intention to make us ready for our travel to that place which Shakespeare called (Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2) “that undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns.” As we apply these teachings from the working tools we improve our mind and conscience to become like that perfect stone, for that perfect building, eternal in the heavens. For us the ideal outcome of our instruction is to be that “Perfect Ashlar” that is placed by the will of our Creator to be of assistance to all mankind. We began our Masonic journey as a “Rough Ashlar” and we hope that at the end we might become a “Perfect Ashlar” reflecting that glory of our God to all of mankind where ever we may go. We have become a bearer of Truth, Relief and Brotherly Love, a true Freemason.

When we meet we meet on the level. That could be because all structures must be level in order to stand upright. Our fraternity stands upon the building stones that have been created through the centuries of our existence. The many buildings and men that have been erected stand as a testament to the quality of the workmanship of our teachings. When we look beyond the here
and now we can look to the past for inspiration from those who came before, and we must also look toward the future to view that which we will build. Let us hope that the qualities left to us by the past are passed along to the future and that our efforts do meet the requirement of “good and square work, just such work as stand the test of the Grand Overseer’s Square”—that perfect stone which is required for the building of the Temple of God. May we become the “Perfect Ashlars” for that “spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”
COLOR SYMBOLISM IN MASONIC RINGS

By
Darryl L. Chapman

A newly raised Brother asked me what color stone he should purchase for his Masonic ring. He told me that he saw three basic colors in the jewelry store’s collection of Masonic rings. He relayed that he saw blue, red and black stones. He did not mention the shapes and type of stones as this would have increased the conversation for a time longer. As curious as young men are, so was this young Master Mason. This Brother with all his newly conferred training suspected more symbolism lies within the color of the stone. Well, he was right. The color of the stone is Masonic symbolism and I informed him that colors are powerful driving forces in the history of man and to this day remain so, especially in the symbolism of Freemasonry.

“Freemasonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.” This is a more recent definition of Freemasonry and every Mason should know, remember, and strive to understand it. The definition itself alludes to color symbolism by using the word “beautiful.” Too often we cannot see the symbolism for other symbols that are obvious to our degree of knowledge and understanding or easily obtained without traveling for the esoteric light within “hidden mysteries of freemasonry.” We see the working tools, the Great Lights and Lesser Lights symbolism as they are taught to us from the initiation to the raising of a Master Mason. We may also see other symbolism as we study and practice the lessons taught by our fraternity. A symbol that we never consider is staring at us in the mind’s eye, and it is different shades of light within the color spectrum.

Masons are taught lessons in universality, and color is definitely one that we must seek to understand. Color is a universal system of symbolism that can communicate in all languages. It has a broader range of defining and conveying exact meanings, more so than language, as the spoken word varies in all cultures. Human Beings can innately see tens of thousands of colors through the light energy projected on the retina, more specifically the back of the retina. Here it converts to electrical pulses that are transmitted to the brain. However, in comparison, there are only a small number of spoken languages and fewer words still for all the colors, thus limiting universally defined spoken communications. Therefore, the possibility of millions of colors can collectively communicate one or more meanings by defining exactly the colored light it illuminates, for all of us that have the key. It eliminates the possibility of erroneously perceived ones from verbal transmission.

The three colors that our young Brother saw were the symbols of the three modern branches of Freemasonry. The stone of blue will be a symbol of the “Blue Lodge”, the red stone is primarily a symbol of the Scottish Rite, as they are considered the “French Red Degrees.” The Black Stone is a symbol of the Knights Templar of the York Rite. Now, within the York Rite’s three divisions, colors are more prevalent in each division. The colors of the Chapter, Council and Commandery are powerful symbols that a non-Mason or a non-York Rite Mason cannot see, but to a member of the York Rite of Freemasonry, they illuminate brilliantly. The same is true for the colors within the Scottish Rite. These are modern color secret language, but could they be ancient as well?

Freemasonry was striving and growing in the United States and European Countries before the 18th century. However, there was no Scottish or York Rite in the United States until 1801 when the Mother Supreme Council was formed. Today, still, some Grand Lodges do not accept the Scottish Rite, but don’t forbid other Grand Lodge’s Master Masons from joining and fellowshipping nor do
they consider it a clandestine lodge. Up until 1801, (and some jurisdictions still today) there were simply the Symbolic Lodge, Royal Arch Masonry, and the Commandery, with the Order of the Temple being the last and foremost degree. Granted, there were other degrees around that later were intertwined or accepted into the Scottish or York Rites. The Symbolic Lodge was the 3rd Degree Master Mason and its color was blue. The Royal Arch, or Chapter Degrees could not be obtained until one was a Past Master. The Royal Arch Degree has always been red. Finally, the Commandery degree was the Order of the Temple and its primary color was black. So here, we learn that the three colors of rings the young Master Mason saw were originally the highest degree colors of each of the three ancient levels of Freemasonry. So here we uncover a dual symbolism, that the three basic colors of red, blue, and black were the ancient and are the current representatives of the three modern divisions within Freemasonry. In so doing, the dual symbolism sheds more light by delivering the impact of “as in the ancient days, so in the modern days.” Today’s colors of Freemasonry have symbolically returned to its original design, one of re-birth.

The Square and Compasses Symbol is commonly and publicly recognized by the world as one of Freemasonry. Wherever the Square and Compasses are displayed, in this case on a ring, the viewer sees Freemasonry. However, when intertwined with color, it visually depicts, to an enlightened Mason, further Masonic light by indicating the wearer of the ring is a Master Mason, Scottish or York Rite Mason.

We have associated the basic colors of the ring and its purpose to Freemasons and non-members. There are reasons why the colors are indicative of various levels and degrees of Freemasonry. I hope to enlighten you. First, let me say that the colors of white, black, red and blue are basic colors of the three degrees in the Symbolic Lodge. The question of why the basic colors of the rings in Freemasonry were chosen is the esoteric symbolism.

Blue is the most common color and it has numerous symbolisms through the Symbolic Lodge’s three degrees. It is frequently referred to in the title of the Masonic Lodge, called “The Blue Lodge,” even though the proper name is the “Symbolic Lodge.” We are taught the lodge stations are symbolic of the earth, giving all four directions of North, South, West and East, with their symbolism being an entire research paper of themselves. The lodge’s vertical area is symbolic of the celestial heavens. The Earth’s view vertically towards the Celestial Heavens is blue. Still there are more reasons for calling the Symbolic Lodge “Blue.” Albert Mackey, a prominent and illuminating Masonic author said, “…Blue is a universal symbol of friendship and benevolence, because as it is the color of the vault of heaven, which embraces and covers the whole globe, we are thus reminded that in the breast of every brother these virtues should be equally as extensive.” Generally, the color blue is a symbol of truth, justice, perfection, unity, trust, order, peace and loyalty. All these virtues are taught within our Order. Blue is also associated with conservative tones. Was the color blue always assigned to the symbolic Lodge? No, it was not.

White was originally assigned to the Symbolic Lodge by the Mother Grand Lodge and later changed to blue.2 We first learn of “a lambskin or white leather apron” in the Entered Apprentice Degree. The color white is generally associated with innocence, cleanliness, purity and birth. These

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1 By Brother John Schoeder:
http://www.themasonictrawel.com/Articles/Symbolism/general_files/color_symbolism_and_free
masonry.htm.

2 Schoeder, John.
virtues are representative of the Entered Apprentice. Thus, the apron of an Entered Apprentice represents him and should symbolically remain white throughout his travels.

Blue, white and black are the primary colors of instruction in the three degrees of a Master Mason and are three of the four essential colors in alchemical symbolism, with red being the other essential one of alchemical transformations. Alchemy’s influence is ever-present in Freemasonry. This is based on the Hermetic Law: “As above, so below and as without, so within.”

The three basic colors of alchemical spiritual transformation are white, red, and black. Blue is also a primary color in this Alchemical system. The higher levels of spiritual illumination begin with the color black and can end with it too. Black is the absence of light and represents the earth or ashes, and is the lowest level of spirituality. It is where the seed of the spirit was planted. The color white is purity or rebirth. It is light undivided by not being divided into various colors. It is color at its greatest intensity. All of the colors between black and white are alchemical levels of spiritual growth. Red is alchemically the final stage of spirit fulfillment. It is the end quest of “The Greater Work.” “The Greater Work” is raising the level of man and it consists of three levels. The color blue is alchemically a representation of life force, spirit, eternity, and heaven. It is where a spiritual transformation should successfully mutate, being the end of life and the beginning of spiritual re-embodiment. For example, the seed planted into the black (earth or ashes) is germinated into different stages of growth until it becomes white (re-birth from a seed) by the catalyst or life-force, blue. The end result is “The Greater Work,” red. The starting point could metaphysically and symbolically, be the opposite, as it would be in harmony with the white apron and the Entered Apprentice Degree. Freemasonry teaches us that we are beginning our Masonic Life with the Entered Apprentice degree, and it represents a Mason in his youth. The Fellowcraft degree is representative of becoming a man. The Master Mason Degree denotes being a mature and wise man. As the circle of life goes, the old wise Master Mason will be overcome by death (black) and return to whence he came, ashes of the Earth. This symbolism alludes to the life-force being the taker of life instead of the giver. Thus, the cycle of life continues to revolve.

Colors can also bring about universal emotions more so than verbal language. Man has universal emotions that permeate language and culture. Our reactions to colors are nearly instantaneous and can produce substantial effects on the psyche, whether by subliminal, subconscious, or trained conditioning messages. For example, children tend to like bright, cheerful and happy colors, well reflective of their enthusiastic and zealous temperament. Color symbolism is a part of our daily lives and has been since antiquity. Further still, it will always be a part of our functioning daily lives.

The science of colors and psychology is called color therapy or chromotherapy. The basic colors of Symbolic Freemasonry are blue, red, black and white. In color therapy blue lowers blood pressure and decreases respiration. Black is a self-confidence and strength booster. Red increases heart rate, blood pressure and respiration. White is not listed as color therapeutic as it generally considered as colorless and full of light. Debate continues of modern science’s belief that color therapy is a pseudoscience, and placebo effects are extremely possible. We discovered colors have

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3 Leon Zeldis 33°, The Symbolism of Colors in the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Scottish Research Society, PS Review of Freemasonry.


5 Leon Zeldis 33, The Symbolism of Colors in the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Scottish Research Society, PS Review of Freemasonry.
effects on emotions by visual recognition transcended by subconscious or trained conditioning within our cultures, societies, and languages. What would happen if sound were added to color therapy and or the science of colors?

We all know that sounds are vital in our functioning Masonic Lives. Clearly, the audible sounds of Freemasonry would produce mounds of research, but color and sound? It is true. Color is formed by electromagnetic waves and sounds are made of pressure waves. They are both frequencies too. If one took a musical note of “G” 49 octaves higher it would be in perfect harmony with the exact frequency of the color blue and could not be of any other color. Here, I have enlightened you of our “G” and its direct correlation to the color blue. It should be noted that the standard of “49 octaves higher” is applicable of all musical notes to harmonize with their correlating color.

The science of colors and sounds can also be used for therapy and is called a “wheel of Light” or “Chakra.” The Chakra system teaches that the color blue is representative of one of its seven total sections. It relates the color blue to the Chakra section (the Throat) that links to creativity and ability to communicate. This art is another research paper of sounds within Freemasonry (i.e., sounds of the obligation coming from the candidate’s throat).

Color symbolism has a history in religion. Colors have been used in religious symbolism and dated as far back as 90,000 BC. Colors are mentioned in the Holy Bible of Christians. It speaks of Jews and the colors of the tassels when building King Solomon’s Temple, incidentally they were blue. The Hindu religion uses colors as symbols. In North America, the Apache and Navajo Nations use colors as religious and sacred symbols. The Iowa Nation holds four colors sacred, yellow, red, white and black. They represent the four races of man to the Iowa Nation.

This paper started out from the simple question of the stone’s color in a Masonic ring. We found out why the color blue is prevalent in Freemasonry, more specifically why the first three degrees are called the “Blue Lodge.” Masonic symbolism relates that our canopy of heaven is blue and our lodge room is representative of earth and its canopy. We went further by discovering the Alchemical intertwining with Freemasonry as it relates to the color blue symbolizing the all powerful life force of God’s power. Science even came into play with the color blue. So should a Master Mason with no further degrees wear a ring of any colored stone other than blue? My answer would be no, since the color blue is representative of the three degrees of Freemasonry and no degree is higher in stature and is the color symbolism of a spiritual eternal heaven. Life eternal is what we pray to receive and nothing is of more importance; therefore, a ring with a blue stone is the highest level for the highest level of Freemasonry to be worn by a just, upright man and Master Mason.


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7 http://www.princetonomol.com/groups/idad/lessons/middle/color2.htm#symbolism.
THE SOUNDS OF FREEMASONRY

By
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Stooksbury Lodge No. 602

A candidate’s first physical connection with Masonic initiation immediately begins to build anxiety within him—stemming from the unknown, contained of his own darkness. His apprehensive undertaking is coupled by an uncertain future lying in wait as he stands before the door of preparation room for the first time. Here begins his Masonic journey as he hears the universal sounds emanating from within. He begins the first leg of his travels with not a word, but instead, a sound, one of the many hidden mysteries of Freemasonry—though it cannot be fully discovered until the sound is defined and its direct correlation to the Mysteries is understood by the aspirant.

There are several definitions of sound, as well as different forms of it. One definition is “Sound is a mechanical wave that is an oscillation of pressure transmitted through a solid, liquid, or gas, composed of frequencies within the range of hearing and of a level sufficiently strong to be heard, or the sensation stimulated in organs of hearing by such vibrations.”¹ ² Another definition is, “vibrations sensed by ear: vibrations traveling through air, water, or some other medium, especially those within the range of frequencies that can be intercepted by the human ear and decoded by the brain. At sea level and freezing point, the speed of sound through the air is 1,220 km (760 mi) per hour.”³ One last definition and quite simple, “Transmitted vibrations of any frequency.”⁴ However, there are sound waves or vibrations that are above and below the ranges of human hearing; they are ultrasound and infrasound respectively.

Ultrasound is sound of a frequency above the upper limit of the normal range of human hearing, which is about 20 kilohertz.⁵ Modern medicine would be set back decades if it were not for ultrasound. We see three dimensional images of a baby in the womb by sound penetrating the body. It bursts kidney stones by penetrating the body. Therapeutic ultrasound gives deep tissue and muscle massage. This vibration is exploited on an immense scale within our world.

Infrasound is listed as a sound that is lower in frequency than 20 Hz (hertz) or cycles per second, which is the “normal” limit of human hearing. The infrasound sound pressure must be sufficiently high for a human to perceive it.⁶ The current civilization, as we know, uses infrasound to study and predict earthquakes. It was used to locate artillery sites during the war against Socialism in

² <http://www.wikipedia.com/>
³ Encarta World English Dictionary
⁴ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/>
⁶ <http://www.wikipedia.com/>
Europe we now know as World War II. Modern medicine utilizes infrasound as ballistocardiography and seismocardiography to monitor heart vibrations, as it has the ability to travel long distances and traverse obstacles. The African elephant uses infrasound from their calls to communicate long distances. It is projected to reach six miles.

Infrasound has been known to cause feelings of awe or fear in humans. Since it is not consciously perceived, it can make people feel vaguely that supernatural events are taking place even though they cannot hear the infrasound. Some film soundtracks put infrasound into their movies to produce unease or disorientation in the viewer. The infrasound and low-frequency noise produced by some wind turbines is believed to cause certain breathing and digestive problems in humans and other animals close to the turbines. All these vibrations—and we don’t know it is happening, could infrasound be heard or detected in the House of the Lord God?

Sounds of our planet travel through many venues. A common method of transmitting sounds on the third rock from the Sun is accomplished through the air. An enclosed area is full of air molecules containing a mixture of electrically charged nitrogen and oxygen atoms randomly colliding around more than the speed of sound. However, this area has empty space between the molecules. When a sound wave penetrates the container the energy pushes the randomly colliding air molecules in the direction of the wave trajectory creating pressure that a human ear amplifies to the brain, or on levels above or below the human hearing means.

A 21st century developing science is named quantum physics or quantum mechanics. This newly discovered science relates that everything in the universe or multi-verse is a wave, or frequency. It is based on the smallest sub-atomic particles of matter and their innate conception and application which can generate light, vibration (sound waves) and energy. For example, before the transistor or microchip, the vacuum tube was the source of electronic technology. The vacuum tube is on the macro scale of electronic technology, where the transistor or microchip is on the sub-atomic level. The microchip in supercomputers allows for complex mathematical calculations in seconds, where vacuum tube computers would take 19,000 years and be the size of skyscrapers to do the same. These calculations give us the modern hand held cellular telephone, which would be the size of an Egyptian Obelisk (an example of which we know as the Washington Monument) without quantum mechanics.

It can be safely stated with quantum mechanics that all matter in the universe produces sound waves or frequencies that penetrate all matter itself. The human body is not exempt from matter’s sound waves invasion, nor is any matter safe from the vibrations of it. A noted and respected professor confers that, “... any unwanted sound, soft or loud, sweet or nasty, creates a multidimensional envelope that does more than intrude—it takes over not only your acoustic space, but your mind space as well. Acoustic intrusions reduce your freedom of thought. There is no

7 <http://www.wikipedia.com>


11 Bindloss, Ian P. Contributions of Physics to the Information Age. Dept of Physics at U.C.L.A.
escaping sound. It meets your body and forcibly enters your mind, not just through your ears but also via your bones, your flesh, and your body cavities.”

The human body produces different vibrations of sound from a multitude of sources within its very essence. Therefore, it produces heat, vibration frequencies, and energy. When a human is breathing heavily and rapidly it corresponds to a rapid pulse and heart rate. If one lowers the breathing rate it will slow the heart to achieve balance and vice-versa.

We discovered that an emanating sound causes an effect on all universal matter. The human body, therefore, will affect the space and matter around it. Vibration balance is needed for universal harmony and the body is always in battle to achieve or maintain it. However, the same can be said of an external sound adversely affecting the human body. It can be physiological and psychological. The loud sounding siren of a police car approaching behind you signaling you to stop can cause changes in the body. The physical effects can be a rapidly increased heart and breathing rate. The psychological effect of the siren can cause irrational behavior, such as the impulse to evade arrest by fleeing at extreme speeds that could result in death—when in fact the loud intrusion could simply pass you by, but not before it intruded your mind and body. Can a loud intrusion be heard by a deaf person?

When I was a teenager listening to very loud music in my room my father would tell me to turn the volume down, as it was “loud enough for a deaf person to hear.” I never suspected he was correct until I witnessed it with my own eyes and ears. My first cousin is completely deaf but her children are not. My cousin’s children are of my age so we generally grew up around each other. One day we hearing people were in the back seat as my deaf cousin was in the front seat and her deaf husband was driving. My ear drums nearly burst as the radio was pounding sound waves from the speakers. Then, I saw my cousin and her husband put one of their hands on each of the front speakers. What I saw next amazed me. My cousin and her husband were moving their bodies in unison with each other as they were rhythmically in time with the music! They were feeling the music internally! Therefore, this just verifies that sound waves can affect the human being internally through vibration.

One of the seven Hermetic Teachings of Hermes Trismegistus is the principle of vibration. Hermes is believed to be walking on the Earth at the same time as Abraham. He was made a god called Thoth by ancient Egyptians. This principle is that all matter in the Universe is in motion and nothing is motionless—further, that everything moves, vibrates and circles. If everything built of matter vibrates, could a thought in the brain be a vibrating form of matter? Hermes says yes. Modern science reveals that a thought in the brain causes electrical impulses. So, yes, a thought in the brain is matter, therefore it vibrates. If it vibrates it can penetrate any matter. A thought is a driving force that could move the Earth. For example, a grain of sand is a form of matter. It is quite minuscule, but matter nonetheless, and it is not powerful. If you have the required amount of sand in unison it can cause the tide of the oceans to ebb and flow, as the collective sand grains of the moon do. Simply, vast amounts of concurring thoughts are powerful.

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13 Hermes Trismegistus was a man that predated Moses and the Egyptian Pyramids. His teaching rivaled the Christian religion. His teachings are thought to be the father of Alchemy.

Sound therapy is a modern alternative medicinal method that uses sound waves and frequencies to treat the human body. It puts the body into a balance. The frequencies of vitamins, minerals and other pharmaceutical products are tested along with all known matter. These frequencies are replicated and introduced into the body for treatment to reduce or eliminate harmful frequencies.\textsuperscript{15}

Research has shown that when we are deprived of certain light frequencies we can become sick. One of the most fascinating scientific facts to emerge recently is that sound behaves in a similar fashion to light. In other words, sound and light act like vitamins and minerals in our body. Most people are deficient in certain tones and this is traced when the human voice is recorded and monitored. We need a certain balance of sound frequencies, which may vary from one individual to another, in order to maintain our bodies in a healthy state.

Recent experiments indicate that one of the most powerful ways to heal the individual is to play back the missing frequencies at a low octave which corresponds to brain wave frequencies. What happens here is quite remarkable and really beautiful. The body is simply helped to heal itself by activating the control center in the brain that looks after this healing.\textsuperscript{16}

The ancients of India give us the Chakra System. It derives from ancient Sanskrit, about 2,600 years ago, meaning “wheel of light” or originally, “Chariot Wheel.” Their teachings, writings and studies of the body energy points are correct by modern medicine standards and anatomically correct. Its treatment of the body utilizes color and sound frequency applications. There are seven Chakra Points and each point represents specific body sections and organs. The fifth Chakra point is located at the throat. The color used is blue. The musical note is “G.” The parts of the body affected are throat, neck, arms, brachial or solar plexus and the endocrine gland associated is the thyroid gland. This Chakra is associated to one’s creativity and ability to communicate.

‘Tis not the many oaths that makes the truth,
But the plain single vow that is vowed true.
What is not holy, that we swear not by,
But take the Highest to witness.\textsuperscript{17}

Centuries ago civilization was illiterate as only a small minute amount of the population could read. Further still backwards in time, before the first written form of communication, vocalization was the only considered form of transmitted thoughts. In those days, one’s word was his bond to another, a promise. However, it was considered sacred to vocalize a vow aloud and say it in God’s name. The Christian Bible clearly says that if a man of Israel swears an oath aloud and proclaims it unto God, the same shall be a covenant unto the Lord God. The breaking of this solemn oath is breaking the covenant of the Lord God of Israel. The Pagans, ancient and present, consider oath

\textsuperscript{15} <http://www.biowaves.com>.


\textsuperscript{17} William Shakespeare (1564–1616), British dramatist, poet. Diana, in \textit{All's Well That Ends Well}, Act 4, Scene 2, I. 21-2.
breaking as one of the greatest dishonors. For example, their cast spells (prayer offerings) usually end with, “As my will, so mote it be” or “As my word is must be done.” This means you are bound to your promise by the vocalized words themselves. Moreover, if you violate the oath(s) the words that you said aloud become the power of the curse itself.

“When the ears of the student are ready to hear, then cometh lips to fill them with Wisdom.”

The oath of all three degrees of Freemasonry must be sworn aloud, and we all know how it begins and how it ends. The vibrations given from performing the oath give essence to the words. Can we feel them throughout the silent lodge room? The vocalized oath’s vibration penetrates the brothers there assembled in the otherwise silent room and bonds the oath taker to all present, moreover, all of the Fraternity.

The Christian Bible (Kings James Version) states, teaches and expounds sound throughout its pages from cover to cover. It tells how the children of Israel sounded the trumpets and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down. The Holy Bible says before the building of the House of the Lord that, “And there shalt thou build an Altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them.”

Moreso, the Christian bible tells how important sound or the lack of it was also during the building of King Solomon’s Temple or the House of the Lord. In the book of 1st Kings: “And the House, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.”

One can readily determine that this passage, in and of itself, teaches that intrusive sounds would violate the sanctity of the House of the Lord. It was silent, as it was Holy unto God. The silence could be Holy unto the Lord God of Israel because of the pagan god’s loud intrusive sounds within their Temples, and the two religions were in fierce competition. The Hebrew God was always in competition with paganism within the Torah, or first five books of the Hebrew Bible, and had far less believers in the land (a minority as such) where they were delivered to, from the Exodus of Egypt. The competition was within Israel itself and pitted tribe versus tribe.

In times antiquity the idolatrous Israelites worshipped pagan gods, namely, Baal, Ashtoreth, and Molech. These gods had extravagant “High Places” or otherwise known as “Temples” where loud music of drums was performed by the High Priests. The priests would make any noise to drown the horrific cries of the children. Inside the temple was a brazen hollow statue of Molech with a bull head or calf head wearing a crown and having welcoming outstretched arms. The arms were heated from a fire within and usually the first born male child was placed in them and burned to death. Therefore, the Hebrew God, Jehovah or Yahweh would be the welcoming and appealing deity for those who suffered the loss of children, or whomever would oppose it, as he required no sacrifice of children or “passing through the fire” of Pagan Israelites. Yahweh’s Temple would be of complete contrary of paganism, and quiet as well. The Lord God of Israel had pure anger and disgust of the pagan Israelites’ worshippning of human sacrificing gods.

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19 Deuteronomy Chapter 27 verse 5, King James Version of the Holy Bible.

20 1st Kings Chapter 6, verse 7, Kings James Version of the Holy Bible.


22 The Holy Bible, Jeremiah, Chapter 32, verse 35.
was a fertility goddess. The pagan Israelites were worshipping them by having more sex. The more the sex, the more pious one would become. Another sound inside the pagan temple would be a pagan worshiper having sex with the female Temple Prostitutes, or with a qadesh. 24 Priests and worshipers would indulge together in drunken orgies inside “the high places.” 25 This would be another reason for quietness in Yahweh’s House. The sounds of Molech Temples would be intrusive by causing one’s body to be invaded by uninvited frequencies of sound to the non-believers.

As an initiate of Freemasonry, he too is building a stone temple, a temple of his own moral, social and religious future. The Hebrew Bible states, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” 26 As the initiate performs ambulation around the four directions of earth and the universe within the room, he hears gavels striking granite. The world he is traveling radiates the sounds of stone being chiseled. These intrusive sounds should penetrate the candidate at the speed of sound causing vibrations inside his body, thereby causing his heart to accelerate suddenly from being startled. These shocks to the body should also send vibrations to the brain which forms thought, that is matter. Could the sounds be balancing the candidate for the solemn oath? Maybe purging unbalances? It is uncertain. The initiate should later discover that stones were being made in other parts of the world to build the House of the Lord—such is the same of his temple. A Freemason should carve the stones outside his body, as no stones were being chiseled inside his temple; therefore, the temple being made within him is representative of the one built for the Lord to dwell in as well. A Freemason should show the world that he is carving his stone in public view for a balanced and harmonized placement within his own sanctified Temple.

Christianity calls this practice, “Letting your Light Shine.” 27

If we applied modern quantum physics to the building of the Temple and our personal Masonic Temple would it prove, disprove or on some level concur with the ancients? This science says all matter is made of waves or frequencies that permeate all matter on some sub-atomic level. Therefore, a perfect house would have no intrusive frequencies and would be totally balanced and harmonized. It would be Holy unto the Lord and a representation and reflection of his perfection. It appears that the ancients had a firm grip of vibration sound, as well did our Freemasonry predecessors.

The Lodge Room is held in due veneration by Freemasons, and at times due silence is required of the members. One wonders why due silence is often required within the lodge walls and is remarked of the Holiness to the Lord of His House. The Masonic Lodge is a representation of King Solomon’s Temple, the earth and further still the Universe. We all, as Master Masons, have been escorted by the Sun revolving three times three within the Universe and sounds are vibrating constantly during the revolutions. The vibrating sounds stop exactly when the Sun stops. But the ritual continues.

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23 The Holy Bible, Leviticus, Chapter 20, verses 2-3.
24 Qadesh is a male temple prostitute.
25 “Ramah” defined as a “High Place” is an illicit place of pagan worship.
26 The Holy Bible, 1st Corinthians 3:16, King James Version.
27 “Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.” Proverbs 24:27
The basic philosophy, since 6,500 BCE, of Hindus is “all is connected through all.” This is rational as we have uncovered or re-discovered that all matter vibrates and has effect on all that is. Time has proven this repeatedly by science; moreover, as new sciences or mediums develop, they all are predetermined to intersect at the original point of matter, vibration. An intrusive vibration was historically and biblically evil. A non-intrusive vibrating sound wave has historically been deemed sacred, the essence and maintaining of matter, and it can be the catalyst of the Big Bang Theory. I believe in the Supreme Architect (God) and the Big Bang Theory of our Universe. My belief is battled by true believers from both sides, the ones of God or the ones of theory, and now quantum physics have proved my belief correct. The Universe began from a “Big Bang of Matter” but God created that vibrating matter or God Particle, and this is a hidden mystery of Freemasonry’s first sound. This first sound, of a candidate’s future new life as a Freemason, is a representation and emulation of the beginning of the Universe, and more. . . .
THE GOLDEN MEAN

By
Ernest Aloysious Chapman

“. . . it is precisely through the Pythagorean approach that quantity (number) and quality are discovered to be integrally related. . . . It is particularly true in the realms of music and what has been called “sacred geometry” that one can gain insight into the Pythagorean conception of Number as both creative paradigm and qualitative relation.”

- David Fideler

When studying the Golden Mean, one is almost immediately confronted by a set of unique mathematical relationships that seem at first glance to be impossible. Its self-generating properties are unequaled by any other proportion, as it has the property of arising from a number of different constructions that can be made with a compass and ruler, yet it also shows up consistently in countless natural patterns and forms, as well as in the relationships of the basic building blocks of three dimensional space. These building blocks, the Five Platonic Solids, can all be constructed out of each other, and can be represented two-dimensionally by a compass-ruler construction that relies on the Golden Mean proportion (Lawlor, 1982: 98). They also all fit perfectly around a frame composed of three Golden Mean rectangles joined at right angles to each other. (McIntosh, 1997: 41)

It’s not hard to imagine how these harmonies, proportions and constructions have been considered sacred and revealing of divine principles by many people throughout history; even if the modern student has no interest in combining philosophical inquiry with the study of the forms of nature and the structure of space, it’s hard to deny that something is amazing about this.

Before the Golden Mean is constructed, it is helpful to see it within a certain philosophical and historical context. To separate it from this context and deal with it as nothing more than an interesting mathematical phenomenon would be foolish, because it is within this context that it was first discovered and used. In the schools of ancient Egypt and Greece, the study of Geometry, literally “earth-measure,” was undertaken for more reasons than just flood control and irrigation. Written records as well as archeological evidence suggests that early on in the history of mankind, Geometry was studied in many different cultures as part of an attempt to bring the student into a relationship of oneness with the rest of reality—what Buddhists might call self-realization or Nirvana. In the Pythagorean school this state of oneness was sought through the meditative

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2 Lawlor makes a cross-cultural comparison of the permeance of this approach in the ancient world in the introduction to Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice.
contemplation of ratio and proportion, certain observances such as vegetarianism, applied ethics, mysticism, and philosophy.3

The Pythagorean school was not the only school to combine philosophy with geometry; indeed, wherever civilizations have flourished, this interdisciplinary approach has existed. Hampshire College is a good example; in America today, there is a growing concern that our way of conceptualizing reality must take into account the interconnectivity of everything, best described by the word synergy. Students of Sacred Geometry come to a mathematical realization of the principles of synergy through studying the Golden Mean and Five Platonic Solids; realizing that the basic mathematical patterns of nature are organized synergetically has direct physical implications as well as philosophical, political, social and spiritual ones. Buckminster Fuller describes his notion of synergy:

“[C]hemists found the universe already in complex association and working very well. Every time they tried to take it apart or separate it out, the separate parts were physically divested of their associative potentials, so the chemists had to recognize that there were associated behaviors of wholes unpredicted by parts; they found there was an old word for it, synergy. Because synergy alone explains the eternally regenerative integrity of Universe, because synergy is the only word having its unique meaning, and because decades of querying university audiences around the world have disclosed only a small percentage familiar with the word synergy, we may conclude that society does not understand nature.” (Fuller, 1975: 4)

Whether or not Fuller’s conclusion is correct, it is important to see the connection between his notion of wholeness and the Pythagorean school’s. Recently, science has given a great deal of support to this synergetic philosophy without even realizing it, largely due to its dedication to impartiality and experimentation, as well as the scientific method. David Fideler observes: “Hellbent on proving the mechanistic notions of 18th-century materialism, physicists have discovered that the deeper they push into matter the more it looks like the cosmos of the Pythagoreans and Platonists.” (Guthrie, 1987: 45)

Central to realizing this wholeness is the study of ratio and proportion, which Lawlor describes as fundamental to both human senses and the objects of our perception, which are “best understood as systems of pure pattern, or as geometric structures of form and proportion.” Quoting Bertrand Russell, Lawlor tells the reader that “What we perceive as various qualities of matter are actually differences in periodicity.” The study of ratios and proportions, then, is functionally identical to the act of engaging in sense perception; our existence, as well as our awareness of it, seems to be defined on the most basic level by geometry. (Lawlor, 1982: 4)

Certain specific ratios and proportions, among them the square roots of 2, 3, and 5, the Golden Mean, the Binary and Fibonacci sequences, the musical means—Arithmetic, Harmonic and Geometric, and the Five Platonic Solids, have been studied for thousands of years by mystics and scientists alike. The Golden Mean is unique because of its ability to describe both an ideal philosophical principle, summed up in the Golden Rule of “Do unto others as you would have them

3 These principles are explained at length in The Pythagorean Sourcebook, which has translations of many ancient Greek texts, such as Iamblichus’s Life of Pythagoras, Plato’s Timaeus, the writings of Diogenes Laertius, Ocellus Lucanus, Aristoxenus, and Philolaus.
do unto you” as well as the basic process by which many living and nonliving forms grow and achieve structural stability.

**Defining the Golden Mean Algebraically**

The first thing that should be clear is that the Golden Mean does not actually exist as a definable number, like 5 or 29 or 342. It is instead a transcendent principle which can only be pointed toward with ever increasing accuracy, and never arrived at. The reason for this will become clear momentarily, but first we have to define it.

Lawlor begins his discussion of the Golden Mean by defining a ratio as a “measure of difference . . . to which at least one of our sensory faculties can respond.” Thus, the comparison of one thing to another is a ratio. In algebra, ratios can be expressed as the comparisons of the lengths of two lines, or two segments of the same line, to each other; for example, $1:2$ or $a:b$. A proportion is a little more complex, and is the relationship, or ratio, between two ratios; for example, $1:3::2:6$ or $a:b::c:d$ (at left). According to Lawlor, the Greeks saw ratio as representing “the elementary basis for conceptual judgment” and proportion as representing a more complex way of conceptualizing sense perceptions, known in Greek as analogy. One step up from this was the limitation to three terms, $a:b::b:c$, which ties the observer, thought of by the Pythagoreans as $b$, to the observed differences of $a$ and $b$. This relationship is a mean relationship, where $b$ is the mean between $a$ and $c$; for example, $1:2::2:4$ or $a:b::b:c$ (at right). It is described by Lawlor as revealing of the interdependence between the objective world ($a$) and the perceiving individual ($b$), who then conceptualizes ($c$) based on his/her perceptions. (Lawlor, 1982: 44)

However, there is an even simpler and more profound way to describe synergetic proportional thinking with algebra, and it is found in the Golden Mean, the only proportion with two terms. As Lawlor says, “This occurs when the smaller term is to the larger term in the same way as the larger term is to the smaller plus the larger.” Written as $a:b::b:(a+b)$, the Golden Mean can be constructed in many different ways. It is visually represented as a line which has been cut at the Golden Mean proportion. (Lawlor, 1982: 44-45)

The ratio of the length of $a$ to $b$ is called Phi ($\Phi$), an irrational decimal approximated at 1.618033989. Phi is actually the most irrational number. This is because out of all the irrational numbers, the approximations based on rounding for Phi are the furthest away from its real value. As Stephen McIntosh says in *The Golden Mean Book and Caliper Set*, “Phi’s property of being the most irrational number is significant in its role in generating dynamical systems.” McIntosh goes on to describe how, in the field of fractal geometry, researchers have discovered that Phi “describes the transition zone between the areas of chaos and ordered complexity in dynamical systems. . . . In other words, the Golden Mean is an attractor at the edge of chaos—the boundary between the finite and the infinite.” (McIntosh, 1997: 35-49) Its strange behavior may never be fully explained, then, because of its origin in the infinite, a realm beyond the finite abilities of human comprehension. We can never understand it in its fullness because all measurements of Golden Mean proportions in nature are actually just close approximations, the same as any other perfect or ideal form. The act of studying this is, in itself, an undertaking that inspires a great deal of growth.

Now let’s go back to the diagram of the line cut into sections $a$, $b$, and $c$. The actual values of $a$ and $b$ may vary, but if $a+b=c$, of whatever length, is cut into segments $a$ and $b$ at the Golden Mean
Proportion, then \( a/b = c/\Phi \) and \( b/a = (\Phi - 1) \). So for instance, if \( a = 1 \), then \( b = 6.18033989 \) and \( c = 1.618033989 \), and \( b/a = (\Phi - 1) \). Furthermore, \( 11/6.18033989 = \Phi \). This can be done with any number substituted for \( a \), \( b \), or \( c \), as long as the proportion remains set at the Golden Mean. This set of relationships becomes even more interesting as well as unique when the values for the lengths \( a \) and \( b \), as well as the wholeness \( c \), are irrational Phi proportions themselves.

For instance:

- If \( a = 1 \), \( b = 6.18033989 \) and \( c = 1.618033989 \).
- Then \( a/b = c \) and \( a/c = b \).
- \( b/a = b \) and \( b/c = (b^2) \).
- \( c/a = c \) and \( c/b = (c + 1) \).

Thus Phi exhibits a unique flexibility; subtracting from or adding 1 to it doesn’t really change its ability to generate the Golden Mean Proportion. This unique property hints at the universality of the Golden Mean—revealed in its relationship to the number one. It should also be noted here that the word “universe” is Latin for “one turn.” Phi gets its name from the 21st letter of the Greek alphabet; it’s no accident that 21 just happens to be the eighth term of the Fibonacci Sequence. Just as Golden Mean measurements in nature are never precise yet still point to it, the Fibonacci sequence, as it gets larger and larger, when divided against itself, yields ratios closer and closer to Phi, never arriving at it; Phi is a destination that lies across an infinite horizon.

In Sacred Geometry, the whole universe is represented in the single turn of a compass, creating a circle which generates the Golden Mean geometrically, as we will see below. (Schneider, 1995: 8) When combined with the circle and hexagon, a natural polygon arising from the stacking of circles, it also provides a gateway between accurate, flat perspective two dimensional and three dimensional views of the Five Platonic Solids. (Lawlor, 1982: 98) But before we go there, while we’re still looking at things purely algebraically, let’s take a look at the Fibonacci sequence.

The Fibonacci sequence is attributed to Leonardo Fibonacci of Pisa, who published a book titled Liber Abaci (The Book of Computation) in 1202. This book is the reason why Europe switched over from Roman numerals to the current system of Arabic numerals. In this book, Fibonacci conveys an ancient number puzzle that now carries his name. The first term is 1, and each successive term is found by adding the two terms that come before it. (Schneider, 1995: 115) Since you arrive at \( T(n) \) by adding the two previous terms, an important question is: How did you get the first term? This is symbolic of the greatest mystery of all—how did the universe come to be? Whatever the reason, it exists, and so in this context creation itself is represented in the leap from 0 to 1. As Lao-Tsu would say, everything comes from nothing.

The first term being 1, we now add 1 to what preceded it, and that is 0. So: the second term is \( 1 + 0 = 1 \), the third term is \( 1 + 1 = 2 \), the fourth term is \( 2 + 1 = 3 \), and so on. Carried out to the twelfth term, the sequence looks like this: 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144. It is interesting to note that the twelfth term is 144, which is the square of twelve.

The Fibonacci sequence has many applications; for instance, it can be used to model certain patterns of growth in plants, such as the number of new branches a Sneezewort grows at a time. According to Schneider, “Each branch lengthens through time and then reproduces another like itself, which repeats the pattern of Fibonacci branching.” (Schneider, 1995: 118) This is the principle of self-referencing regeneration, which creates living forms.
Rabbit populations can be modeled after the Fibonacci sequence as well. If each month is considered a successive term in the sequence, the number of rabbits will correspond, in an ideal setting, with its term in the Fibonacci sequence. This is because it usually takes a pair of rabbits one month to mature, after which they can only produce one other pair. That pair then takes another month to mature, and in the next month it produces another pair. Assuming that each new pair continues to survive indefinitely, the model for the population growth is then based on the Fibonacci Sequence. (Schneider, 1995: 1115-119) It is important to realize, of course, that nature doesn't follow rules just because human beings conceive of them. But on average, data tends to confirm that this is a defining principle of the pattern of growth and physical structure of many living organisms, at least according to every author I have read who has written about this.

An interesting thing happens when the Fibonacci sequence is divided into itself: the ratio of one term against the one before it gets closer and closer to the Golden Mean. If this variance is displayed on a graph, where the x-axis = T(n) and the y-axis = T(n)/T(n-1), the progression closer and closer to the Phi ratio can be seen visually. For the purpose of graphing this, we'll calculate Phi exactly as ((\sqrt{5})+1)/2. Using \sqrt{5} is a simple way to get an exact value for Phi, attained geometrically with the simple tools of compass and straightedge. In the next section I'll explain some of the geometric constructions; for now, just look at the graph below.
Methods of Geometric Construction

The Golden Mean is most easily generated by $\sqrt{5}$ through algebra in one of the following two ways: $\Phi=\frac{((\sqrt{5})-1)}{2}$; $\Phi=\frac{((\sqrt{5})+1)}{2}$. The first way gives Phi as .618033989, and the second way gives it as 1.618033989. Phi takes many different forms geometrically, all of which utilize the above algebraic equations in different ways, some more complex than others. Make sure to use a pencil if you do these constructions.

Construction 1: Phi Generated from $\sqrt{5}$ in Double Square Rectangle

The first two constructions are taken from Schneider, pages 121 and 131, but I did the calculations myself.

1) Construct a double square rectangle (2 by 1) from two squares, each having sides equal to 1.

2) Draw its diagonal, equal to $\sqrt{5}$. $(1^2)+(2^2)=((\sqrt{5})^2)$

3) Using your compass, cut the $\sqrt{5}$ line with an arc that has a radius of 1, dividing $\sqrt{5}$ into $1:(((\sqrt{5})-1)$.

4) Make another arc from the left side of the $\sqrt{5}$ line, radius equal to $((\sqrt{5})-1)$, and swing it down to cut the base of the rectangle into sections: $2-((\sqrt{5})-1)=(a)$ and $((\sqrt{5})-1)=(b)$.

5) Proof: $((\sqrt{5})-1)/(2-((\sqrt{5})-1))=\Phi$, and also equals $((\sqrt{5})+1)/2$. When compared to the earlier definition of the Golden Mean, the relationships become more apparent.

\[
\begin{align*}
a/b & = c \\
b/a & = b \\
c/b & = (b+2) \\
c/a & = c \\
\end{align*}
\]

Construction 2: The Golden Mean Rectangle from a Square

1) Construct a square with sides equal to 1.

2) Draw a line from the middle of the top to the middle of the bottom, parallel to the two sides.

3) Draw diagonal lines from the middles of the bottom and top to the right top and right bottom corners of the square (only one shown). Since the side is equal to one, and half of the side is equal to .5, the diagonal will be equal to $\sqrt{5}/2$; by the Pythagorean Theorem, $\sqrt{((.5^2)+(1^2))} = (\sqrt{5})/2$. Notice that this value, 1.118033989, is $\Phi-.5$. This is one of the ways in which $\sqrt{5}$ generates $\Phi$. 

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4) Making compass arcs with centers at the midpoints of the top and bottom and radii equal to \((\sqrt{5})/2\), swing them down to extend the base and the top further out to the right. By putting \((\sqrt{5})/2\) on the same line as .5, which adds them together, the Golden Mean proportion is set up with the length of the resulting line.

\[
\frac{.5}{1} = \frac{\sqrt{5}}{2}
\]

5) Connect the ends of the arcs with a line equal to 1, parallel to the other two sides and perpendicular to the top and bottom sides. Then erase everything but the Golden Mean rectangle. If you were to cut out three of these and join them together at right angles, you would have a three dimensional frame that fits inside each of the Five Platonic Solids. Before I describe the Five Platonic Solids, though, there are two more constructions of the Golden Mean that will lead us there.

Construction 3: The Pentagram Star

This construction is my own, although its basic concept is inspired by Lawlor's *Squaring the Circle* construction on pages 74-79, and a lot of the calculations are similar to his.

1) Open up the compass and draw circle OA, radius equal to 1. Then, select any point on the radius and draw another circle of equal size, and call it AO. You now have the starting point for all 2-D constructions in Sacred Geometry: the *vesica piscis*. This construction can be used to get triangles, squares, and pentagons, which make up the faces of the Five Platonic Solids. For now, we'll just use it to get a pentagon.

2) Connect points B and C at the top and bottom of the figure to get \(\sqrt{3}\), bisecting the shared radius OA at D and making points E and F. With center D and radius of .5, draw a smaller circle, DE. This smaller circle fits perfectly inside the *vesica piscis*.

3) Use points A and F to define a new line, extending out past F to intersect with the radius of circle OA at G. Then, create another circle with G as its center, and its radius defined as tangent to circle DE at H, named GH. The length of the radius GH is 618033989, or \(\Phi\). Here is how it is proven:
Givens: $OG = 1$ (radius of circle OA); $OD=.5$ (radius of circle DE);
angle $OAG =$angle $DAF = 45^\circ$ (given);
$\Delta FDA$ is similar to $\Delta GOA$ (law of similarity)
therefore: $GOD$ is a right angle because $FDA$ is a right angle.

Proof: since $GOD$ is a right angle, sides $GO$ and $OD$ form two sides of a double square rectangle with $GO=1$ and $OD=.5$;
therefore $GD=(\sqrt{5})/2$ (defined above in construction #2);
$GH=(GD-DH)=(\sqrt{5})/2-(.5) = .618033989$.

Furthermore, circle $GH$ provides the arc cuts to divide circle OA into five equal pieces, or ten equal pieces, depending on what you do next. Assuming this to be true, the construction would need to generate angles of $72^\circ$, $36^\circ$ and $18^\circ$ at angles $IOC$, $IOG$ and $IOG/2$, respectively.

Givens: draw line $OJ$, bisecting $GI$ to make a right angle at $J$;
angle $JOG = angle IOG/2 = angle IOC/4$; $18^\circ=(36^\circ/2)=(72^\circ/4)$.

Proof: sin($18^\circ$) = .3090169944;
$JG/OG= .3090169944$; therefor angle $JOG$ is $18^\circ$. It follows then that angle $IOG$ is $36^\circ$ and angle $IOC$ is $72^\circ$, and so it is proven that circle $GH$ divides circle OA into five, ten, or twenty parts.

What this third construction shows us is that out of the intersection of two circles, $\sqrt{5}$ can be easily generated through a double square rectangle found by connecting certain rather obvious lines, revealing the Golden Mean and dividing the original circle into five pieces, producing the pentagram star. Thus, $\sqrt{5}$ can be seen visually to be the generative principle behind the Golden Mean; wherever $\sqrt{5}$ is constructed, Phi can’t be far behind. The pentagram star, as an expression of $\sqrt{5}$ and the Golden Mean, contains within it an endless stream of Golden Mean proportions.

Construction 4: The $\sqrt{5}$- Inspired Generation of the Icosahedron
This construction is taken from Lawlor, Sacred Geometry, pp. 98-99.

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Step 1) Draw circle OA, inscribing a hexagon within it that shares the same side-length as its radius, equal to 1. Draw its vertical diameter, AB, and number each apex of the hexagon 1-6.

Step 2) Bisect radius O-5 with line 6-4, making point C. With center at C and radius CA, equal to (√5)/2, swing an arc down to cut radius O-2 at its Φ proportion, point 11. With center at O and radius O-11, draw a new circle. Label the points 7-11.

Step 3) By connecting points 7-8-9, one of the 20 faces of the icosahedron is revealed. Connecting 7-8-2, 8-9-4, 9-7-6, 6-7-1, 1-7-2, 2-8-3, 3-8-4, 4-9-5, and 5-9-6 as well give the ten faces of the icosahedron visible to the eye from this point of view.
This particular construction spontaneously generates all of the Platonic Solids. In fact, any construction that generates one of the solids generates them all.

The Five Platonic Solids

There are only five ways to divide three-dimensional space equally—and these five divisions form the Five Platonic Solids, polyhedra made from equal sized triangles, squares and pentagons. The rules for the construction of any given Platonic Solid are that:

1. all faces are the same size, and the same shape
2. all corners are equally distanced from each other and from the center
3. all edge lengths are the same
4. a sphere fits perfectly inside it and perfectly around it
5. all angles on and between the faces are the same

These five shapes, known for thousands of years as the building blocks of space, all fit within each other in many different ways. They also all fit over a Golden Frame, which is made of three Golden Mean rectangles joined together at right angles. On top of that, the coordinates for plotting the Five Platonic Solids in 3-D space are entirely composed of 1 and Φ! Here’s some pretty pictures:
A tetrahedron of edge length $\sqrt{8}$ has coordinates $(1, 1, 1), (1, -1, -1), (-1, 1, -1), (-1, -1, 1)$.

4 points, 6 edges, 4 faces.

A cube (or hexahedron) of edge length 2 has coordinates: $(1, 1, 1), (1, 1, -1), (1, -1, 1), (1, -1, -1), (-1, 1, 1), (-1, 1, -1), (-1, -1, 1), (-1, -1, -1)$.

8 points, 12 edges, 6 faces.

An octahedron of edge length $\sqrt{2}$ has coordinates: $(1, 0, 0), (-1, 0, 0), (0, 1, 0), (0, -1, 0), (0, 0, 1), (0, 0, -1)$.

6 points, 12 edges, 8 faces.

The dodecahedron of side $2/\Phi$ has coordinates $(0, \phi, \Phi), (0, \phi, -\Phi), (0, -\phi, \Phi), (0, -\phi, -\Phi), (\Phi, 0, \phi), (\Phi, 0, -\phi), (-\Phi, 0, \phi), (-\Phi, 0, -\phi), (\phi, \Phi, 0), (\phi, \Phi, 0), (\phi, -\Phi, 0), (-\phi, \Phi, 0), (1, 1, 1), (1, 1, -1), (1, -1, 1), (1, -1, -1), (-1, 1, 1), (-1, 1, -1), (-1, -1, 1), (-1, -1, -1)$.

20 points, 30 edges, 12 faces where $\Phi=1.61803\ldots$, and $\phi=1/\Phi=\Phi-1=0.61803\ldots$. 

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The **icosahedron** of side 2 is defined by coordinates (0, 1, Phi), (0, -1, Phi), (0, 1, -Phi), (0, -1, -Phi), (Phi, 0, 1), (Phi, 0, -1), (-Phi, 0, 1), (-Phi, 0, -1), (1, Phi, 0), (1, -Phi, 0), (-1, Phi, 0), (-1, -Phi, 0).

12 points, 30 edges, 20 faces where Phi is the golden ratio, (1.61803…).

In the coordinates given above, Phi capitalized = 1.618033989 and phi uncapitalized = .618033989. Below, there are some more images which demonstrate the spontaneous generation of the Platonic Solids from the Golden Frame.

Tetrahedron fits inside a cube

Octahedron fits inside a cube

Icosahedron fits inside an octahedron

Octaheron fits inside a tetrahedron
As well as fitting inside of each other, the Platonic Solids exhibit three dual relationships, which means that they also create each other through truncation, similar to crystal growth. The three dual relationships are shown below: Cube and Octahedron, Tetrahedron and itself, and Dodecahedron and Icosahedron.

Golden Rectangle (left)
Golden Frame (right)
Golden Frame inside Icosahedron (left)
Golden Frame inside Dodecahedron (right)
Golden Frame inside Dodecahedron, sharing center with a Cube (left)
The Golden Frame relationships are truly remarkable. It shows yet again how all-pervasive the Golden Mean is, how it provides a basic framework for the Five Platonic Solids, which divide space evenly and describe order on a molecular level. Philosophically, the implications are vast as well—in short, this set of relationships has come to represent, mathematically, the idea that there is a knowable order to everything—and that that order is beautiful and strange.

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The Platonic Solids

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Mozart, Music and Masonic Ritual: An Exploration for the Un-Initiated

Delivered to the Public at Observance Lodge #686,

Nashville TN, January 31, 2013

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{Ave Verum Corpus is performed piano/vocal as an introduction}
The song you just heard was the *Ave Verum Corpus*, and I played it like this, using simple chords and a piano and just my voice, so you could hear it like you are used to hearing people perform songs they’ve written at The Bluebird, or in a writer’s circle.

It might seem strange to say this, but Mozart wasn’t that different from many of us songwriters. In fact, I’ll tell you something that shocked me recently when I discovered it: Mozart co-wrote an opera with four other guys the year before he wrote *The Magic Flute* that contained all of the same basic ideas, both musically and textually, and do you know what it was called? It was called *The Philosopher’s Stone*!! And it wasn’t discovered until 1994, *The Philosopher’s Stone*!

So what was Mozart doing co-writing an opera named after the symbolic goal of Spiritual Alchemy one year before writing *The Magic Flute*, with his librettist and Masonic brother, Schikaneder? And why were all of Mozart’s co-writers on *The Philosopher’s Stone* the same people who took all the leading roles in *The Magic Flute*? What were they trying to do? What ideas were they working with? And why, merely four years after *The Magic Flute* was premiered, was Freemasonry banned in Austria for 100 years?

In order to understand what Mozart was up to, we really need to see this in a larger context. History must be separated from mythology so that we can more clearly study the myths and understand their symbolic value. When mythology is taken literally, at face value, and becomes history, it quickly becomes impossible to have a rational discussion about anything, and faith becomes a rotten substitute for critical thinking and for the search for the truth, whatever it may be. Thus, in order to understand the truly profound value of Mozart’s Masonic Music, we must destroy any illusions that may have built up about who Mozart actually was.

Despite the romantic desire of many non-Masonic Mozart scholars and authors to see Mozart as some kind of magical personality, a kind of Harry Potter of music, actually, Mozart was a pretty normal guy who spent most of his time being an incredible
musician, and not much else. This is pointed out in a brilliant paper by Brother Peter Paul Fuchs, 32ª, titled “A Resolution of Mozart and Freemasonry: Enlightenment and the Persistence of Counter-Reformation.”

Fuchs’s argument is brilliant and simple, and clears up a lot of misperceptions about Mozart by putting him in the proper context. As Fuchs points out, Mozart did not write the texts of his librettos. How, then, could he be personally involved in the construction of the symbolic expression of these great works? Surely, putting a song or two in Eb, which has a key signature containing three accidentals, a Masonically significant number, or having rhythmic patterns show up here and there in groups of three or five, isn’t all there is to it.

Brother Fuchs demonstrates that the matter is further complicated by the fact that Mozart was a devout, committed Roman Catholic for his entire life, and he lived during the time of the Counter-Reformation, which was a movement largely inspired by and dominated by the Jesuits. As Fuchs says,

Much of Mozart’s career took place during the period when the Jesuits had been suppressed by the Holy See. The extent to which the Jesuits . . . created the Counter-Reformation cannot be overstated. [They] controlled the theological speculations of the Council of Trent [and] created the whole culture of the Counter-Reformation and its artistic expression, the Baroque . . . , part of Mozart’s ability to creatively engage the tension with this “archaism” is that it perhaps always had that archaic feature even when used in its initial force. . . . perhaps there are aesthetic reasons for considering that this Jesuit Baroque style, with its unsubtle propaganda moorings, always had a put-on quality.

What Fuchs is hinting at but not fully saying here is that Mozart used elements of the Jesuit influenced Baroque style in his music in a way that often was intentionally tongue in cheek.

Having read all of Mozart’s letters, I can also see that he did so knowing that in the context of his times, he was “putting on” or making a mockery of the Jesuits as well as the Monarchy. Anyone who has seen the movie Amadeus, or who is aware of Mozart’s use of humor and sarcasm, will instantly understand the sublime genius of this man when it is seen that these compositions were often played for the people that he was directly making fun of. And, he got away with it. The Jesuits were only reinstated by Pope Pius VII in 1814, a full 23 years after Mozart’s death. One of their great admirers was the Empress Maria Theresa, the mother of Marie Antoinette, thought by most scholars to be the inspiration behind the Queen of the Night character in The Magic Flute.
At first, this character appears to represent motherly love and divine feminine affection, and sends three ladies to save Tamino from a huge serpent. Her daughter Pamina has been kidnapped by Sarastro, an evil sorcerer some think to have been modeled after Cagliostro or the Prospero character from the Tempest.

In the second act, Sarastro is revealed to be the high priest of Isis and Osiris, and in fact is a wonderful, benevolent, wise man who leads an ancient brotherhood that initiates Tamino into their mysteries to prepare him to be worthy to marry Pamina. By the end of the Opera, the Queen of the Night has transformed into an arch villain, who desires to destroy the Temple.

Maria Theresa, our real-life Queen of the Night, was fond of the Jesuits, and not surprisingly, hated Freemasonry as it posed a direct threat to the tyrannical powers of the monarchy. The parallels are clear. At first, leadership is needed in a time of chaos, but over time, as order emerges, the savior often becomes a tyrant. It has always been this way with Kings and Queens. Pamina, as her daughter, represents the people, who have been “taken” or “kidnapped” by the Brotherhood, which is to say, the common people at this time were being initiated into the mystery traditions and as a result, were starting to understand personal development and critical thinking skills, and were coming to have no use for Kings and Queens.
Maria Theresa’s younger son, Leopold II, ironically, was rumored to have risen to the 18th degree of Scottish Rite Masonry, that of the Rose Croix, and is thought by many to be portrayed by the character Tamino. In The Magic Flute, Tamino must undergo trials of wisdom to become worthy to be Pamina’s husband; this directly references the idea that Kings must always be approved and installed by the Brotherhood, and if they are not, like Pharaoh Akhenaton so many millenia before, they can be removed. This concept was holding true in Catholic Europe, with the divine right of Kings, but the existence of Freemasonry and the Protestant Reformation at this time provided a competing Brotherhood that served the same function, and this is the crux of the matter.

Sadly, Leopold II was only on the throne from 1790-1792, and was replaced by Francis II, who was extremely paranoid that Freemasonry was working against him and suppressed the Order. The Chymical Wedding that could have been arranged between an initiated, wise King Leopold and his people was not to be.

It is useful to point out that Francis II’s Aunt, Marie Antoinette, had her head chopped off in 1793, amidst the French Revolution whose rallying cry of “Liberté, égalité, fraternité” was strikingly similar to the motto of the Scottish Rite, which had had a Grand Lodge in France practicing the 25 degree Rite of Perfection since at least the 1760s.
In his argument, by placing Mozart in this Counter-Reformation context and pointing out the complexity of his Catholic faith, Fuchs carefully and brilliantly deconstructs the notion that Mozart was any kind of musical Gandalf figure, and leaves the reader with a kind assurance that despite this fact, Mozart was a great man and Mason and lived in very turbulent times. The point is also made that Freemasonry allowed Mozart to be as Catholic as he wanted to, and he had the ability to sit in a lodge with men of other creeds, and have enlightened discussion; indeed, this melting pot atmosphere of enlightened discussion and philosophical inquiry also had a profound effect on Mozart’s music.

If someone reading this brilliant paper by Brother Fuchs simply stopped there, they would be missing an incredible thing, which is the centerpiece of my presentation today: despite the fact that he was a normal guy, Mozart was still a musical alchemist; he just did everything with the power of his intuition, and didn’t need to even consciously understand every nuance of the times in order to explode forth with unstoppable inspiration.

The world is lucky that he was surrounded by Freemasons who understood his genius, cultivated it, and created containers and structures for his compositions to infuse, like carefully prepared alchemical elixirs of high art, available for the whole world to ingest for centuries. Indeed, some have commented that his music got even better AFTER he became a Mason; there is no doubt that his Masonic period also happened to be the period of his greatest masterpieces. This doesn’t prove anything, of course, but it’s quite astounding when parts of The Magic Flute are compared to The Philosopher’s Stone.

The way the co-writing relationships happened is very curious; in 1789, Schikaneder, an actor, singer, playwright and composer, and Freemason, assumed artistic management of a theater company called ‘Theater auf der Wieden” in Vienna. In order to attract a larger audience, he took it upon himself to create a series of fairy tale operas based on a collection of fairy stories published in 1786 by Christoph Martin Weiland. One of his first partners was another Freemason, Karl Ludwig Giesecke, and together they began to put together co-writing teams that for all intents and purposes closely resembled the

Bro. Karl Ludwig Giesecke

Bro. Emanuel Schikaneder
kinds of group writing sessions that now happen commonly in the film, TV and music world. The atmosphere of these writing sessions, of which Mozart was a member, was described in 1794 by an anonymous author thusly: “with The Beneficent Dervish and with The Philosopher’s Stone, several individuals composed them at the same time; one works on these operettas like one builds a house; and it cannot be denied that this is the very best way when an opera has to be created in a short amount of time.” Or, if you live in Nashville, “We need you to get that song finished and demo’d by tomorrow or we’ll miss our window to pitch it to Brad Paisley!” Add to this the fact that there is a massive controversy over whether there’s a third cowriter, Karl Ludwig Giesecke, on the Libretto to The Magic Flute, and you might as well imagine these guys sitting around in a studio on music row, because they really did go through a lot of the same stuff back then, only they didn’t have copyright so they were all starving.

The thing that makes these songs a little different than what we have now is their highly esoteric symbolism laid over the otherwise normal fairy tale stories. Like a true Masonic Allegory, these Operas overlay a set of symbols directly on top of a previously existing story that allow for two completely different sets of meanings to emerge, one level of meaning for those who are just there to be entertained, and another for those with eyes to see. Oscar Wilde, who wrote The Importance of Being Earnest, a play I still haven’t seen, once said that “All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.” This cuts to the heart of what a Masonic Allegory really is, and provides a context for understanding these operas as Masonic works, operating on multiple levels and based on source materials that, for all intents and purposes, could have been equally effective had they been taken from Aesop’s Fables, or Star Wars.

Further solidifying the connections already made, you must remember that Mozart’s co-writers on The Philosopher’s Stone all took leading roles in The Magic Flute. J.B. Henneberg both conducted and co-wrote The Philosopher’s Stone and conducted during the first performance of The Magic Flute. Benedikt Schack both co-wrote and played the role of Astromonte in The Philosopher’s Stone and played the role of Tamino in The Magic Flute. Franz Xavier Gerl both co-wrote and played the role of Eutfronte in The Philosopher’s Stone and took the part of Sarastro in The Magic Flute.

Finally, Emanuel Schikaneder both co-wrote and sang the role of Lubano in The Philosopher’s Stone, commissioned the work, wrote the Libretto, took the part of Papageno and was the original promoter and provided the venue for The Magic Flute. Eat your heart out Tyler Perry! And let’s not forget about Giesecke, who may have been a ghostwriter for Schikaneder.

We’ve seen a glimpse of how the specific works of The Magic Flute and The Philosopher’s Stone were intentionally created as Masonic Allegory, by Masons, for the public, in a time where public enlightenment was seen as a threat to the powers of Church and State. It got so messy, rulers like Francis II, the nephew of Marie Antoinette and the Grandson of
Empress Maria Theresa (who is symbolized by the Queen of the Night in The Magic Flute) outlawed Masonry entirely based on personal fears that the hysteria of the French Revolution, which killed many members of his family, was somehow caused by Masonry. Despotic rulers have a hard time perceiving the natural reflexes of an evolving public mind conditioned by the abuse of tyranny, rising up too fast, and without the means of self-control. Moammar Qadaffi certainly found out about that recently.

But in the ancient world, there was actually a mechanism for dealing with this energy, what Freud’s nephew, the creator of public relations, Edward Bernays might call the Group Mind. And it was done, like Oscar Wilde’s quote on art, or as the Alchemists would say, the Royal Art, on two basic levels.

There is a hidden, ancient tradition that deeply connects music, ritual and symbolism to the science of personal improvement, or the Art of Perfection, using the tools of architecture, ritual and symbolism to effect profound changes in consciousness. The concept of Perfection has always been a threat to tyrants and dictators because it is based on the idea that without an intermediary, and without any priest or authority, an individual could use reason to study nature and in the process, connect with an infinite and immortal intelligence that dwells inside of themselves and is shrouded by what some might refer to as a veil of tears, or a shroud of darkness. The esoteric element here is clearly seen to be in the service of a higher cause; the true great work of the Alchemists comes to fruition, in its first form, in the political alchemy of the creation of the modern constitutional republican form of government, based as it is on the will of the governed, and only made possible by the elevation, through intellectual freedom, of the individual. This can only happen when people are allowed to have meaningful relationships with others who share different political and religious beliefs.

Looking at Mozart’s Magic Flute, which is an esoteric ritual modified for public consumption, it’s obvious that the combination of huge visual symbols with powerful music creates a state of wonder...
that gives the artist incredible power to communicate with and make suggestions to the unconscious mind of the audience. This was at one time a very private affair, as the public was not always encouraged to participate in the self-improvement rituals of the higher classes, important as it was to keep people dumb and dependent in order to better rule them. Caesar had his Bread and Circuses, and some of the less enlightening forms of entertainment we have today are no better, and serve the same purpose.

In the ancient world, there were Inner and Outer Mysteries. These functioned as a social control system, and revolved around key holy days in the year, based on the Solstices and Equinoxes, Moon cycles, and planetary cycles. That’s how they told time. That would be like my holding a watch; they would look up. The stories that were told to the public were usually different from the stories that the Priests were told in their private education, and strict secrecy was always the rule. Plato, Pythagoras, and Socrates were all initiates in the Greater or Inner Mysteries, and during the ascent of the Christian era, much of this ancient knowledge was lost or suppressed as those who had less understanding gained more and more power.

As Masonic Scholar, and Former Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, Albert Pike says, “Fables and leading strings always have been and always will be necessary for children, but those who hold the strings must not themselves be children and listeners to fables... Burn not the holy images, nor demolish the Temples; Men must have Temples and images, but let us chase away the [salesmen] from the house of prayers; let not the blind any longer be the leaders of the blind; let us... recognize those only who know, as teachers of those who believe.”

As I read these words of Pike, I can’t help but think of the great and terrible disaster of the loss of knowledge in the four separate times the Library of Alexandria burned, in the destruction of Tibet in the 1950’s, and in the brutal attacks all over the world in the name of God throughout history, from the Spanish Inquisition to the Crusades and the slaughter of the Cathars.
When I read Pike’s words, I think about how the common sources of all of the world’s religions, which are incredible, beautiful stories that reveal the human condition, the pain of our existence and a colorful, diverse set of tools to transcend that pain, have often been reduced to violent fairy tales that are used to manipulate and control people through fear, divide them from each other, and justify war, tyranny, and oppression.

Even the opposite of this, the atheistic philosophies of Stalin, Lenin and Mao, as an extreme example, is based on a rebellion against an oversimplified and childish view of the Divine, thus it is defined by the same infernal logic. Either God is seen as an absolute tyrannical monarch, who loves you so much he sends you to burn in hell forever if you don’t love him back, or God doesn’t exist at all, and there is no middle ground. Or so many would have you think.

This is a picture of me and my father. When I was just 13 years old, on August 11, 1994, my father passed away from cancer. I held his hand as I felt his spirit leave his body, and it had a profound effect on me. It caused me to start asking some hard questions. One of the most cherished possessions I have is a letter he wrote me near the end, in which he told me that I was free to believe or not believe in anything I wanted, but if I chose to believe in a God then, in his words, I had a “Moral Obligation to believe in a Compassionate God”.

He made a very clear argument for this, and talked in his letter about how certain extreme forms of religion cause people to see each other as non-human objects, and create the rationale for massive violence, tyranny, terrorism, oppression and injustice. My father wasn’t a Freemason, but he sure acted like one, and like Mozart, he was a devoted Catholic. In fact, my father had at one time studied to be a priest at Maryknoll Seminary, and dropped out because his Jesuit instructors couldn’t answer his deep and penetrating philosophical questions honestly. He opted instead for a master’s degree in philosophy, and spent his life as a therapist and counselor, helping to improve the lives of people less fortunate than himself. It could be said that he was devoted
to the art of Perfection.

Freemasonry, for many, is a way of balancing extremes, a way of creating equilibrium between highly contrary forces both within the individual and the collective of society. It is defined as a “Peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”; I have found these words to be so exact, so precise, that they almost hold the key to the entire thing for me, when I apply them to everything I have encountered in the degrees, so I’ll say it again: Freemasonry is a “Peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”.

This becomes critical when we look at the Magic Flute: it’s easy to take for granted the fact that I can stand here, right now, and give this lecture and we can have this discussion. It’s easy to forget that not too long ago, a free exchange of ideas, the pursuit of self-improvement or Perfection, and living in a free society, a constitutional republic which democratically elects its leaders, was such a threat to the ruling elite, that literally every single person in this room would be tortured and potentially executed for participating in this event if it were held just a few centuries ago in the wrong country.

Music and art, symbolized by the flute and bells in The Magic Flute, were one of the few ways to sneak in personal development and critique of the rulers of the time.

In 1795, the same year that Francis II banned Freemasonry, making the climate of Brotherhood and Enlightenment thinking that nurtured and elevated Mozart’s genius suddenly go underground, Cagliostro was tortured by the Roman Inquisition and died. The great mystic Louis Claude de St. Martin was active at this time, and the Comte De St. Germain was also very active at this time. What we take for granted as the “modern” world was being birthed by a handful of luminaries and visionaries in a violent and bloody time of revolution. Brothers Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Paul Revere, all did their great works at this time as well. But what makes all of this possible? What makes it possible to have a nation capable of ruling itself through a constitutional republic? In Masonry, there is a process of self development that attempts to answer this question.
The individual as an Initiated, Passed and Raised Master Mason is working towards his own Self-Perfection for the rest of his life, a concept brought to their attention in the 14th degree and worked on in all the degrees. This word, “Initiation,” simply means that something is beginning, or has started, and so really a Masonic Initiate who walks out of the lodge after attaining any degree is just getting started, as they have a lifetime of study ahead of them if they want to truly understand this stuff. The word “Perfection” has been used in many different places and times to symbolize a psychological process, initiated often through ritual, that leads one down a path of self-improvement. This is the process that Tamino undergoes in The Magic Flute.

Within the collective of society, which can be compared to a great stone building, there are the individual stones, individual people seeking to become better, to perfect themselves, who hold things together. This creates a structure that holds a sacred space, for everyone else to walk into and experience divine proportions. This is the spirit with which the ancient monuments were all built; as symbols of the divine appearing on earth, and as symbols of the State as a large Body of Individuals.
The great Cathedrals of Europe are all built on divine ratios and proportions. They simultaneously reflect the patterns and movements of the stars and planets, the patterns and ratios of music theory, and the patterns and ratios of living forms all the way down to the molecular level of DNA, in which two of the five Platonic Solids, the Dodecahedron and the Icosahedron, are seen to be linked together, providing a stable structure. This is described well in the Alchemical maxim “As Above, So Below.”

Throughout history, there have been countless examples of great teachers, mystery schools, and philosophers who have been murdered, attacked, persecuted by those in power, because they made the mistake of going too public with their teachings and energized too many people. There has always been a natural tension between kings and dictators and the people they rule.

The work of preparing society for its own real freedom is a form of Alchemy; This Royal Art of Transformation is the foundation of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, and goes right back through history in an easily demonstrated line from the present day through to Pythagoras and beyond. There is a profound and quite literal reason for why Brother Goethe, the legendary writer of “Faust,” referred to architecture as “frozen music”; the basic structures of sacred architecture and
music are the same, and both are expressions of a deeper structure, which can be discovered by looking up at the movements of the stars, and looking inward at the structure of living forms.

In Mozart’s time, the characters in The Magic Flute represented real physical people who had as their mission the destruction of the Fraternity and with it, the ability of a free people to think independently, all come together on the same level, regardless of creed, and build a harmonious society based on the consent of the governed.

To anyone who thinks that today we may be able to sit back and say that these threats are no longer an issue, and we don’t need to worry about tyranny, that we can work things out with modern politics, and that we are free to think and speak as we wish, I have some bad news and some good news. Even if that’s correct, though I doubt it is, it wouldn’t matter anyway because if this is truly a Masonic allegory, then every single character is a part of the self in the terms of Jungian dream analysis, a form of analysis heavily influenced by Alchemy.

After the March of the Priests, a very telling line is given when someone asks if the initiate is a Prince, or some kind of noble person. The answer is: “More than that, he is a MAN!” This says a lot. It says that being a man is “more” than being a prince.

Like you, I have within myself an inner Dictator, the Queen of the Night, ready to take over and appearing to be my saviour at first; I have within me an inner enlightened High Priest of Isis and Osiris, the character Sarastro, who is a benevolent and rational, wise ruler; I have within me a story that starts with Chaos, as the first act is very chaotic and irrational, reflecting superstition. The second act of this story moves through initiations that take the story to higher and higher degrees of Order and rational enlightenment. I have within me Trial and Error, the characters Tamino and Papageno, and they have the potential to make, as Brother Schikaneder says in the finales of each act, “The Earth a heavenly kingdom, and mortals like the gods.” In fact, everything I need lies dormant within my mind, and you are the same.

By looking at Mozart’s life in this context, we can see the intersection of all of the most important ideas that led to the creation of what we now take for granted: a world in which individuals are free to discover their true selves, live with religious and political freedom, and create their own reality with a set of basic working tools shared by all, which allow every person to raise themselves up out of ignorance, conquer their own internal darkness and fit their lives, like individual stones in a cathedral, into a larger meaningful pattern that can quite literally transform the world.
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CONTEMPLATING THE BEEHIVE

By
Bro. Thomas J. Driber, Ph.D.

The beehive, we are told is an emblem of industry. It should remind us to remain ever active and responsive to the needs of those around us who are in want. This is the explanation given us in the Craftsman, and although it is hard to find fault with this short remark on a very significant symbol, it seems to fall woefully short of imparting the plethora of meaning intrinsic to this symbol.

From a functional point of view, there are many parallels between the Lodge and the hive as well as a hidden symbology not readily apparent to the casual observer. This, in and of itself is a ready parallel, as little within the Craft is what it seems to be at first glance.

Consider the social structure of the hive. It is dominated by a monarchial Head of State and is not unlike the benevolent dictatorship of the Worshipful Master of the Lodge. Drones perpetuate the hive and may be representative of our line officers that perpetuate the operations of the Lodge from term to term. Worker bees are synonymous with our Craftsmen who comprise the industrious laborers of the Lodge. The guard bee(s) will accost anyone inadvertently disturbing the hive much as the Tiler will preserve the Lodge from intruders, and as the guard bee is armed with its stinger, so to the Tiler is armed with his sword. Recall that Tolken named Bilbo Baggin’s short sword “sting” in his timeless treasure, The Hobbit.”

Thusly, we can find certain parallels within the social structure of the
hive and the Lodge in both of which the structure demands a sense of order and working harmony.

By considering the end product of the hive’s effort we recognize an important contribution to not only our own food chain, but also a contribution to the hive’s economy, that being of course, honey. Honey, also called the nectar of the gods, is an important sugar source, medicinal, and natural antibiotic used as far back as the time of ancient Egypt. When we consider the end product of the Lodge we find an indispensable source of human comfort in the form of brotherly love, relief, and truth, those Masonic substances that without which we would have no basis for our organizational existence. Just as the honeybee, the harder we labor the greater the substance of “honey” do we lay up in the archives of the Lodge.

Just as each bee labors for the good of the hive, so does each Craftsman labor for the good of the Lodge and ultimately for the good of humankind. In this observation we learn the lesson of those working together that can best work and agree, and therefore derive the exponential synergies from the whole as opposed to just an individual laborer.

Readily, we can appreciate why the beehive is a useful symbol in expressing the lessons of our Order, however we can still come to recognize much more as we peer deeper in the hive. Beyond the obvious parallels already stated we see the structure of the hive itself. Row after row of individual hexagonal chambers, each designed to lend structural integrity by adding increased angular surface area, and each containing its own copious storage of honey. In order to appreciate the internal intricacies of the hive, we must peel it back
layer by layer just as we must do with Masonry in order to understand
the nature of the great gift we have been given.

Hexagon

As we peel back the outer layer of the hive and examine the internal
structure we find thousands of hexagons as in the diagram above. The
hexagon is especially revealing because from it we can immediately
identify the hexagram, which is nothing short of the Seal of Solomon
comprised of two overlapping equilateral triangles, one pointing
upward and the other pointing downward. The internal composition of
the hexagram or Seal of Solomon is of course the same hexagon as
comprises the respective cells of the honeycomb. In fact, without the
hexagon, the Seal of Solomon would be virtually impossible to
construct.

As a symbol the Seal of Solomon has great significance to Masonry
being comprised of two overlapping and interlacing equilateral
triangles. In interpreting it, we can find the omnipotence,
onnipresence, and omniscience of the Deity. We can interpolate our
own divinity interlaced and in union with Deity. Steinmetz has
postulated the “Perfect Man” in his attempt to define the interlaced
equilaterial triangle. Given just a bit of thought we can extrapolate the
concept of duality from Scottish Rite Masonry, and the occult concept of “as above, so below.” To those not of our Order, it is known as the Star of David and is representative of one of the worlds three great religions, all of which had their origin with the Patriarch Abraham.

![Hexagram](image)

Furthermore, as we examine the hexagram we can see that it is also formed by adding an equilateral triangle to each of the six sides of the hexagon. Given six sides there are then six equilateral triangles wherein we find the number 3. Three times 6 = 18. Eighteen is a multiple of 9, which is the square of three. The number three has always been representative of three emanations of Deity, specifically the omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence of Deity, and the diagrammatic representation of the number three in the Pythagorean Talisman is representational of the symbolic name of Deity. This can be readily appreciated through the transliteration of the number 15 to the Hebrew letters JH. In perfect union with Deity as Steinmetz defines it, we find ourselves interwoven into these emanations and therefore have a basis to begin the contemplation of the perfection of natural creation.
ENSIGNS OF THE PRINCIPAL TRIBES
By
Bro. Thomas J. Driber, Ph.D.

In Royal Arch Masonry there are said to be four principal Tribes of Israel that wandered in the desert for forty years. We are told in the Talmud, as well as within our ritual, that each of the tribes carried a banner or ensign peculiar to their respective tribe. The tribe of Judah bore on its banner the emblem of the lion, Ephraim bore the emblem of the ox, and the tribe of Rueben bore the emblem of the man, while Dan bore the emblem of the eagle. Such emblems are superficially explained within Capitulary or Royal Arch Masonry, but since they are well known to occur in places outside of traditional Freemasonry, it seems that there might be more to their explanation than is given within the Royal Arch.

One frequently encounters the very same emblems within the sanctuary of most Roman Catholic churches. There is one difference; that being that the animal representation is a depiction representing each one of the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John rather than the principal tribes of Israel. According to the multi-volume set, Butler’s Lives of the Saints, St. Matthew is represented by a “winged figure”; which is representative of an angel or the “intelligence of man.” The lion characterizes St. Mark, which is said to represent “courage.” St. Luke is represented by an ox or cloven animal also said to be a bull, and representative of “patience.” The eagle is said to allude to “swiftness” and, represents St. John, the Evangelist. It is an interesting transposition from the Judaic to the Christian belief
system. All four characteristics would be critical to wandering in the desert for forty years, and all four characteristics would be crucial to the development of a “new Judaism” namely, Christianity. However, such explanations are superficial at best, and we must look even further. Then we will find that such depictions in either format, Judaic or Christian occur frequently in other places and even in combined forms, and also with additional symbols to help us get to the secret meaning of these ensigns.

On the crest of the Grand Lodge of England, we will find the four animal emblems as noted. They are also reportedly to be found along the ceiling line of the Grand Lodge of England and peculiarly, at each of the four cornices as “decorative” representations of the signs of the zodiac. Their relevance to Freemasonry becomes more intriguing when one examines the Royal Portal to Chartres Cathedral in France. The same ensigns are there to be found as well, although they play a secondary role to a more central carving, that of Jesus Christ within an egg shaped oval, which is centered among the four ensigns.

It is of some Masonic interest that St. Bernard of Claivaux commissioned the cathedral, circa 1130-1140 A.D. and reportedly, in concert with the original nine Knights Templar from whom many authors declare a descendant lineage to Freemasonry. Interestingly, Bernard de Clairvaux was reportedly the nephew of Andre de Montbard, who was also one of the original nine Knights that inhabited the ruins of Solomon’s Temple in the Holy Land. The commission occurred immediately on the heels of the return of the Knights to France (about 1130 A.D.) from their many years of excavation under the ruins of King Solomon’s Temple in the Holy
Land. The famed north tower of Chartres was under construction in 1134 A.D. and shortly following the return of the Knights and, coinciding with the pinnacle of St. Bernard’s power as a Cistercian abbot and church leader, and was in close proximity to his abbey headquarters. Both Graham Hancock in his book the *Sign and the Seal*, as well as the informative booklet, *A Guide to Chartres Cathedral*, described the various and unusual statuary and carvings, geometrical designs, stained glass windows, and underground labyrinth that comprise the interior and exterior of the cathedral. Victor G. Popow in “Freemason, Know Thyself” describes from the work of Louis Charpentier in *Mysteries of Chartres Cathedral*, “a rose over the north door or the Gate of the Initiates, where a Negro St. Anne is seen carrying a fleur-de-lis: there is a depiction of Melchisedek, the Chaldean Magus handing to Abraham the cup said to be the Holy Grail”; Aaron, the Egyptian Magus and ‘brother’ to Moses is represented. It will be recalled that Aaron was the instigator of the building of the Golden Calf amongst the Israelites during their wandering in the desert: and amongst these figures are also depicted King David and King Solomon.”

St. Bernard of Clairvaux was a Roman Catholic abbot and clergyman. Powerful as he was during his medieval time, it is difficult to fathom how he managed such a feat as to erect statuary of such a pagan and “heretical” nature. But, perhaps that “heretical” nature was only the “party line” meant for the common faithful. Maybe there was much more to the symbols and allusions than we have been led to believe, and maybe Freemasonry is one of the last bastions to keep guard of those secrets.
Of more exacting interest to the point of this paper is that relief above the Royal Portal to Chartres Cathedral. There is depicted the four ensigns correlating precisely with the animal depictions of the four principal tribes and the four evangelists. In that relief carving over the Royal Portal and centered between the four emblems is a carving of Jesus Christ with the Cross-Patee instead of the customary halo of the time. York Rite Masons immediately recognize the Cross-Patee as the “Templar Cross.” It is contained within an egg shaped oval. Victor G. Popow refers to this as a *Vesica Piscis*, and here I will take licensure to digress since the *Vesica Piscis* contains its own occult meaning.

The *Vesica Piscis* is that oval shape obtained when one interconnects two circles of the same circumference and does so through use of a common radius. Where both circles overlap in the center there is then formed an oval. Much of the “New Age” literature describes the *Vesica Piscis* as representative of the womb. If such is to be accepted, it can then easily be inferred that the *Vesica Piscis* containing the image of Christ with a Cross Patee rather than the traditional halo, refers to the immaterial (Deity) becoming material (man) within the womb. Such an idea is well within the scope of orthodox Christianity, and the Cross Patee easily serves as an indicator of Templar acceptance of this belief and an indicator of their purported involvement in the construction as well.

In the *History of Man* by Rabbi David Azuli (1724-1805) there is an even more interesting explanation for the oval shape. In his chapter entitled “The Days of Man are the Measure of Mikvah,” Rabbi Azuli goes into great detail describing the Mikvah purification incumbent
upon all faithful Jews. He discusses the volume of "naturally occurring" water to be used for the immersion bath, and details for us exactly how that volume is calculated at a minimum of forty "seahs" where the smallest volumetric equivalent is that of one egg. He states that three eggs can be held in each hand and six eggs are considered a "log." Four "logs" or two-dozen eggs are called a "cab" and six "cabs" equal one seah. It requires forty "cabs" or 5,760 seahs to fill a mikvah immersion pool to the minimum level for the purpose of Jewish purification. Beyond the volumetric use of the egg there is also a Hebrew reference to time where one seah (oval egg shaped) is equal to the time it takes the earth to revolve around the sun (one year). It will be recalled that the earth’s rotation around the sun is actually oval in nature and not precisely circular. The reader will also recall that Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was excommunicated from the church because he believed that the earth revolved around the sun. Was Galileo inadvertently yielding up some part of the long secret knowledge that was privy to only the initiated few?

Vendyl Jones, of the Vendyl Jones Research Institute, further asserts that the Hebrew calendar is measured from the creation of Adam, and that contained within the ancient Hebrew literature is a prediction as to when the history of man will begin to change. That time is supposed to be 5,760 years from the creation of Adam, or the same number of seah as required in filling a Mikvah immersion bath or earthly rotations around the sun.

From the above description, the oval shape has deep connotation that is not readily apparent to the unenlightened. If we extrapolate the "New Age" thought with the old Jewish precepts, we end up with a
volumetric measurement for ritual purification of the body that is somewhat akin to a resurrection, and a timeframe, which might apply to a period of time when man’s history may begin to change due perhaps to a lack of vision for the immaterial made manifest in material terms and the methods for application of that knowledge. According to the Jewish calendar 5,760 years from the creation of Adam was upon mankind on March 22nd 2000.

The Vesica Piscis helps us to understand something about the oval derived from interlacing two circles of the same circumference and using a common radius, something about purification, and something about time with a particular earth reference. From an architectural point of view, the pointed Gothic arch seems dependent on knowledge of the Vesica Piscis. But still, we must go back to the Royal Portal and the accompanying ensigns at Chartres Cathedral to comprehend what our ancient brethren were trying to convey to posterity.

Chartres was reportedly, the very first Gothic structure of its kind on the face of the earth. How did it suddenly appear? There were no prototypes. It was not a gradual evolution of the stonemason’s craft, nor the architecture of the time, though indeed it was built by medieval stonemasons of the day. Suddenly it burst onto the European landscape without even a hint as to its perceptual origins. We do know that it appeared immediately following the return of the Knight Templars; we know that they had a close tie with St. Bernard of Clairvaux; and we know that it was he and the Templars who had commissioned that unusual Christian edifice. It seems possible that the years spent in the Holy Land may have easily had influence on the Knight Templars and that they could have gained access to a certain uncommon theology.
symbolized in the form of a sacred geometry, old characters from ancient Judaism, dualistic connotation of saintly figures and other obscure renditions of Christianity which would help to explain St. Bernard’s willingness to facilitate with the Papacy, the Templars formal Charter as an Order of Knights devoted to Jesus Christ, as well as the construction of such a cathedral or story in stone. Such an idea would lend some help in understanding the construction of Chartres embodying certain secrets unearthed or learned in the Holy Land.

Knight and Lomas in, The Hiram Key proffer this very point suggesting that the building of Chartres was the fulfillment of the Nazorean Scrolls unearthed by the Knights Templar and, which ordered the building of a “Heaven on Earth” a mission said to be unfilled in earlier Judaic times by James, the brother of Jesus due to his untimely death.

In the Gospel of Thomas, a part of the cache of scrolls recovered at Nag Hammadi, James does seem to be the one to whom Jesus instructs his followers to look to for leadership and completion in the event of His absence. If such uncommon theological precepts and findings were shared with and accepted by St. Bernard, it could then be understood why he chose and condoned such unorthodox depictions of the theological message, a sort of spiritual alchemy that was a critical statement as an enduring landmark, but not readily apparent to every profane eye. He must surely have had some insight that we do not have. It is for us to work at unraveling those secrets.

If we take just a cursory examination of Gothic architecture we can very quickly see that the pointed Gothic arch could not possibly have been understood without knowledge of the Vesica Piscis, the same
geometrical oval containing the image of Christ at Chartres. As an example, if we interlace two circles of the same circumference and sharing a common radius, the center of one circle we’ll call “A” while, the center of the second we’ll call “B.” The oval sides of the then resulting Vesica Piscis, which will then lay in the exact center between A and B, we will call “V” and “P.” The exact center diameter of V and P will fall precisely on the points also labeled A and B. From these two points it is then only necessary to draw a downward vertical line, and magically a two-dimensional pointed Gothic arch will appear. It seems unlikely that such a concept just simply appeared at the commissioning of Chartres Cathedral by St. Bernard. It does seem more likely that it was imparted to him by the returning Knights who likely learned of the geometry from their contact with the peoples of the Holy Land or from their findings beneath the Temple of Solomon.

But still, how does it fit into the milieu of Freemasonry? The answer becomes even a little more complex because now we have to work with the geometry to find the hidden message. Within the Vesica Piscis can be drawn two inverted (opposing) equilateral triangles where both bases are aligned at the center point of the Vesica Piscis. The downward pointing triangle represents the Perfection of Deity, while the upward pointing triangle represents that to which, the Master Mason strives, the Perfection of Man. If we round the Vesica Piscis we will create a circle, while simultaneously merging the two equilateral triangles into an interlaced pattern, the result of which, will be the Seal of Solomon that is well known amongst Scottish Rite brethren. As such, we then represent the union of man with Deity in perfect harmony. Going a step further, we find that another equilateral triangle
can be drawn around the outside of the Vesica Piscis, and we might say that such a tracing represents the material world contained within a Divine balance. If we turn the Vesica Piscis horizontally, we will then have a representation of the shape of the human eye, or perhaps the sacred eye of the Egyptians, or the All Seeing Eye of Freemasonry.

At this juncture we must return again to the Royal Portal and the carving above it. As stated earlier the Vesica Piscis is flanked in four quadrants, and each quadrant containing the image of one of the ensigns assigned to the four principle tribes of Israel where Israel represents the older Mosaic Dispensation. Although it would be negligent to not point out that contained within the name Israel are the syllables for deities beyond that inferred by the Judaic reference. The first syllable “Is” could be easily taken as a reference to Isis, the sacred feminine from the Egyptian mythos. “Ra”, the second syllable might also be taken to refer to the Egyptian monotheism of Ra, the sun god. “El” is also the first syllable of Elohim, a reference to the sacred and symbolic name of Judaic deity.

Those same four ensigns are used to represent the four evangelists of the Christian Dispensation in the New Testament representing the newer story of Truth in a kinder, gentler form. The most obvious common thread to tie these respective representations together is seen in the signs of the zodiac. In the table below the reference becomes clear:

1. Tribe of Judah – St. Mark – Lion – Zodiacal Sign, Leo
2. Tribe of Ephraim – St. Luke – Ox or Bull - Zodiacal Sign, Taurus
3. Tribe of Rueben – St. Matthew – Man or Winged Being – Zodiacal Sign, Aquarius

4. Tribe of Dan – St. John – Eagle – Zodiacal Sign, Scorpio (the sign of the Eagle must be converted to the old Egyptian astrological chart where the Eagle and the Scorpion or Lizard held the same significance)

By solving the direct and indirect correlation between Judaic, Egyptian, Christian and Astrological symbols we have made an enormous step, however we still have no meaning for the relationships, nor do we have a meaning for the relationships as they occur in carved history at Chartres Cathedral or within Royal Arch Masonry, Freemasonry in general, or Christianity. We have applied, as we are instructed to do in the FC degree, art, science, geometry, and astronomy, but we must yet apply arithmetic. By examining the common thread, the zodiacal signs themselves, we find that they have a certain fixed position on the zodiac table, a position from which, they do not deviate. Each of those positions is sequentially number one through twelve. We can therefore, take the number of each position in the zodiacal table to determine its numerical equivalent, i.e. Leo is 5, Taurus is 2, Aquarius is 11, and Scorpio is 8. The combined total of the numerical equivalents is then 26.

The number 26 can only be interpreted if we apply it to an older theological body of knowledge, that being the Judaic system of beliefs, that system from which Freemasonry has gained so much of its esoteric doctrine. The last step in the secret then is to correlate each zodiacal number position with the Hebrew alphabet since Hebrew
letters also represent Hebrew numbers as well. In so doing we arrive at the sacred and more ancient Hebrew name of Deity (HWHY). It is not exactly the same designation taught in the Royal Arch since certain letters in English are not contained in either the Greek or Hebrew alphabets.

The trail thus far has been circuitous and tangential, however that is only because through the corruption of time we hold only fragmentary pieces of the ancient knowledge. But, without doubt we have a profound message contained within our ancient carvings and partially within our Royal Arch ritual and Scottish Rite. That message implies the divinity of Jesus in material form on this earth! That He made the transition from immaterial to material form and that His divinely human experience was in perfect harmony and balance! It seems further, that we are invited to participate in that perfection although neither the ensigns themselves, not the Vesica Piscis specifically elucidate the formula. For that, we must look deeper and elsewhere within our ritual, our history, and our landmarks, and we must utilize the tools as we are instructed in the FC degree.

Realizing that the symbolic name of Deity is obscurely disguised within our ritual, and appreciating that certain corruptions must have occurred over the millennia, we can quickly see why only certain Tribes of Israel are mentioned in our work. We can see a ready connection between Masonic knowledge today and its relationship to our guild brethren of the medieval period. We can also see that the Knights Templar did indeed impart some special knowledge, and that the revered St. Bernard of Cairvaux was likely privy to it before 1130 A. D. Given the very nature of Chartres Cathedral, it seems highly
improbable that our ancient brethren were merely guild workers performing by rote memory and brute force the fashioning of stone blocks. Perpetuation of that fable seems ignorant and irresponsible, reflecting little more than those who have been given a great gift and tools with which to cultivate it, but hear no message, see no message, nor speak of any message. In order for work as evident as that which exists within Chartres Cathedral and other medieval edifices, the stonemasons had to be initiated into something deeper than simply shaping and fitting blocks of stone. If nothing else, the climate of church dominance and its control of the popular thinking of the day would have caused most masons to tremble for fear of being cast a heretic and hung or burned alive for mindlessly creating theological insights in stone. A simple momentary glance at the obvious would suggest that our ancient brethren were most likely far better immersed in the mysteries of Masonry than many of us today. They were clearly versed in the sacred geometry in order to fulfill the designs they created. They obviously knew the meaning of what they were carving or it otherwise would have been meaningless to them and would not have survived the ages as a relevant Masonic communication. Someone over them had to have been initiated into the deeper meanings in order to condone those creations. Whoever or whatever that was, also knew the hidden meanings and knew that they contained truth, truth handed down from ages long before, at least back to the time of Moses, and likely from ages well before that since Moses was an Egyptian prince for much of his life. He was a man of “power” and some think a man of magic, i.e. a Magus who learned the very ancient mysteries and their uses from the very earliest of times. Those truths
have been passed to our Order, albeit in fragmentary form. It is those truths of Freemasonry that will lead men to know Deity each perfectly, in their own way. Therein lies the truth of Freemasonry. Therein is the rationale for our insistence on tolerance and a required belief in a Supreme Being.

It is further noteworthy that the Cross-Patee replaces the traditional halo around the head of Jesus in the depiction at Chartres. According to the Old Testament description of the Jews wandering in the desert, they camped according to the tribe to which each belonged. The banners of the principal tribes were hoisted higher than the others thereby presumably making it easier for one to locate his people and his tent with ease. They camped according to the cardinal compass points, north, south, east, and west with three tribes in each encampment and the Levites camped precisely in the center of the encampment. This interestingly, corresponds to the head of Jesus occupying the center of the Cross-Patee just as the Levites were charged with the care and keeping of the Ark of Covenant, which would have been squarely in the middle of the bisecting lines of the cardinal points of the encampment. Those bisecting lines obviously formed a cross as well. Steinmetz points out that the primitive usage of the figure of a cross anciently represented man with outstretched arms. If that is the case, then the heart of a man lays squarely at the center.

In most representations of the Ensigns of the Principal Tribes the ensigns are place in a quadrangular form whether in the church sanctuary as the evangelists, on the shield of a Grand Lodge, Grand Chapter, or an emblem above a Royal Portal. Of necessity their placement forms a cross as does a certain grave dug six feet long, six
feet wide, and six feet deep where the Word of Master Mason was buried. Allegorically, whether the center of the Hebrew encampment, the Cross-Patee, the center of the Visica Piscis, or the center of a man, it would seem the location of the Word of a Master Mason can be found in the heart and that the word is spelled out with some degree of specificity by the Ensigns of the Principal Tribes.

The following table is an illustration of the symbolism of the four principal tribes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIBE</th>
<th>EVANGELIST</th>
<th>COMMON SIGN</th>
<th>ZODIAC</th>
<th>EQUIV. / NO. POSITION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judah</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephraim</td>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Ox/Bull</td>
<td>Taurus</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rueben</td>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Man/Angel</td>
<td>Aquarius</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>Eagle</td>
<td>Scorpio</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL**

26

*In the ancient Egyptian zodiac the sign of the Eagle, and sometimes the Lizard occupied the same place on the zodiac table as our present day Scorpion. The Eagle and the Scorpion therefore, seem to be interchangeable zodiac signs, at least for symbolic purposes.*
Two sources of the Hebrew alphabet and numeric equivalents were researched to determine if there was a correlation in the total above with Hebrew letters in a numerical position that would correlate with anything in the symbolism of the Holy Royal Arch. The first source researched was THE GREEK AND HEBREW ALPHABET WITH NUMERIC EQUIVALENTS found in the *Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry*. The second source was *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* Alphabet Table showing the transliterations used in etymologies. Two distinctly different results were identified with the same essential meaning.
CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS:
LETTER NUMERIC-EQUIVALENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Numeric</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 26

WEBSTER’S LETTER NUMERIC EQUIVALENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Numeric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL 26

CONCLUSION

Although the ensigns of each tribe have multiple meanings, each as deeper meanings, here is suggested that the emblems clearly represent the sacred name of Deity. Transliterations from one text to another suggest that there are different English equivalents for the representations of Hebrew letters, and therefore, also the numeric
equivalents. The letters “J” and “Y” appear interchangeably, as do the letters “W” and “V”.

Irrespective of the source or the transliteration the numeric equivalents of those respective letters add up to 26. From an alphanumeric interpretation the banners of the four principal tribes are then a secret disclosure of the symbolic Name of Deity. Their respective positioning may further indicate where the meaning of the Word may be found.
REFERENCES

A EUCLIDIC PARADIGM OF FREEMASONRY

By
Bro. Thomas J. Driber, Ph.D.

Every Mason has an intuition that Freemasonry is a unique vessel, carrying within it something special. Many have cultivated a profound interpretation of the Masonic work that they indeed, find useful in navigating their way through the tumult of daily living. Still, many others ponder the symbols and contemplate the allegories only to find themselves more perplexed. The Euclidian Paradigm is an effort to explain an overall pattern contained within just one example of Masonic symbolism, though the paradigm is repeated in many different forms throughout Masonry. The right angle triangle described to us as the 47th Problem of Euclid is a multi-layered geometric symbol that summarizes much of what Masonry has to teach, and it will suffice as our basis to explain the tiers of the Euclidian Paradigm of Freemasonry.

The right angle triangle is composed of three parts, the base, the perpendicular, and the hypotenuse.
The 47th Problem of Euclid defines these parts as 3, 4, and 5 respectively, and repeats the Pythagorean Theorem as stating that the sum of the square of the base (3x3=9), plus the sum of the square of the perpendicular (4x4=16) is equal to the square of the hypotenuse. The addition of the sum of the square of the base to the sum of the square of the perpendicular is equal to 25, i.e. 16 + 9 = 25. The square root of 25 is obviously 5 and as such represents the hypotenuse. The theorem has specific applications in building and construction insomuch as it is used to square buildings and used for defining certain distances. Operative Masons must certainly have used the theorem in medieval constructions, and it was likely an important secret that elevated them to a privileged class of workers.

By the seventeenth century additional speculative layers of a more esoteric nature had been realized in the theorem. Here we find the second layer of meaning added to this geometrical symbol.

Let us replace the base and the number 3 with the term Entered Apprentice; replace the perpendicular and the number 4 with the term Fellow Craft, and replace the hypotenuse and the number 5 with term Master Mason. Can we create a definition whereby these terms have substance in the context of the geometrical design? How might the Entered Apprentice correlate with the base, the Fellow Craft with the perpendicular, and the Master Mason with the hypotenuse?

Clearly the base is the shortest of the three lines and accordingly is assigned the shortest of the three dimensions. In this respect it correlates with the lowest degree in Symbolic Masonry. The perpendicular is in length assigned the number 4 and represents a measurement that is between the Entered Apprentice (the base) and the
Master Mason (the hypotenuse) degree and therefore the perpendicular clearly represents the Fellow Craft in this paradigm. The hypotenuse is presented in the theorem as the number 5 representing the longest or greatest measurement of the right angle triangle. The theorem states that the determination of the hypotenuse is dependent on the base and the perpendicular. Within the ritual the third degree is clearly dependent upon the candidate being initiated and passed before he can attain the most valuable third degree. Thus, we can with confidence transpose each of the three degrees for the assigned numerical measurements given in the theorem, and thereby represent the three degrees of Freemasonry.

The transposition model enhances the 47th Problem of Euclid considerably from the perspective of a ritualistic assignment where we find it described within the work and apparent in how the Lesser Lights are laid out upon the floor of the Lodge. It still however, leaves us with a cloudy understanding of the meaning imparted in this important symbol. Therefore, the terms Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason must still be expanded further in the crafting of the Euclidic Paradigm.

In considering the term Entered Apprentice we come to appreciate the Entered Apprentice as the lower form of the Masonic mystery. In the operative period the Entered Apprentice was the physical laborer, the bearer of burden, the mason that worked with his back rather than his brain. He was given orders and expected to submit to the lower levels of labor and required direct supervision due to his lack of knowledge. His degree of understanding for the theory of masonry was little to none. Considering these characteristics, we might easily today
represent the Entered Apprentice as the physicality, the body, or the brawn, one without a depth of knowledge, at least as far as the mysteries of the Craft are concerned. We can associate the Entered Apprentice in allegorical form as that which is focused on the vanity of physical appearance and demands, the needs and drives of the body, the contentiousness of mankind, and the self-focus. This is not to be thought of as a negative in anyway since it is the physical body as the ignorant laborer that houses that higher component, which we call the intellect. It is a third of the components that comprise the divine creation of humanity and a needed component in an understanding of who we really are. Given our physical natures we are all sometimes still, Entered Apprentices.

Examination of the Fellow Craft indicates that these were Masons of the operative period that could think and plan, make decisions without over the shoulder supervision, that were not yet masterful, but could nonetheless combine the talents of mind with those of body to accomplish a masonry construction. Within the speculative form, the Fellow Craft degree represents an unequivocal intellectual capability as is defined in the components of the Stairway Lecture. The Fellow Craft has learned to subordinate his physical demands and direct himself in an intelligent manner in order to accomplish some particular end. Within the speculative framework, the Fellow Craft unequivocally represents the uprightness of the perpendicular.

The geometrical theorem tells us that the hypotenuse is the combination of the sum of the square of the base plus the sum of the square of the perpendicular. If the hypotenuse does in truth represent the third degree or the Master Mason then we can inferentially reason
that a Master Mason is one who has learned to perfectly couple his physicality with his intellectual skills and can arrive at the theoretical square of his whole self, but moreover can distill that down to his true identity, which is his own divinity represented by the inducted square root. The true Master Mason moves masterfully within his temporal existence, which is to say that he is in perfect balance in his own duality.

It is apparent from the transposition model that a substantive transition can be made from the geometrical theorem to a Masonic degree diagram. In expanding order then, we have a right angle triangle represented by the numerical values of 3, 4, and 5, followed by the terms base, perpendicular, and hypotenuse, which can be transliterated into Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. By characterizing the degree names with terms inherent in each of the three degrees we begin to see the components of the Masonic characterization of our human sojourn, those being the physical, the intellectual, and the spiritual element or divinity of man.

The Euclidic Paradigm of Freemasonry then, qualifies for each Mason the components of temporal life. It would seem that sometimes we are in the mode of the Entered Apprentice when we are “me focused.” When the various passions of life dictate one’s behavior or interpersonal transactions, we are likely being ruled as the Entered Apprentice. Most conflicts are the result of two or more people focused on what they individually want. Their view is circumscribed solely to themselves in blindness to their brotherhood as originating from the One. A basis in fact can be presumed here as the Entered Apprentice degree teaches first and foremost the need to subdue one’s
passions. This does not solely imply the passions as so often interpreted to mean sexuality, but in a much broader sense the passions of all physicality, the assumptions of the validity of material existence. When the self is demanding and unyielding, it is almost a certainty that the Entered Apprentice is ruling, lacking in awareness and understanding that this world is largely transitory and some would say fully illusionary, and insisting on a materialistic one-dimensional view with the self view as the foremost objective. Balance between physicality and reason is woefully lacking.

Within the paradigm it is clear with even a casual notice that he who considers carefully, expresses thoughtfully, and calms conflict is one who has learned to balance the physical nature with intelligent reasoning. He is representative of the sum of the square of his laborer self plus the sum of the square of his intellectual or thoughtful self, and is more of a two dimensional expression within the temporal experience.

Occasionally, we can succumb to pure intellectualization just as we repeatedly fall into the trap of the “me-focus.” Therefore, even in the mode of Fellow Craft, we can become one dimensional as the expression indicates, “all talk, no action.” The true Fellow Craft has a comfortable balance between thought (intelligence) and action (labor) and is therefore bi-dimensional.

The ritual informs us that it is unknown as to whether or not any of us will ever truly be a Master Mason. How can this be? In understanding the Euclidic Paradigm we of necessity must understand the geometrical theorem first. From the calculation of the sum of the square of the base plus the sum of the square of the perpendicular, we
only arrive at the square of the hypotenuse, not the hypotenuse per se, that requires yet another step, i.e. solving for the square root. There is nothing in the theorem that advises us to calculate the square root of that square, which in esoteric terms, must be self-evident. He who explores must choose to take the final step. The ritual work gives us all three dimensions as 3, 4, and 5, but in fact the theorem requires that we actually find the square root in order to calculate the hypotenuse. Within the Euclidic Paradigm it is a clear suggestion that each Master Mason must find it for himself as the total sum of all his parts.

At best, most Masons may only achieve mastery but for a momentary time. Such momentary experience is analogous to the square of the hypotenuse not the hypotenuse itself. This occurs when the lower physical being is coupled with the higher intelligent being in perfect unity and balance, perfectly balanced thought and action understood in its duality. When we learn to maintain perfection of that balance, the square root must become readily apparent. These are the ones who have found the essence of their duality and become the teachers and examples to their brothers.

The Euclidic Paradigm of Freemasonry is the vessel, which carries the composite fragments of truth expounded by the world’s great religions, but which has become obscured through dogmatic insistence on being the one sole truth for all mankind. “From the Judaic we learn of the equilibrium of certain contraries as infinite attributes of Deity. From Christianity we learn of the hope of redemption, and from Islam we gain deeper insight into the oneness of God.” Taken in the context of the 47th Problem of Euclid we can then appreciate the contraries of mercy and justice. Here is a clear reference to the nature of cause and
effect as manifested within the concept of the base, the Entered Apprentice, the physicality, and the world of temporal conflict and the single dimensionality of labor alone. Yet it is part of the whole of the infinite oneness and cannot be dismissed, as it is a part of the divine exercise of creation.

By examining the idea of “hope of redemption” we must necessarily conclude an intellectual process, since there cannot be a concept of hope without some contemplation of a need for something better. By implication we surmise that one has then determined through thought, that something has been analyzed or considered and therefore, hopes for something more. Therefore in the Christian model we find the second component of the paradigm consisting of the intellectual process deemed within the ritual work of Masonry as the Fellow Craft and corresponding to the geometrical perpendicular.

Islam assists us in gaining insight into the oneness of God, and here we find an example where the concepts of the base and the perpendicular become united as represented by the sum of the squares of the base and the perpendicular. Stated according to the Euclidean paradigm, it is a unification and perfect balance of the physicality, intellectual reasoning, and the spirituality of man all clearly recognizable as the greater and lesser mysteries or capacities contained within man and yet established in perfect balance.

The paradigm is further supported by the additional hidden mysteries of Masonry, which inform us of our true origin and destination, the reasons for our presence here, and the explanations for the Masonic tools and skills, which we must learn to use and
understand in order to perfect the unity and balance of a coherent disequilibria in a tri-fold humanity.

The Euclidic Paradigm then consists of five overlapping right angle triangles. The first provides the numerical sequence 3, 4, and 5. The second defines the terms base, perpendicular, and hypotenuse. The third transposes those terms to Enter Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason. In the fourth, the degree names are defined by their nature. In the fifth and last, three of the world’s major religions, all originating with Abraham and defining the balance and duality necessary to attaining the degree of Master Mason are identified. By definition of language, a Master Mason is one who is masterful, meaning masterful of the self as the great end of our Order. Mastery may only be achieved through a realization of our tri-fold humanity, body, mind, and spirit with spirituality being that part for which we solve in identifying the hypotenuse. Given the number of sides in the right angle triangle and the number of triangular layers within the Euclidic Paradigm, it becomes apparent that the paradigm also represents for us the symbolic name of Deity, which in this interpretation is taken to represent the divine spark within each Mason and therefore, qualifies the paradigm even further.

Through an understanding of the underlying symbolism contained within a simple geometrical form, the Master Mason can come to a realization of his identity in appreciating who he really is while ever continuing to use all the tools given him in order to integrate his thoughts and actions for the sacred purpose to which he has been initiated, passed, and raised. That purpose is without doubt stated and enacted within our ritualistic portrayals and symbols of ancient truths.
which tell us that we are spiritual beings first and come here of our own free will and accord to create. We are given the tools to navigate the temporal world while simultaneously told the means to remain connected to our source. All then concludes with that heinous culmination feared by the unenlightened and which is the grand fiction made horrid by the ignorance of the multitude when in truth, it is a mere return to place from which we came.
The easterly direction is familiar to every Master Mason. We have heard it referenced many times. We see it in every degree, installation, and stated meeting, but we scarcely ever explore its meaning beyond what we heard within the ritual. Though we do hear something of the meaning, as it given us it is superficial at best, or the outer meaning only. Some know a deeper meaning while others think that there must be something more to it, however deeper meanings are seldom literally unfolded within the Craft work. We must always ponder, search, and attempt to connect the dots ourselves. It is the purpose of this paper to express a most unusual meaning behind the term “East.” It was uncovered in the study of why we dedicate our Lodges to the Holy Saints John. That article will be of some help in understanding the peculiar findings described within this article. It appears in the Annual Proceedings 2004 of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

Whence cometh the candidate or brother and whither is he traveling? The answer of course, is from the West, traveling toward the East. Literally, we find this to be true within the physical dimensions of the Lodge because that is the exact path of the floor work. We can then take the answer to be true at the physical and immediate level. But, intrinsic to the formulated answer is a sense that there is something more that is as yet unspoken, unexplained.

Why does he leave the west, or again leave the west and travel toward the east? The answer reveals that the candidate or brother is in
search of light or ‘more light.” He is symbolically in the dark, blindfolded and unable to see. But surely we are not talking about seeing the interior of the Lodge itself. Light is a metaphor for knowledge. The ritual does not grant us even a hint as to what specific knowledge the brother is seeking. That must concern only the individual, and it must evidently manifest differently to each brother, as no substantive explanation is given, only allusions.

Light is most commonly taken to mean “knowledge,” but exactly what knowledge is unknown. Many newly-made Masons never return to the Lodge, so we must assume that they either experienced an epiphany of great proportion that they no longer need the Lodge, or that the message was all about taking off the blindfold and that was it! Still others may perceive this ritual as some manner of peculiar and outmoded early English for which there is simply no current relevance. Some would suggest that the brother is searching for the knowledge of the mysteries of the Masonic Lodge, while others might say knowledge of the mysteries of life, all of which is essentially non-specific enough as to be generally meaningless. Others may proffer that each Mason is searching for how to be content with his life or how to participate in some rewarding way. We have all heard to a never ending monotony and ad nauseum that, “Freemasonry takes good men and makes them better.” The term better is ambiguous enough as to be interpreted by degrees. “Better” is just not a satisfactory answer in and of itself, for if Freemasonry accepted thieves into its midst and they then only stole occasionally instead of daily it would be “better,” but still altogether unsatisfactory. Making good men better men must therefore mean something more. All of the foregoing ideas are good
and useful, but there is still much to ask and much to answer in all those explanations. They are all too broad and none really get at the depth of meaning contained in the ritualistic work imparting the important allegories, metaphors, and symbols conveyed in our degrees where the reference to light and the East constantly intertwine. We each believe that we are good men, but exactly what constitutes a good man? Could every man be an essentially good man even though he enjoys his state of ignorance? Could it mean that Freemasonry in some way lifts a man from the mire of mundane human existence to some greater understanding of himself and that which surrounds him? Could it mean that an essentially good man is a man sufficiently evolved so as to be ready to receive the messages imparted and employ them for his further evolution in his upward path? I think this may be so if we are to accept the messages imparted in the symbolism of the Saints John and interpret for ourselves, individually, the meaning of light in the East.

Why is the East a place of light? Surely, the obvious answer is because that is where the sun rises each day, and it is the sun that illuminates our world. But, we do not worship the sun. Its rising and setting are determined by planetary tilting and orbital rotation. We understand it as a celestial body, a luminescent orb, and an orb that provides light each day to our world and warmth to the earth. Without it plants would not grow, bones would soften, microbes would flourish, and life as we know it would quickly come to a screeching halt. All this and more we already know. Therefore, there must be something more regarding the East as a place of light. We must always recall that the sun was a primary focus for early mankind and it played
a part in humankind’s early religious experience, and in explanations of celestial events, planting times, and rites of fertility. It has been used as a symbol of the “gods” as far back as mankind recorded his history in stone. It has held symbolic meaning for eons.

In trying to understand why we dedicate our Lodges to the Holy Saints John it was discovered that the path of the sun correlates closely to the messages imparted with the use of the Saints John, the parallel lines and the point within the circle. We discovered that the path of the sun in its travels through the northern and southern hemispheres is so closely tied to the meaning of the landmarks of the Saints John as to be symbiotic in nature. As such we found that the path of the sun illustrates for us the perpetual direction of mankind’s real life in its descent and ascent, and essentially tells us that we are all ascending back to our true spiritual identities.

In that exploration it was found that the sun is used symbolically to convey a deeply profound message to each of us, a message that is as clear and concrete as one could hope to find, and lends such encouragement and hopefulness that in the truest Christian form teaches us to discard the notion that some of us will “make it” and some of us will not. We find there the message that we are all evolving and ascending upward, albeit at seemingly different rates.

The message contained in the path of the sun has applicability to all mankind, but the symbolic characterization of the sun in the east and each Mason’s search for light is specific to each individual Mason.

The specificity for each of us is contained in the early Christian writings of the Christian Gnostics, those religious works written shortly after the life of Jesus, but not included in the Roman canon of
Christianity as dictated by Constantine during the Council of Nicea. In particular, we find in the Secret Gospel of Thomas in saying 19 a question to Jesus from the disciples inquiring as to what their end will be like. In the most extraordinary reply, Jesus asks them if they know the beginning so well that they should now be concerned with end? Buried within Jesus’ reply is the answer to why we travel toward the East. We must be in search of the beginning.

As the sun is the beginning of the day and the light of the physical world in which we live so is our Creator the light from which all has sprung forth. In theological terms the historicity of the beginning is literally given us in the Book of Genesis. Chapter I, verse 3 tells us of God’s first command, which was “Let there be light.” We reiterate this event “in humble imitation of that sublime and august scene.” Verse 4 tells us that God saw the light, that it was good, and divided it from darkness. Light, therefore, was the beginning and as the beginning it was Deity in manifest form. Verse 27 tells us that God created man in “His own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created He them.” Contained herein is a glorious hint of the beginning that Jesus prompts the disciples to search out. If we are in search of light as the beginning then we are in search of God. If we were indeed made in the image of God then we too have something of that light within each of us, and therefore we must each then be about the business of seeking our own divine light nature, the nature of who we truly are. “Traveling toward the East” is simply a Masonic way of saying that we must first learn our beginning. Our beginning, from the beginning of the scriptures then, seems to be that of divine light. Knowing the beginning, the end fits right into place, as we descended
from the Light so too are we ascending back to it. Know the beginning, and you will know the end! Further along these lines and offered with nothing more than a speculative hint, but with speculation that is astonishing to say the least, I will recall for you that in a gathering of Jesus and His disciples, Jesus inquires of the disciples, “Who do people say that I am.” Various ones offer their renditions of hearsay. Thomas offers that Jesus is his Master whereupon; Jesus takes Thomas aside and out of hearing of the others and conveys to him three words. On Thomas’ return the others inquire as to what Jesus conveyed secretly to him. Thomas responds “if I tell you, you will stone me to death, and the stones will burst into fire.” Obviously, Jesus said something pretty astonishing. If our theory of the east is even remotely close it is then for each Mason to but simply fill in the blanks for himself.

We can be certain that if the Gospel of Thomas has any merit at all as to the intimacy of Jesus’ teachings, He must have certainly told Thomas something so astonishing that his brethren would take his life, yet so important that the vignette has been retained and transmitted on even to the present day.

We find in our work clear and unequivocal repetition of those teachings of Christ found within the Gnostic writings of the early Christians, writings suppressed by Iranaeus and later Christian leaders who were more concerned about the orderliness and control of Christianity than the experiential Christianity of the early followers of Jesus. Sadly, little was known of the Gnostic body of literature until 1947-8 when a large cache of Gnostic scrolls was discovered buried outside a cave in Nag Hamadi. In recent years modern scholars have
pored over the Gnostic Gospels, Dead Sea Scrolls, and other ancient works and have found new insights into the thought processes and priorities of the early Christians, which has caused many to reconsider the totality of the dogmatic approach to understanding exactly what Jesus was teaching us. Nonetheless, Freemasonry, in whatever forms it may have existed over the past 2000 years seems to have managed to keep these teachings alive and convey them from generation to generation, all cleverly concealed from profane eyes, but yet available to each who seeks to find. We have more today than ever before to reference the teachings and the true nature of ourselves, and it seems that it has always been there neatly contained within our Order. We have only to start peeling the layers away to get to the core.

Although I have never seen a five pointed star displayed in the east of any of our Symbolic Lodges, it seems to be common in the English Lodge and seems to represent the morning star, Venus, which rises shortly before the sun in the pre-dawn sky. At certain times of the year it is also seen as the evening star, first in the dusky sky before the moon.

The Shekina is referenced within Scottish Rite Freemasonry. The Shekina was taken as the physical manifestation of God in the form of a heavenly light, most brilliant and most unusual to all mankind. In their current book, *The Book of Hiram*, not yet released in the United States, Knight and Lomas take great pains to describe the Shekina as a brilliant light manifested in the pre-dawn heavens caused by the conjunction of Venus and Mercury, a conjunction that occurred on a somewhat regular basis where the number 40 years plays a critical role, and on which they conclude the great events of biblical history;
i.e. the flood, Solomon’s Temple, the birth of Christ and the advent of the Messiah are founded. Each such great event seems, according to their research, to have occurred either in phases of forty years or in multiples of 40 years, the appearance of the Shekina included as the basis and the signal event. Sadly, Knight and Lomas conclude that the Craft has been searching all these many millennia for nothing more than an astral conjunction mistaken to be the physical manifestation of Deity by the ancients and passed along to the Craft as a great mystery all these many years. Such is the nature of the concrete conclusion that the followers of Amun Ra worshiped the sun itself when, in fact, they may have worshiped what the sun represented or symbolized. It’s pretty much the same old ignorance that Catholics pray to statues when in fact the statue merely represents an image or an idea. It is symbolic, not unlike our square and compasses.

Given the context of the Holy Saints John as markers of our path, it seems that Knight and Lomas may have missed the real point. The Shekina as a conjunction of planets offering an extraordinarily brilliant light was surely never taken to be the physical manifestation of Deity in His true form save for those who were ignorant of the higher knowledge. It must be seen rather as a marker, a reminder as light of the truest essence of Deity that humankind could or was capable of appreciating. It is only a representation of our beginning just as the light of the sun marks the beginning of the day and as Saint John the Baptist marks the beginning of our descent, while Saint John the Evangelist marks the beginning of our ascent.

Here then is the true Masonic East. The representation of our beginning and that form from which we all began, that which Jesus
admonished his disciples to seek. The East is a representation of our beginning. The Shekina is a glorious and grand reminder of our beginning. We are traveling toward the East because we are each ascending back to our beginning, to our light as spiritual identities in communion with our Creator.

In conclusion, we seek light or we seek more light as the reason to travel eastwardly. We know that the sun rises in the east to illuminate our day. We know also that light is a metaphor for knowledge. Just as the Disciples of Christ, we too are entrenched in our focus of the ending, but Jesus taught us to explore the opposite end of that thought. Know the beginning! Just as the Great Architect of the Universe was, and is, the beginning, so too is the sun in the east a symbolic beginning of each day, representing for us our beginning and the knowledge of how we were created. Understanding this, it is open for every Mason to speculate as to what those three words were that Jesus spoke to his disciple, Thomas. Just as the dedication of our Lodges to the Holy Saints John depicts in symbolic form the ever descending-ascending path of mankind, so too does the sun depict for us every day the meaning of that ascent in the form of our individual light. This is the individual depiction illustrated for us by the Point Within a Circle and thusly explains for us why we are incessantly traveling toward the East.
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THE 47TH PROBLEM OF EUCLID, DISSECTED

By

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The 47th Problem of Euclid is well known in Masonic circles although not necessarily well appreciated by many Masons. From a geometrical point of view, the theorem states that the sum of the square of the base of a right angle triangle combined with the sum of the square of the perpendicular of the right angle triangle is equal to the square of the hypotenuse. Within this theorem is contained much profound Masonic philosophy that is not adequately explained in the lectures, perhaps because at his raising the Master Mason has supposedly learned to develop on his own and no longer needs the Lodge to intercede for him. It is the purpose here to elaborate on this particular area of interest in an effort to spread the cement of masonry to others who may not have considered this repetitive lesson of Masonry. It may not necessarily fit the beliefs or philosophy of every Mason since it is only the dissection of the author’s interpretation.

The Euclid Problem is composed of three parts. The first part of which, is a base of the right angle, or in Masonic terms, a “horizontal,” not unlike the 24-inch gauge, which has some additional allegory attached to it, but which may also fit the 47th Problem of Euclid. The second component is a perpendicular. We also know the perpendicular as a “plumb.” The third component of the problem is the hypotenuse, or that part of the theorem that must be discovered, based on the known facts, by the person solving the problem. We now know how to solve the problem mathematically, as stated in the opening paragraph. But, the
Mason in search of light must solve the problem in the context of Masonry.

How do Masons meet? How do Mason’s walk? Lastly, how do Masons part? The level, the plumb, and the square provide us with the answers and simultaneously create for us the mental vision of a right angle triangle. It may be further surprising to learn that in the Lodge there is scarcely ever an answer as to the net effect of those three components as they may pertain to the product of our work in the microcosm of the Lodge and the search for Masonic light. That is to say that the hypotenuse of that right angle triangle is missing. It is here that the Master Mason must deduce for himself the hypotenuse or meaning of the Right angle triangle described by the Master and Wardens. This is the meaning of learning to pray by yourself at the altar. The Lodge can only do so much for you. As a Master Mason you have been equipped to think, act and create on your own, but also as a part of the whole.

Let us first examine the base of the right angle triangle. It is the same as the Masonic “Horizontal” and, as such, may correlate well to the Entered Apprentice Degree. It can be easily extrapolated to mean within that degree, the more material basis of temporal existence. It is this basis on which we spend most of our time, consumed with the mundane terms of everyday life and similar to the child whose focus is solely in his material wants. Specifically, it may reflect how we interact with other people, the productive or unproductive efforts we expend in our vocation, our times of refreshment and those day-to-day things that we do or not do.

In the Fellow Craft Degree we may be thought of as the upright man. We are told the story of the “Plumb” which parallels exactly the
perpendicular of the right angle triangle. The Fellow Craft Degree is the degree of intellect, of thought, of introspection and of consideration of the Divine symmetry in all that we see in the material world around us. In the perpendicular we are now using our mind in addition to our body as in the Entered Apprentice Degree. We might be thought of as the young man who has now begun his search for answers, answers as to why he is here and what he should or should not be doing with his life. It is representative of that stage in life when man seeks to establish through his thought, his connection to Deity.

At this point we are confronted with the body and mind of man for each of which we now have a Masonic symbol, the horizontal and the perpendicular. Additionally we have something further. We have a “right angle” or the Masonic Square, meaning perhaps that what a man does in a material sense should indeed match exactly with what he does in thought and what he thinks matches as well what he does in the temporal world. The exactness and precision of the “right angle” cannot be overstated!

In the microcosm of the Lodge we meet on the level, walk by the plumb, and part on the square. How do we do this? By what formula do we know that indeed this is being accomplished? We are told explicitly through the application of the Four Cardinal Virtues, which are Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance and Justice. In these virtues we have the immediate formula for achieving success in the practice of Masonry and in them we have the sum of the square of the horizontal and the same for the perpendicular. Is this not how a Mason may be known by his conduct? In practicing them how can the material aspects of man’s existence be anything less than Godly? If a man governs his thoughts
according to these virtues, how can his thinking be less creative than that naturally occurring creative principle instilled in man at the very dawn of time. Therefore, we have inculcated in our practice the hypotenuse of the Right angle triangle or the Spiritual side of man insomuch as these virtuous qualities cannot lead anywhere but to an emulation of the Divine. This is the light that shines forth in Masonry when the Master Mason considers the tenets of his Order.

This model has now yielded up to us the three characteristics of man, those being body, mind and spirit. We order them quite naturally from temporal to intelligent to spiritual. But, perhaps a real ray of light is the re-ordering of these characteristics in the exact reverse. Suppose that we considered ourselves spiritual first. Would not all of our thinking then be based on more profound insight? Would every Mason then not be fully absorbed in the pro-creative principle of thought as opposed to the destructive principle of thought? If we engaged only in pro-creative thought, would not the horizontal plane be less than mundane? Is it possible that we would truly be evolving instead of devolving in the muck and mire presented to us on a daily basis? Might we then achieve the configuration of an equilateral triangle, symbol of the “Perfect Man in his divinity” among the ancients, instead of just the right angle triangle? This is a thought that the author believes merits considerable meditation amongst the Brethren as it goes to the heart of Masonry, which is after all, what brought each of us to the Lodge in the first place.
Commonly, the second degree of Freemasonry is associated with the simple external and ordinary growth of man, that being a progression from youth to manhood. A fundamental examination of the Pythagorean theorem correlates symbolically with the same symbolic presentation and, of course, much more. The objective here is to look more intensely beyond simplistic, exoteric explanations, and to delve more thoroughly into the sacred and esoteric where an indication of the symbolic name of Deity is given as well as a symbolic representation of how to formally craft communication with the Absolute.

The exploration of this presentation will focus principally on the second section of the second degree where at once the candidate is presented with the representations of the two brazen pillars, which stood at the porch of King Solomon’s Temple. They are called by name and their respective properties are detailed to the candidate. Special attention is given to the crafting of the pillars and their symbolic representations, including the lilies, the checker work, and the pomegranates. The symbolic representations are the customary representations afforded every candidate, but when taken collectively with other symbols and allegories a much more profound illustration emerges.

Literary licensure will be taken here to extrapolate a fuller meaning of this ornamentation. The lily is said to denote peace. We could
theorize multiple explanations of peace, and they would each be correct. More specific to the purpose here is peace of mind, meaning a settled and quiet mind, not fraught with incoherent thinking and random thoughts. The checker work suggests interconnectivity, but an interconnectivity of what in particular? Because of the installation of the celestial and earthly globes it would be rational and logical to infer an interconnectivity between the celestial and the earthly realms which modern science unquestionably demonstrates through quantum mechanics and the Unified Field Theory. Thusly we may find support for the ancient and occult meaning of “as above, so below.” By the pomegranates we are informed of “plenty”, but plenty of what? We are not told, but the answer will be apparent that there is necessarily plenty of everything to go around. It is also one of the tangible models for thoughts as prayer in cluster forms. The reader will take note that pomegranates are scarcely edible since they are little more than a conglomeration of seeds. This observation will have greater relevance as we move through the discussion.

By description, according to the old Jewish laws, the candidate is still outside the Temple since he is only at the porch during the time that his attention has been drawn to the twin columns. By definition he is still something of a profane since, in the early Judaism of Solomon’s time, the profane were confined to the outer walls of the Temple, whereas only the purified were permitted to enter. We may take from this hint that the newly-obligated Fellow Craft is not quite yet a Fellow Craft Mason. On passing the pillars he is then inside the Temple where historically only the purified could pass and enter. Thus, there is an implication that the candidate has in some way symbolically advanced
to a more meaningful or purified state, perhaps being ESTABLISHED IN STRENGTH, as would be readily discerned from the meaning of the pillars themselves. But what in particular must the candidate be purified for and why must he be established in strength? This seems to indicate that the candidate has a difficult passage ahead, but must he be purified to accomplish the task as delineated in the stairway lecture? Without question he must! This will be more evident to the reader as we progress through the staircase journey, as we see that the preparation is most assuredly in preparation for something that we may take to be sacred and secret. Insomuch as he is on his way by way of the winding staircase to the Middle Chamber, which Dr. Mackey indicates was connected to the next Higher Chamber, we can assume that whatever he is to obtain in the Middle Chamber must be preparatory to entering the Higher Chamber, which we can readily denote as the Sanctum Sanctorum, and therefore verifies for us a sacredness involved in this process.

Once inside, the Fellow Craft is then confronted with the winding staircase curiously comprised of 3, 5, and 7 steps to the Middle Chamber all of which, importantly, total 15 steps. Kabbalistically, the number 15 is a sacred number. In Pythagorean philosophy where the square of 3 equals 9, and when written in a diagrammatic form of nine digits comprising a grid of nine single digits with the 3, 5, and 7 written as the middle sequence, the Pythagorean Talisman is then created. Vertically, horizontally, and obliquely it will always total 15, just as do the steps to the Middle Chamber, i.e.:
The candidate is told that he must ascend the staircase of 15 steps whence it is implied that he earns his reward, indeed the wages of a Fellow Craft Mason.

As he ascends the staircase, which is winding in its course, not unlike the River Jordan, and which is later referenced in the lecture and has in itself a special meaning, the description of the three stationed officers is tendered him. With a modicum of effort the stationed officers can be extrapolated to represent the growth levels of man from youth to adulthood to old age. Somewhat more deeply they can be said to represent the Entered Apprentice as a mere physical laborer, a Fellow Craft as an intelligent thinking man, and the combination or square of those two qualities combining to represent the spiritual aspect of a Master Mason. Further speculation on this line of thought is easily found in the contemplation of the 47th Problem of Euclid, which will continually evolve from a mere theorem of geometrical fact to an illustration of the degrees of Masonry, to a replication of the Point Within A Circle, evidencing in an early rendition, the story of Isis, Osiris, and Horus, up to more modern applications and insights with respect to Id, Ego, and Super-Ego.

Irrespective of where one may begin his contemplation of that geometry, he will inevitably conclude something important to his understanding of exactly who and what he is.
Beyond the first three steps the candidate encounters a series of five steps, which are equated to the five senses of man. It is through these senses that man derives his sensory input regarding knowledge of the ordinary material world, and this too is aptly tendered to the candidate as a means of processing the knowledge of the ordinary world for his use.

Next come the series of seven steps, which are enumerated as the seven basic arts and sciences including grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy, previously known to the ancients as astrology. Not only are these arts and sciences specifically given as the basis for study in general, but also they are all vitally important to discerning the secret messages which Masonry has to offer the man with eyes to see and ears to hear. In the 21st Century these would appear to constitute a woefully abbreviated list, but inclusiveness is not the point of the allegory therein given. Symbolically, they represent the call for man to enhance his mind and his ability to think and analyze, all for the purpose of divining Divine Truth. They are a meaningful application in harmony with the general tenets of the degree of Fellow Craft representing the intelligent man who is able to decipher more than the face value presented to him. Only when they are taken in the context of the totality of all 15 steps does the deeper meaning begin to unfold.

Collectively, the stairway lecture implies the life cycle of man from youth to old age and his physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. It illustrates the means by which he gathers data, and also gives examples of material, which his mind is to distill in order that he becomes an intelligent thinking-man, the very definition of a
Fellow Craft Mason. The means through which all this temporal
development occurs is self evident in the exoteric lecture attendant to
each sequence of steps. What is curiously absent is an overt reference
to his spirituality, which is not given except in general terms in the
‘G’ lecture following his enrollment as a Fellow Craft Mason.
Nonetheless, a most profound and secret representation of spiritual
communication is evident beneath the surface. But, before we can
speculate on the meaning there is still more to be told to the candidate,
which helps to further elucidate the secret contained therein.

Before arriving at his destination, that being the Middle Chamber,
he endeavors to attract the attention of the Junior Warden where the
appropriate password is given. Of the greatest importance is the
paraphrastic translation referenced from the Vulgate by Albert
Mackey, which tells us that the password means “an ear of corn” and
which, in the Hebrew, is translated from the root word ShaBaL, as
meaning a rapid stream of water or “to flow copiously.” Both
definitions have tremendous significance on our exploration of the
deeper meaning, although as many studies of Roslyn Chapel have
suggested, “corn was a new world plant and was not therefore, from a
botanical perspective, known in the old world cultures. Therefore, the
first definition as “an ear of corn” is perhaps up for debate depending
on the archetype from which one derives his point of origin for the
Craft. Irrespective of the presence of corn during the guild period or
earlier times, it is the signification that will stir greater interest as we
proceed. The password is exchanged and then there is presented to his
mind the image of a shaft of wheat suspended from a tree limb
alongside a stream of water, which is taken to imply a river. Rivers
are, of course, tortuous and winding similar to the staircase itself. Hiram Lodge #7 in Franklin, TN, displays a very old fresco to the candidate, which additionally pictures a waterfall. In the translation offered above the root of the password is given as ShaBaL. One of its meanings is also taken to mean a “waterfall” symbolically denoting an emblem of “plenty.” This meaning is also of greatest significance, and curiously is also repetitious of the symbology of the pomegranate, as the staircase is to the river.

As the dialogue exchanges there is great emphasis placed on the lack of ability in articulating or “framing” to pronounce that certain word, thus a reference to the lessons of rhetoric included in the seven steps. Symbolically, it may be in some instances better to communicate in silence rather than in words! Further, there is a most serious and mystifying monologue regarding the demise of the children of Ammon and later the Ephraimites by the Gileadites, who “took the passages of the Jordan.” This story, cumbersome and obtuse to most brethren, is allegorical of the wresting of control between the respective components of the human being, which we might say are the instinctual sub-conscious self, the wakeful ordinary conscious man, and the supra-conscious (meaning, above) or spiritual self. I will shortly share the contentions of the selves offered by Max Freedom Long in his studies of Hawaiian theology as an integral part of the discovered secret of this degree.

We may take the Gileadites metaphorically to represent the supra-consciousness, or higher spiritual aspects of man, the Ephraimites metaphorically as the ordinary consciousness of man, and the children of Ammon as the instinctual sub-consciousness of the ordinary man.
As the scriptural passage unfolds for the candidate, one takes control over another and another until the strongest tribe or that highest part man prevails and is in control of the other two thus represented by the Giliadites, who ultimately “control the passages of the Jordan.” The Jordan is that same copiously flowing river, where John the Baptist baptized or initiated Jesus into His own teachings. It clearly meshes well with the definition of the password given at the station of the Junior Warden. Controlling the passages of the Jordan is to control the flow of powerful energy as will shortly become clearer.

The conclusion of the second section or staircase lecture ends in the Middle Chamber where the candidate earns his reward, the wages of a Fellow Craft Mason, those being Corn, Wine, and Oil. Curious wages indeed! Some speculate this representation to mean that the Fellow Craft during the operative period was provided with the simple means to sustain his physical life. Such an explanation has little or no value to the Mason and should be immediately suspect on the basis of so simple an exoteric meaning. The deeper meanings of the Fellow Craft degree, both allegorically and symbolically, can only be appreciated when taken collectively as the whole of a puzzle. Any single or solitary representation may or may not lead an inquiring mind to the broader scope of meaning in the ancient knowledge of which Freemasonry is an obvious repository.

In his first three steps, the candidate’s attention is drawn to the progressions of the life cycle, the hierarchy of temporal life, along with a geometrical allusion to his very own life component, those consisting of his physical burden-bearing self, his intellectual capacity, and his spiritual being.
Through the means of the next five steps, he is made aware of how he gathers knowledge and awareness of his external world, those being his five senses.

The last seven steps suggest to the candidate the areas of interest that should occupy his mind in order that he develop his intellectual capacities, capacities quite necessary to him if he is to succeed in his Masonic quest, that of seeking out Divine Truth. On mastering such skill-sets, the Fellow Craft is then prepared to understand the messages conveyed in the degree in spite of their shrouded nature.

Initially, we must consider the mystical nature of the number 15 in the context of Freemasonry, sharing much of the Hebrew mystery content from more ancient times. The first order of business, then, is to correlate the numerology with the Hebrew alphabet. Royal Arch Masons will readily recognize that relationship as previously described in the paper entitled “Ensigns of the Principal Tribes”. Although there may indeed be other alphanumeric correlations, the more readily apparent is that of the component 10 correlating to our letter “J” or the Hebrew “Y” or yod. This will have immediate recognitions of importance to Scottish Rite Masons of the 14th degree. The component 5 correlates to the Hebrew letter for “H.” As the Hebrew alphabet is devoid of vowels, we are free to add accordingly. Assuming that we include a letter “A” we would then conclude JAH, which is the first time in York Rite Masonry prior to the Royal Arch that the symbolic name of Deity is divulged to the candidate, albeit in the most abstruse manner. The letter “A,” was arbitrarily chosen; however, one could just as easily select any vowel and achieve the same essential phonetic
by using either the long or short sound of the vowel, i.e. jah, jeh, jih, joh, juh.

By itself, the preceding numerology and interpretation may be mere coincidence, though the author doubts coincidence exists anywhere within the rituals. However, to lend credence to the alphanumeric finding one must establish a rationale for why the name of Deity would be included within the ritual content in the first place since a more generic representation is given in the “G” lecture following the exit from the Middle Chamber. It is necessary to consider certain theo-philosophical tenets held by other schools of belief and understanding. In this instance, the theology of the Hawaiians provides some helpful insight.

Max Freedom Long was the foremost author and researcher of Hawaii’s theology. For lack of a known name, Long referred to the Hawaiian theology as Huna. Claiming an ancient derivation of Huna back to the earliest times of Egypt, which may be fact or fiction as it is based solely on anecdotal renditions of Hawaiian legend, Long described the Huna practice of formulating prayer. In an abbreviated version here, the Huna method of prayer is:

1. Visualization of the prayer as a precisely crafted form, and by itself symbolically represented as a single seed, offered up at least three times in succession on a regular basis and thusly forming a cluster of thought forms or prayers;
2. Meticulous crafting of the wording of the seed-form prayer;
3. Careful planting of the prayer within the divine consciousness, which he called the Higher Self and which seems to correlate well to the concept of a supra-consciousness;
4. Precise and timely repetition of the prayer on a regular basis,

5. Generation of nutrient for the supra-consciousness (‘High Self’) so as to be able to act upon the prayer request. (Long, informs us that the Huna method for this is through a regulated breathing, which is to occur in sets of four sequential breaths at a time. This is certainly a common concept of clearing the mind and bringing it to stillness, and is to be found in many Eastern religions, Yoga, and various forms of meditation.) (Breath was also commonly referred to as spirit in the time of Solomon and is clearly indicated in Chronicles and the Book of Kings when it written said that Sheba, beholding the great wonders of Solomon, had the breath or spirit go out of her);

6. Lastly, persistence and fortitude in maintaining the prayer to fruition exactly as the petitioner originally visualized and formed it. Long called this repetitiousness the creation of ‘thought form clusters.”

Although the Huna method offered by Long is rather mechanical, it is not so far from the methods employed in Western Christianity where we find biblical instructions to “be still and know that I am God.” meaning to still the mind and make it available to the Divine Presence, “pray ceaselessly,” which seems a clear reference to repetitiousness in prayer, as in the Catholic use of the Rosary. In Eastern Transcendence, we find the use of repetition in the utilization of mantras. The Buddhist practitioners recite Ohm Mani Pad Mah Ohm not only for the vocalization of harmonic sounds, but also for the purpose of clearing or stilling the mind of all other incidental or random thought. Hitler, during the Second World War, is also believed to have used repetitious monotonous chanting of the throngs gathered to hear his speeches.
prior to his appearance. It seemingly allowed him to achieve a kind of mind malleability to such extent that he was successful in implanting his agenda in the minds of the German people.

Returning to the Fellow Craft degree we find repetition as a principle as well as itself employed to actually deliver the lessons of the degree. This very component is presented to the candidate first at the porch in the form of the pomegranate. Is there any other fruit so repetitious of seeds in an aggregate cluster form that is known to man? Repetition is again presented at the station of the Junior Warden where the shaft of suspended wheat may again suggest repetition and the aggregate of a cluster of seeds. It, too, is clearly representational and symbolic of the “thought form cluster” or clusters of prayer as seed in grain form. It is again presented in the meaning of the password as an ear of corn, which is also one of the earned wages of a Fellow Craft. One example of seeds in cluster form and taken to represent thought form clusters or clusters of prayers might be considered coincidental and highly speculative. When we find the concept of aggregate thought form clusters illustrated in three separate symbols and used four times in the ritual as in an ear of corn, a shaft of wheat, and a pomegranate, it is hard to dismiss. Further, we find the suspended shaft of seeds (wheat) overhanging a flowing stream taken to be the Jordan, which to Christians, at least, is a sacred river. Recall that prayer needs nourishing and thus the seedling prayer symbolically receives watering readily, as represented by the adjacent stream. It is also widely held that prayers should “flow to the Father as freely as water.” Recall that the translation of the password also means, “to flow copiously.” Thus
we now have the first veiled indication and rationale of why the name of Deity is part of the Fellow Craft’s reward.

Recall, also, that the allegorical meaning of the scriptural passage implies a taking of control by the supra-conscious self or spiritual self of the candidate where the spiritual, the supra-consciousness, subdues the ordinary man and the instinctual passionate man. It is an allegory for man’s spiritual identity to prevail over his physical and intellectual identity since neither is that component of man, which has the ability to unify with the Absolute.

It is in the Middle Chamber that the candidate is given the wages of the Fellow Craft, those being corn, wine, and oil. How cleverly disguised is the formulation of the prayer method! Remember that the password also translated to mean “an ear of corn.” An ear of corn is easily recognized again as a symbolic cluster of thoughts and, as prayers are specific thoughts directed to the Absolute, his wage is in part the lesson that his prayers must be clustered and repetitiously exacting. This is precisely what Long was describing in his years of researching the mystical characteristics of the Huna practitioners in Hawaii.

Taking each component of the Fellow Craft’s wages separately, we find that corn is indeed just another version of a seed and, thus, representational of the prayer as the single thought or as the cluster of prayers, each identical to the other. Here just as with the pomegranate and the shaft of wheat we again have a precise representation of the “thought form cluster.” It is most relevant to recall that Huna dictates exacting repetitiousness of the thought form prayer while Western Christianity reminds us to pray ceaselessly. Pomegranates, corn, and
wheat are representative of the individual kernel, grains, or seeds and symbolically represent single thought forms, as well as cluster forms as the ear of corn or the shaft of wheat or the entire pomegranate meaning a thought form cluster or the repetitious prayer formed and offered “ceaselessly.”

Wine is the second component, and as we consider the properties of wine we find it to be constituted of water, sugar, and alcohol. Water is essential to the germination of the seed and so is symbolically the nutrient of the prayer nurtured to fruition. Prayer should flow to the Father as easily as water and is but a further representation of the waterfall, and the River Jordan. Sugar is one of the two absolute nutrients for the functioning of the human brain, that human organ responsible for our intellectual functioning, i.e. thinking, extrapolated to the thoughtful formulation of prayer. Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant and, as such, tends to still or quiet the mind when taken in small amounts. Large amounts tend to anesthetize the brain and promote incoherent thought processing. The symbolism here is that wine represents that biblical admonition to “be still and know that I am God” or simply a tool to assist in quieting the mind in preparation for prayerful communication with the Absolute. Wine, therefore, is an important symbol comprised of several components important to the understanding of the hidden secret of the degree.

The final component of wages includes oil. From the most ancient of records we know that oil has been used in anointing or consecrating something as holy and pleasing to God. It is indeed part of Masonic ritual, as well as a key component in conferring certain sacramental Rites such as Ordination, Confirmation, and Extreme Unction. It is a
part of the Masonic consecration of newly instituted Lodges and is incorporated into Masonic degrees, where a candidate is consecrated for higher and nobler purposes. The proffered argument that it was a part of the operative Fellow Craft’s wages as a physical means of light and cooking etc. is useless and absurd when considering the degree in this most profound context. Clearly, it is an indication that the prayerful petitioner must bless, nay more than that, he must consecrate each prayer lest its hallowedness be lost in the offering process. Oil certainly fulfills this requirement in a symbolic sense.

As we peek beneath the simple exoteric terms of the Fellow Craft degree, we begin to realize its importance well beyond the superficial scope of the stationed officers, lessons on senses already known, and subjects of study more appropriate to mere academia. There is much more in biblical history recitations than a simple story of warring tribes from a long lost epoch. It becomes clear that the veiled mystery is about the tiers of human life, growth, development, and a strenuous life process, the purpose of which is to achieve knowledge of Divine Truth. In symbolic form, we are given the components of meaningful prayer, the method of precise formulation, the need for prayerful repetition, the quieted mind, the requirements for nourishing our prayers through to success, and most importantly, the indication of the symbolic name of Deity as a representation to whom prayer is communicated.

To conclude and to encapsulate the message of this degree, we can persuasively argue that the Fellow Craft degree provides us with the name of Deity. We can make a strong case for a secret meaning buried well and safely beneath the exterior of the ritual experience, and that
the secret teaching regards a methodology for the proper formulation of communication with Absolute Deity, which is given as follows:

1. We are Craftsman; therefore let us craft our prayers with precise and exacting language and visualization.
2. Quiet the mind before attempting to pray.
3. Be repetitious, timely, and regular in prayerfulness. Do not abandon it.
4. Let prayer flow easily.
5. Frame not to pronounce it. Keep it private and silent.
6. Bless or consecrate prayer exclusively as a communication between you and Absolute Being.

(Note: As it is in the unified field of divine being, represented by the celestial globe, so too will it be in the ordinary field of the temporally-manifest represented by the earthly globe.)
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WHY THE HOLY SAINTS JOHN

By

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Early in our Masonic careers we are told that our Lodges are dedicated to the Holy Saints John, those being John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. In most every illustration, the Saints John are depicted with the Point Within A Circle and the Two Parallel Lines with the open Volume of Sacred Law displayed at the top. The characteristic representation can be seen in the *Tennessee Craftsman* (p. 29) and in most comprehensive texts and encyclopedias of Freemasonry.

The explanation that we are given for this unusual constellation of symbols is exoteric at best, and when considered seems to have only a superficial exoteric value, leaving one with more questions than answers. The usual explanation of the Point Within a Circle is that the point represents the individual brother and the circle the boundaries of his duties to God and man, beyond which he is never to suffer his passions, interests, or prejudices to betray him on any occasion. When we read further that the Parallel Lines represent the Holy Saints John, (who are also pictured) and that in traversing the circumference of the circle we will touch upon the two saints as well as the holy scriptures, and that a Mason, in this respect, should therefore keep himself circumscribed within their precepts, we begin to wonder, what precepts? Are they Judaic or Christian? Might they be timeless and neither Judaic nor Christian? Recall that John the Baptist was of the earlier Mosaic dispensation while the Evangelist was clearly of the
Christian dispensation. What precisely are those precepts to which we should confine ourselves? These questions are not answered in the ritual because such an explanation, although valuable in regulating our lives, is meant as an outer teaching and not substantively different than what any Mason might hear in any Christian church on any given Sunday. That outer teaching keeps the esoteric message well concealed from all except those who have the eyes to see and the ears to hear.

John the Baptist wrote nothing of the New Testament as he was reared an Essene and was of the older Mosaic Dispensation, which was based on the covenant between God and Abraham and specifically delineated by Moses into a set of laws by which to live. That was the Covenant of blood sacrifice initiated when God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. John the Evangelist was clearly of the newer Judeo-Christian Dispensation, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” which defines for us the new teaching that God is love. We know further from biblical history that John the Baptist was the forerunner who initiated Jesus into His own teachings through Baptism. Additionally, we know that the Baptist prophesied. He is noted as the last prophet of the old dispensation. John the Evangelist is not especially noted as a prophet, however the Book of Revelation is essentially prophecy. We might therefore recognize John the Evangelist as the first Prophet of the Christian Dispensation and therein may be an explanation of the parable that, “The first shall be last and the last shall be first.” However, none of this historicity or speculation adequately explains why the Saints John became the patrons to whom our Lodges have been dedicated. This is an especially valid inquiry when we are told that our ancient brethren dedicated their Lodges to Solomon, which
ritualistically infers the existence of Freemasonry, though perhaps by another name, prior to the Gothic period and indeed before the time of Jesus.

There is further, some redundancy in the explanation given us. Why is it necessary to define the Saints John both pictorially and by way of parallel lines? This redundancy provokes serious questions. The exoteric is readily given us, but we are admonished not to settle for it. Symbols and allegories are said to be like the layers of an onion. One must peel away at them layer by layer in order to comprehend their message. That, we will herein attempt to do.

It will be necessary to dissect the constellation of symbols and look at them individually and then later see them for the whole of their message. Let us begin by examining the Point within a Circle.

The Point within a Circle (PC) is an extremely old symbol and can be found carved as a hieroglyph in stone columns of ancient Egypt. Whether it is of Old Kingdom or New Kingdom age is unclear. Mackey indicates that it derives from the Rites of Osiris, which would clearly put it into the Old Kingdom period from whence the original resurrection rite is thought by Knight & Lomas, authors of *The Hiram Key*, to have derived.

Many scholars generally recognize it as a representation of the sun. As such it was worshiped for its generative properties as regards the earth. It was through the sun’s warming power and sunlight that the earth was to bring forth fruit and, therefore, physically nurture mankind. Whether the ancient Egyptians worshiped the sun as a mysterious luminescent orb in the daily sky or worshiped the generative principle as an implied concept is debated amongst various
scholars, While it gives rise to the ideation that one represents the created, the other may denote something of the Creator.

Snodgrass tells us that the PC was a symbol of the sun as the center of the universe. He further indicates that it was used in the Persian mysteries of Zoroastrianism and states that it was the Signet of Zoroaster, the “Wise Man from the East by whom it was called the sign of the sun…”

Snodgrass furthermore tells us that the literature of his time revealed the PC to be representative of the male phallus, but dismisses that interpretation as “an old pagan phallic symbol” and as such declares it irrelevant stating that, “It was doubtless a pagan misrepresentation of a profound philosophical symbol.”

Snodgrass wrote in the southern United States during the 1940s and 50s, a time when reference to such generative properties was viewed with considerable prudish suspicion. It therefore seems more like a cultural norm of his time to have dismissed any such notion with a sexual overtone as possibly part of a valid interpretation. However, when the generative principle is viewed as an ongoing cycle of creation, the implied baseness of sexuality is easily set aside as a cultural aberration and can be taken as part of a conceptualization in the evolution of understanding.

If the sun could be representative of the generative principle of the earth by impregnating the earth with the heat and light for the earth to bear her fruit, then a phallus for the point and a womb for the circle do not seem very far-fetched. It is still the generative principle whether the allegory is made to the sun and earth or to the reproduction of man.

Mackey tells us that among Asians the PC was known as a lingam
and was connected to the female productive character, while the modern definition is that of a stylized phallus of the masculine cosmic principle and of the Hindu god Siva. As a symbol of fecundity, whether expressed as the sun and earth, male phallus or female productive character they, taken collectively seem to allude to the “Great Father–Mother” or producing causes of the human race. This can be further supported in Mackey’s citation of Captain Wilford, (Asiat. Res.) “That it was believed in India that, at the time of the great deluge, everything was involved in the common destruction except the male and female principles, or organs of generation, which were destined to produce a new race to re-peopled the earth when the waters had subsided from its surface.” Mackey further then references Higgins (Anacal. 2, 306) who states that, ‘In deference to this symbolism, circular temples in the very earliest ages were universally erected in circular members to do honor to the Deity.” Clearly there is evidence of circular memorials of very ancient age found throughout Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Greece, and India. Most all are represented by a single center stone remnant. Of certain Masonic interest is the circular construction of Templar Priories.

In the foregoing the PC was obviously used to illustrate the generative principle, at first on a very broad and fundamental basis, and later at a more personalized and physiological level. It seems clear that contained within the illustration is the matter of creation. If man’s purpose is to create, then given the contributions of the modern philosophers it is not hard to extrapolate to a newer and higher level of the generative principle, that level being the consciousness of man and man’s physicality. That is to say that the Point Within the Circle can
just as well represent man’s pure consciousness or divinity, while the circle represents his temporal existence or physicality. The duality of man is recognized throughout our Masonic work.

Albert Pike makes reference to such a point in his discussion of the Knight of the Sun or degree of Prince Adept when the question is asked, “What is the meaning of the center of the circumference?” The answer given is, “It signifies the universal spirit, the vivifying center of nature.” We must ask then, what is this universal spirit and what does he mean, the vivifying center of nature? Interpreted, Pike was saying that all nature or the physical world is imbued with an aspect of Divinity. The spirit of all creation is the divine essence of that creation. In man, we can appreciate this point when we inquire as to the origin of thought. From whence do thoughts come? No one can say with any certainty except that thoughts do enter into our conscious awareness. When we act on them we create or bring something into physical dimension. We might say that thoughts arise from our consciousness and we become consciously aware of them. If this is so, then we can infer that our consciousness is that center which has some connection to the ultimate creative source, that which vivifies all creation or imparts spirit to everything. In this way the ancients were not at all pagan in their concepts, at least not in the negative terms which pagan thought conjures to the surface today. They simply expressed the vivification in the terms of their day, terms that were understood either as the sun and the earth or in the genders of male and female.

Given the foregoing it should be clear that the general explanation given us in the Lodge for the Point Within the Circle is clearly the outer meaning. It is not without value, as it directs our daily activities
while living on the circumference. Despite its temporal value to all men we can see that this symbol has some deeper reference to creation and, specifically, a reference to the creation of man and perhaps a reassurance and reminder of our nature and direction.

The Saints John and the parallel lines will further elucidate the meaning of this point.

Attendant to the Point Within the Circle are the two parallel lines. It must remembered, that parallel lines, by the rules of mathematics, must always remain parallel. In that they are straight lines they must adhere to another rule, that being that a straight line has no beginning and no end. It travels on to infinity and may be defined by a line of any length, even a dot or point.

If the Point Within the Circle references the creative process and the parallel lines follow the rules of mathematics, we can infer that creation is a never-ending process, without a beginning and without an end. Still, there is more to capture because the Holy Saints John expand this concept and help to delineate our immortality in this ongoing process.

Thurston and Attwater in their revision of the sixteenth-century text, Butler’s Lives of the Saints, indicate that the we may learn from the Syriac Breviarium of the early fifth century and the Carthaginian Calendar that the practice of celebrating the Feast of St. John the Evangelist immediately after that of St. Stephen (December 26) is of very ancient date. The feast day of John the Evangelist is December 27. So, why did we choose John the Evangelist over Saint Stephen? There are some important reasons, which will accrue to the allegorical meaning of our dedication. Stephen has been accepted as the first
martyr of the Christian Church, but John was the disciple “whom Jesus loved.” John was one of the witnesses to the transfiguration and experienced Jesus in a “radiant body of light.” John was also reported to have been “assumed into heaven.”

John’s assumption is recorded in the Hieronymianum of 600 A.D. Whether his body was actually “assumed” is an arguable point since the Greeks claimed that his first resting place was well known and the site of many marvels. The notion of his assumption is preserved for us, though somewhat imperfectly, through the Acta Johannis. Although staunchly condemned as heresy in the writings of Eusebius, Epiphanius, Augustine, and Turibius of Astonga, it was not sufficiently heretical enough to end the legend, as it still survives as part of Romanized Christianity today. This will be a major point in our understanding of the dedication.

Pike, in his work indicates that John the Evangelist was Gnostic and not literal in his persuasion of Christianity. He declares that John had a following of Gnostic Christians, Johannites, who held that John’s evangels were allegorical in nature. This is consistent with the Gnostic philosophy of “KNOWING” as opposed to a purely faith based dogma. Allegories and the knowledge contained therein are the quintessential fabric of which Freemasonry is made and in that way resembles Gnostic philosophy. Indeed, Christian Gnostics were the predominant sects in the first two centuries of the early church with their principal method of teaching based on initiations and dramas designed to impart to the initiates something profound in their knowing of the mysteries. Gnosticism was experiential and not confined to any particular set of rules to live by.
In his discussion of the 14th degree of Scottish Rite Masonry Pike asserts that John the Evangelist was the Father of Gnosticism; that the translations of his polemic against the heretical of his sect who denied that Christ was the Word are throughout a misrepresentation of the whole spirit of that evangel. If the correct representation was to acknowledge the Gnostic knowing of the allegorical or parable teachings, then Pike might well be correct given that literal Christianity has a sole focus on exoteric faith-based dogma and not esoteric interpretation. This will become another facet of understanding the present dedication.

When we examine the life of John the Baptist we find that he was the forerunner to Jesus. He was allegedly reared in the Essene community believed to be at Qumran. This Jewish sect was known for its initiation rites, baptism, and frugal and austere life style. They are described in modern literature as Gnostic in their philosophy, as were most early Christians, since the Romanized version of Christianity did not predominate until the end of the second to the middle of the third century. John the Baptist is depicted as the Saint personifying the tribulations of human existence. According to biblical sources he dressed in the coarse garments of camel hair, lived sequestered in the desert, and ate off the land, surviving on honey and locust. He was decollated for preaching repentance. Aside from the abundant allegory imbedded within this description, it is the description that fits him so neatly into the philosophy of Freemasonry. It is of no little consequence that we celebrate his feast day on June 24th, three days after the sun is at it’s highest point in the Summer Solstice or just as the sun is beginning it’s descent to it’s lowest point in the earthly
hemispheres.

According to Mackey our Lodges were dedicated first to John the Baptist with John the Evangelist not being included until sometime either into or after the sixteenth century. By Mackey’s account and that of Snodgrass, Masonic Lodges before that time were dedicated to Solomon and Moses. Of some interest is a quotation from a catechetical lecture of the early nineteenth century that may be spurious, but, nonetheless, broadens the historical breadth of Masonic Lodge dedications.

“Q. Our Lodges being finished, furnished and decorated with ornaments, furniture and jewels, to whom were they consecrated?
A. to God
Q. Can you tell me to whom they were dedicated first?
A. to Noah who was saved in the ark
Q. and by what name were Masons then known?
A. they were called Noahchiadae, Sages, or Wise Men
Q. To whom were the Lodges dedicated during the Mosaic Dispensation?
A. to Moses, the chosen of God and Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel who was an eminent patron of the Craft.
Q. and under what names were the Masons known during that period?
A. under the name of Dionysiacs, Geometricians, or Masters of Israel.
Q. But as Solomon was a Jew and died long before the promulgation of Christianity to whom were they dedicated
under the Christian Dispensation?
A. From Solomon the patronage passed to Saint John the Baptist.
Q. And under what name were Masons then known after the promulgation of Christianity?
A. Under the name Essenes, Architects, and Freemasons.
Q. Why were the Lodges dedicated to Saint John the Baptist?
A. Because he was the forerunner of our Saviour, and by preaching repentance and humiliation, drew the first parallel of the Gospel.
Q. Had Saint John the Baptist any equal?
A. He had; Saint John the Evangelist
Q. Why is he said to be equal to Saint John the Baptist?
A. Because he finished by his learning what the other began by his zeal and thus drew a second line parallel to the former: ever since which time Freemason’s Lodges, in all Christian countries, have been dedicated to one or the other or both of those worthy and worshipful men.”

Not only does this catechetical lecture provide us with a dedication lineage, but it also expands upon the meaning of the parallels albeit still within the confines of a more exoteric understanding. It also implies that Masonry is a living philosophy and that as more is learned new symbols are added to illustrate or expand on a concept. Such was the case with the addition of St. John the Evangelist, and as Mackey tells us that did not occur until the sixteenth century or later.

John the Baptist’s Feast Day is generally celebrated on June 24th, although some texts offer June 22nd, and 23rd. John the Evangelist’s
Feast Day is celebrated on December 27th. These Feast Days, in such close proximity to the Summer Solstice (June 21st) and the Winter Solstice (December 21st) in the Northern Hemisphere and the Winter Solstice and Summer Solstices respectively in the Southern Hemisphere are of great significance. If one will simply plot two circles side-by-side, call one the Northern Hemisphere and the other the Southern Hemisphere and draw a horizontal through the center of both, it will become easy to plot the path of the sun. That horizontal will represent the equator, which will be a straight line and which can be represented by only a point anywhere along it’s path. Above and below the equator plot two more horizontals at the 45-degree meridians. Call the one on top the Tropic of Cancer. Call the bottom horizontal the Tropic of Capricorn. Place an X on the highest point of the horizontal labeled Tropic of Cancer in the northern hemisphere and southern hemisphere. That will be the Summer Solstice on June 21st in the Northern while it will be the Winter Solstice in the Southern. Do the same for the Tropic of Capricorn at the lowest point of the bottom horizontal within both circles, and label it December 21st. Now simply connect the Xs and you will have mapped the undulating path of the sun beginning in the Northern Hemisphere and completing in the Southern Hemisphere. You will have mapped the sun through the Summer Solstice down into the Winter Solstice of the Northern Hemisphere, through the Vernal Equinox and into the Winter Solstice and Summer Solstice of the Southern Hemisphere. You will see that the Solstices are reciprocal to each other in the northern and southern hemispheres.

Now, it will be easy to visualize that the sun is descending in its
course out of the Tropic of Cancer on June 24th, Saint John the Baptist Day, and is beginning its ascent out of the Tropic of Capricorn on December 27th, Saint John the Evangelist Day. The undulating line of the path of the sun through both hemispheres describes a sine wave, the peaks and valleys of which describe the reciprocal parts of a circle and the frequencies are the solstices themselves. The Equator is the line through the center. It may also be any part of that line since a line has not a beginning or an end. It therefore easily represents and creates the Point within the circle. The Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn form the parallel lines, neither of which have a beginning or an end.

Given the dates of the Feast Days for the Holy Saints John we can extrapolate that Saint John the Baptist is a descending sign, while Saint John the Evangelist is an ascending sign.

In understanding our dedications, the descent and ascent as conceptual terms are extremely important in interpreting the message conveyed. Saint John the Baptist is the descending sign because he was the forerunner to Jesus and initiated Jesus into his own teachings. Jesus descended into temporal life to teach us who we truly are and to understand our own divinity. As divine spirits we too have descended into temporal life, but in understanding the teachings of Jesus we learn that we will ascend back to our heavenly home or our spiritual identities. Saint John the Evangelist represents that ascension as he was witness to the light of the transfiguration and so experienced light. He is said to have ascended into heaven by means of assumption, which is then clearly a representation of our spiritual ascent to our true selves, and ultimately to our true home.

These symbols, once interpreted and taken collectively illustrate for
us the fundamental truth of life. That is to say, that life is a process of perpetual creation evidenced by the parallel lines that have no beginning or end; that mankind as a spiritual entity has continually descended into mortal existence only to rise again to his original state. The PC and the Parallel Lines have illustrated this for us over many millennia, but were conveyed in the usual terms of the day that were understandable by the people of the time. With the advent of Christianity the illustration became more vivid, including Saint John the Baptist in our dedication. As Masonic scholars either understood more or recovered lost knowledge, Saint John the Evangelist was added to the illustration to make the message even clearer to those who wish to look and see.

That now brings us to a more esoteric interpretation of the PC itself and exactly what context it may have with regard to our descent into mortal life and our ascent back to our spiritual identities.

As previously suggested the PC is representative of our generative principle. It has already been suggested that we can expand the more ancient views of that principle to a deeper meaning, that the point itself can represent our pure consciousness from which all our awareness flows, while the circumference can represent our physicality and the nature of where we currently spend the vast proportions of our time. Conspicuously missing from the PC is the geometrical radius, the distance from the center to the circumference. It is important to ask why. The answer is simple. The distance from the center to the circumference and from the circumference to the center is different for each brother. Some may be fully conscious of their Consciousness and in that regard they may experience that which is called pure bliss, and
their radius would be necessarily short while others may be still asleep as to any awareness of their Consciousness and their radius would be necessarily longer. So, it is left to each to discern the radius for themselves.

There is yet another reason why the radius is left as an understood, and that has to do with the Masonic concept of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man where intrinsic to the phrase is the idea of oneness, all parts of the same essence. This being the case, we could draw multiple radii from the center to the circumference and illustrate the consciousness and physicality of all mankind, which is essentially saying “completion of the whole temple.” This is the same allegory as that stated in the phrase, ‘City of Jerusalem, the Holy City.” The question, - “Whence came you?” - and the answer, - “From the Lodge of the Holy Saints John at Jerusalem,” - tells us that there is something more to learn about the Saints John than what we are told in the Lodge catechetical, especially since there is no record of either John having been part of a Lodge in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is representational of the completed temple or the perfect union between our spirit and Deity. It is that other realm from which we descend into mortal existence; that realm where all perfection exists and to which we are all ascending on a continual basis, albeit at different rates though in perfect harmony with the Divine Plan.

In this modern notion of the PC it is understood more clearly that the center is where we are striving to go. That is our East, our place of light and enlightenment. It is the heaven within that Thomas cites in his sayings of Jesus. We live physically in unconscious consciousness, way out on the radius at the circumference. In searching for the light
we seek, we must transcend the physicality of the circumference and come to realize our center, our consciousness. In this way we make our ascent just as the path of the sun, and just as John the Evangelist. Each of us has already made our descent into temporal life just as did the sun descend and as did John the Baptist and as did Jesus. As the Gospel of Thomas tells us, “The kingdom of heaven is within us and without us.” This is what Pike was re-stating when he indicated that, “…the point indicated the universal spirit.” It is common to each of us and we are all part of it. We are the Brotherhood of Man, each a part of the Fatherhood of God as part of the perpetual motion of creation as illustrated in the Point Within the Circle and the Parallel Lines within which lays the undulation of the sun’s path as a metaphor to our own journey.

In conclusion, the constellation of symbols defines for us the perpetual descent of man into temporal life, his ascent back to his spiritual identity, and the infinite undulation of the creative process, which concept accrues to our teaching of the immortality of the human spirit or soul and its ultimate unification with Deity. In short, we are being told that we are divine spirits only temporarily attempting to have a human experience. Perhaps it is for the purpose of consciousness knowing itself through human creation. This differs from the faith-based dogmas that suggest we are but mere humans hoping to have a spiritual experience in the next life if we do everything right in this life. We will all have that spiritual experience in the next life simply because we are all ascending back to it.

Recognition of the message in the symbols should prompt us to begin realizing our spiritual nature now. John the Evangelist admonishes us
to love. He tells us that God is love. If our pure consciousness is of Divine origin and the seed of divinity within us, it seems that we should begin an earnest effort to find ourselves. How different would be the conduct of human affairs if we set out for the center now and realized who we truly are. The Volume of Sacred Law attached to this most profound illustration informs us that the message contained therein should be held sacred to us as it must be a Divine Communication requiring ears to hear and eyes to see.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:


WHY WE BALANCE 3 X 3
By
Bro. Thomas J. Driber, Ph.D.

It is a curious exercise that each exalted Companion re-enacts within the Chapter, yet scarcely a single Companion has indicated even a remote inkling as to what the purpose or meaning may be. Still, we follow it with careful exactitude each time we meet. After some considerable thought and while exploring another subject, previously published under the title, “Secrets of the Fellow Craft Degree,” a significant meaning emerged that has not only an attendant beauty, but also a direct correlation to that secret communication shared amongst three such as we under a living arch.

The EHP, twice in the opening and twice in the closing, instructs the Companions to balance 3 x 3. In both the opening and the closing the first order is given following the offering of the devotions to Deity. In the second instance the order is given whence a tri-union of Companions is formed and a secret communication is held amongst them.

To understand the correlation, the RAM must resort to an alphanumeric transliteration where the most sacred number 15 becomes readily apparent to those who will look.

3 x 3 may also be stated as 3 squared. The square of 3 is 9, or 3 x 3 = 9. This may be easy drawn as a grid of nine separate blocks where each block within the grid represents one digit consisting of the numbers 1 through 9. Such grid is readily recognized as the basis of the Pythagorean Talisman. This talisman is specific to the placement and organization of the nine digits, which the order from the EHP does not take into account.
Nonetheless, the talisman gives us a specific format and is of significance here due to the conclusive nature of the talisman and the special characteristics of the Royal Arch degree.

According to the format of the talisman each outer corner is occupied by an even number. The middle row of numbers consists of the 3, 5, and 7, which correlates to the Middle Chamber as presented in the FC degree of Symbolic Masonry. The grid below demonstrates the Pythagorean Talisman as Dr. Mackey has depicted it in his work, and as has been handed down to us through many millennia.

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<th>8</th>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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One may readily see that the sum total of each vertical or horizontal row of numbers quickly adds up to the number 15. Additionally, if one adds the sum of the numbers from corner to corner, he will find again that the total is equal to 15.

According to Mackey, the number 15 has from ancient times been held as a sacred number, as the ancient Hebrews represented the symbolic name of Deity through the use of the number fifteen. To understand that representation one must appreciate that in the ancient Hebrew numbers and letters were synonymous with each other. Further, they used no vowels in their written language.
Transliterating from numerical values to alpha characters in Hebrew then tells us that the number 15, being composed of the letter yod, which is also the number 10, and the letter h or he, representing the number 5, is representational of the symbolic name of Deity, or YH. By inserting the vowel we then have YAH. Because we can transliterate even further to modern English, we can legitimately change the Y to our letter J. We can now conclude JAH.

The correlation between this finding and the communication amongst the Companions is clear enough. The finding gives however, a new meaning to the physical demonstration re-enacted around the altar. Conclusively, we can recognize that with our physical action we are representing in the physical sense a non-verbal expression of the symbolic name of Deity.

This assertion finds further validation from the historical knowledge that indicates that only the High Priest in the days of the First Temple was permitted to utter the sacred symbolic name of Deity, and that but only once each year. Clearly this supports the interpretation that if the ineffable name could not be verbally expressed, then a physical expression could suffice as recognition of the Deity while still remaining in compliance with the law.

Further, Brother Michael Synder points out that TET plus VAV is used to indicate the number 15 in any other context. Brother Synder also brings to light that any name ending in JAH or YAH is using that syllable to refer to Deity, i.e., Elijah meaning the “Lord is my God.” Obadiah can be translated as “Servant of the Lord,” whereas Isaiah could be translated as “Man of the Lord.”

In conclusion, an inquiry into the numerology of balancing 3 x 3
within the context of the Royal Arch clearly indicates that the practice is a gesticulation of the ineffable name in accordance with ancient Hebraic law, and should, therefore, be performed with great solemnity and sincerity.
THE MASONIC HEART

By
Thomas J. Driber, Ph.D., 32°, K.C.C.H.

The number of Masons who have traditionally entered the Lodge on an impulse must be few, as impulses are generally not long lasting and the Initiation, Passing, and Raising is necessarily protracted according to the Lunar Cycle and among other things, serve to offset any impulsive petitions that are not heartfelt. Occasionally, despite our best effort and the impediments of design, there are a few who pass the West Gate that should not, but the true Mason could not avoid finding his way to the door of the Lodge. In some ways it may, for many, seem pre-destined.

Although most have given considerable thought to knocking at the door of Masonry it is more than linear thought that drives a Brother to find his way.

Where was he first prepared? Long before he submitted a petition he felt moved in his heart. He was there, first prepared! A variety of different prods may have stimulated his cognitive awareness of Masonry, but it was a positive heart-felt feeling that led to his linear good opinion of the Craft. It’s his heart-felt fidelity that keeps him returning and progressing in moral science.

Too often since the Age of Reason we are propelled to cerebral analysis in the perpetual gathering of material goods, status, and acclaim, while anything resembling feelings has been dismissed as “soft”, “fuzzy”, “high risk”, “sentimental”, and “unreliable”. Feelings are not “cool”. They portray vulnerability and weakness. So, we think and fail to feel, yet in our first preparation it seems we both thought and felt something about Masonry. And, on that basis did we choose to petition, and on that basis have we each progressed in the art and science of Freemasonry.

“The heart has long been considered the seat of our emotions. The Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Grecian culture all recognized the heart as the organ directing emotions, morality, and decision making.” Proverbs 23:7 tells us that, “as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” In Luke 5:22 he asks “what reason you in your hearts?” In mystical Judaism the heart energy center is responsible for “Beauty, Harmony, and Balance,” all qualities well known to Freemasons. The “Judaic heart” is the key to health and well being. Many Yogic systems recognize the heart as the core of human consciousness. Chinese medicine has for many centuries held that the connecting pathway between the body and the mind is the heart and through its pulsations are read the pathologies affecting a patient’s wellness and balance. In Japan shinzu denotes the heart muscle while kokoro is used to express the concept of the “mind of the heart.”

Amongst all these notions is the common thread that the heart is a center of an independent intelligence capable of independent decision yet working in coordinated communication with the linear decision making brain. (1)

Our deepest secrets are safely deposited within our breast. We vow to keep a Brother’s secrets as safe and inviolable within our breast as within his own and we might then construe that within our hearts are kept our inmost thoughts and feelings. We use phrases such as “with all our heart”, or “having our heart set on …” as common idioms today. (2) Linear science has for the most part dismissed such references as folksy wisdom without much in the way of empirical value and defiant of measurement parameters. Science has had little interest in the reservoir of knowledge contained within the Masonic corpus yet it would now seem that a body of scientific experimentation and reported findings lend support to being first prepared in one’s heart. The ancient wisdom known across time and cultures now seems to find common ground in the marriage of the heart as an
anatomical/physiological organ and the heart as a source of decision making intelligence.

The Institute of HeartMath (IHM) in California has pioneered new research into the intelligence of the heart. Their research is widely published in respected texts and traditional scientific and medical journals and has produced a thoroughly new understanding of the heart and its interrelatedness to the brain and other organs. They have shown in scientific terms why we can now understand why we were first prepared for Masonry in our hearts.

By measuring the electrical activity of the heart IHM has shown that the heart is the largest waveform generator of the human body. It’s capable of entraining the electrical waveforms of the brain, the immune system and other systems of the body. Entrainment is best understood as a physics phenomenon of resonance that was first observed in 1665 by Dutch Scientist Christian Huygens while working on the design of the pendulum clock. Huygen noticed that two pendulum clocks with the pendulums swinging at different rates eventually ended up swinging in unison at the same rate due to their mutual influence on one another. From his observation entrainment is defined as the tendency for two oscillating bodies to lock into phase so that they vibrate in harmony, or simply the synchronizing of two or more rhythmic cycles. With respect to heart muscle cells, when two or more are brought into close proximity the cells will pulsate in synchrony. (3)

IHM has also recorded the effect of heart pulsation in the electrical recording of the brain. Even further, they have recorded the heart beat of one person in the brain waves of another while both subjects were simultaneously shaking hands with each other (4) yielding yet a whole new meaning to the modes of recognition amongst Brothers.

Additionally, IHM has recorded an electromagnetic field generated specifically by the heart that is in addition to that electromagnetic field previously shown as the human aura, also known as prana in the ancient Sanskrit. This field of electromagnetic energy exists in a configuration known as a torus and has been measured extending eight feet out from the body itself (5).

According to Childre the heart has its own intelligence and consciousness. “It has unusual perceptual and intuitive information-processing capabilities; its frequency range of intelligence is not controlled by the brain nor by the autonomic nervous system; it is auto-rhythmic, beating on its own without requiring input from the brain or nervous system although both communicate with each other through neural and hormonal pathways directly affecting perception, reaction times, intuition, and decision making ability.” Feelings and emotions experienced by the heart are communicated directly to the brain via neurotransmitters and hormones which create chemical changes throughout the organ systems of the entire body (6).

Moreover, the heart has an effect on the immune system, DHEA production, DNA, cell growth, and tumor inhibition when coherent emotion is intentionally created by using “specially designed mental and emotion self management techniques which involve intentionallyquieting the mind, shifting one’s awareness to the heart area, and focusing on positive emotions” (7)

Harris cites Vincent Giampapa, M.D. who has found that subjects in a relaxed state (coherent) can directly access their own DNA and effectively reverse the signs of ageing. Coupling a relaxed state with binaural beat technology, Giampapa reported a 46% decrease in blood Cortisol levels, a 97% Melatonin increase and a 43% increase in blood DHEA levels. It is of some significance that Giampapa found that by increasing DHEA levels by 100 micrograms/deciliter of blood, mortality from cardiovascular disease decreased by 48%. (8) It may then be possible for nearly half of the brethren to eliminate some degree of cardiovascular risk simply by renewing coherent core emotions in their heart that were the basis of the first preparation, albeit unknown at the time.

Adding to the body of new science in understanding the heart is the work done in quantum
biology where research findings suggest that our DNA has a phantom effect with that which it has ever had contact. Poponin and Gariaev demonstrated the effect of human DNA on the arrangement of photons (light particles) contained within a glass vacuum. In a glass vacuum without the presence of human DNA, photons were observed in scattered random array. Following the introduction of human DNA into the vacuum environment the photons arranged themselves in an organized way. When the DNA was removed the photons retained their ordered arrangement suggesting that the stuff of which we’re made has a direct affect on the quantum building blocks that make up our world (9).

Other research scientists working with U.S. Army personnel sought to determine the effect of human feelings on human DNA when the DNA was separated from the subject. Traditionally, we would readily recognize that no such effect could exist once the DNA tissue was separated from its donor. In fact, human DNA responded by relaxing and contracting its helix according to the kind of emotion evoked in the donor. The effect was observed even at a distance of 500 miles in separation between the DNA tissue samples and the donors, and the key to the DNA responsiveness was genuine feelings of emotion (10) (11).

When we put the scientific findings into a practical perspective it seems that there is indeed something to the idea of heart intelligence beyond just the mushy sentimentality that would have been used to explain the answer to the question; “Where were you first prepared”. It seems evident that our DNA has a direct effect on the quanta, the photon particles of light that make up our world. Whether our DNA is still attached to our bodies or separated by mere walls or hundreds of miles there remains some manner of molecular connection where the effect remains the same. The Institute of HeartMath has shown beyond doubt that a principal factor in affecting our DNA and the quantum world around us is our own core heart emotions.

Now, can a case be made for a cause and effect relationship between the new discoveries of quantum physics, quantum biology, neuraltechnologies, neurotransmitter blood levels and a core heart feeling that leads one to contemplate Freemasonry, become a Freemason, and actually put into practice the tenets of a moral science? If Masonry is based on brotherly love, relief, and truth it would seem possible. If the Masonic principles are based on pure morality; if its sentiments are those of an exalted benevolence; if it supports all that is good, and kind, and charitable it would then seem that Masonry provides an inexhaustible supply of opportunity for positive core heart feelings that could prompt any petitioner to proceed forward. But, was the question posed in the catechetical lecture with purposeful intent in the first place? If so, it suggests that those who composed the rituals had some level of insight into quantum theory way back there in the middle Ages. That seems unlikely!

A. E. Waite, in discussing Masonic links to the chivalric Order of the Temple, says that the Templar Knights were the prototype of Masonry as they erected their temple within their heart first. Why? Waite further describes his belief that Craft Masonry has been symbolic of a secret tradition that has its roots in a Secret Doctrine of Israel and that those who composed the rituals knew of this secret doctrine and that the Masonic ritual is the most sublime evidence ever put into the written form (12). Although not explicitly stated and certainly more esoterically expansive than this one particular variation on the Masonic theme, the secret doctrine may simply have been, in part, an awareness of the importance of combining positive core heart emotions (IHM) with linear thought in order to achieve a meaningful understanding of the mystical component of their temporal mortality.

In their text The Spiritual Anatomy of Emotion (to be released July 2009), Jawer and Micozzi contend that emotion is the greatest influence on personality and that further, emotion plays a key
role in immunity, stress, cognition, sensation, and emotional expression even with regard to psychosomatic illness (13).

Daniels and Daniels in Matrix Meditations (to be released in August 2009), offer a sixteen week program for the development of a heart-mind connection using various meditative techniques from both Eastern and Western spiritual traditions where concentration, contemplation, mindfulness, and awareness are the key forms to achieving mental clarity, expanding creative thought, and modifying behavior (14).

In conclusion it seems that there is a universal and time enduring notion that is now better defined as a scientific paradigm, that we are able to achieve more than dry, mundane, purely objective decision making by accessing the emotional feeling centers within the heart, and coupling those emotions with our ability to think in linear terms. This has been long known in Freemasonry, but probably little understood and taken simply as a matter of sentimental form, if even that. And so, the question and answer of where a Mason is first prepared to be a Mason gains support from new science and ongoing research that even further suggests that our DNA is the “software” through which we can renew not only our bodies but actuate, with coupled core heart emotions including love, compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude, all that is good, and kind, and charitable as we go about erecting that “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” and while simultaneously pursuing our own super-longevity (15).

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THE INEFFABLE NAME ENCRYPTED IN THE INEFFABLE DEGREES

By
Dr. Thomas J. Driber, 32°, KCCH

Presented before the Moqedah Lodge of Perfection #7, Valley of Nashville, Orient of Tennessee, Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry for the Southern Jurisdiction, USA
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The Ineffable Name is the Ineffable Word, the Incommunicable Name expressed for us in the Tetragrammaton as the symbolic word expressed in four letters which denote the name of God and which always applies to the Hebrew word only (Mackey 1882).

In this regard Albert Pike says, “Every degree of the Order has a Word which expresses its meaning. There is for Hiram only one Word, but this is pronounced in three different manners. There is one for the Apprentices . . . another for the Fellow-crafts . . . and another for the Masters; and in their mouth it signifies Truth, a word that is explained by Wisdom. This Word is that used to designate God, whose true name is ineffable and incommunicable” (Pike 1956).

Whilst at the Burning Bush this name, as indicated in the Book of Exodus, was communicated to Moses, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel: Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me to you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” (Exodus)

And again in Exodus Chapter VI: “I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name El Shaddai; but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them” (Exodus).

Although we venture the pronunciation of this Name of God, there is no authoritative agreement as to the proper pronunciation, although it is variously accepted as Yahweh or Jehovah or Yehovah as in the less familiar Yehavah Al Alohim and “which is rendered Lord-God” (Hutchens 2006). Irrespective of vowel differentiations each has the same numerical value when transliterated from alpha characters to numerical equivalents. The sum of the numerical value of each consonant in the Ineffable Name is 26. It is variously written in Masonry as the Hebrew letter Yod, equivalent to the English letters I, or J, or Y, and often enclosed within an equilateral triangle; He, equivalent to the letter H; Vauv, equivalent to the letter V or W; and concluded with the letter He or H again. The Hebrew numerical equivalent of Y is 10. The numerical equivalent of the letter He or H is 5 and the numerical equivalent of Vauv, V or W is 6. We find it written also in Phoenician characters as upon the jewel in the 14th Degree (Hutchens 1995).

Because Masonry speaks to us in a language of symbols we must be cognizant of the Ineffable Name expressed not only in Hebrew and Phoenician letters but also through numbers and other symbols. It is the intent herein to identify some of the more common, yet cryptic forms of the Ineffable Name in each of the ten Degrees of Perfection. In review of the 4th Degree it is said that ‘the AGE of a Secret Master is nine years (Pike 1982). Insomuch as the word “age” is fully capitalized in the text it is a hint to us that we think beyond the mere number of years. In this context the term AGE must mean something more.

If we think of the number 9 as the square of 3 it begins to take on different connotations.
Imagine one square containing nine smaller squares within it and each smaller square containing a different digit comprised of 1 through 9. By placing those nine digits in a specific order we will configure the well known Pythagorean Talisman shown here:

![Pythagorean Talisman Diagram]

The Talisman is significant because in each row, in each column and from corner to corner the numbers are summed to the number 15. This is of significance in understanding Masonry when we separate the number 15 into two of its components. Thus we will have a number 10 and a number 5. By transliterating 10 to the Hebrew letter equivalent we get the letter Yod or Y. Doing likewise with the number 5 we would transliterate to the letter He or H thus yielding the first two letters of the Ineffable Name YH and commensurate with either YAH, JAH, or YEH as symbolic of the Sacred Name (Mackey 1882).

It is also noted that Hebrew letters as well as Arabic letters are primarily consonants and a few of them are used secondarily to represent vowels, but full indication of vowels, when provided at all, is by means of a system of dots or strokes adjacent to the consonant characters (Webster’s 1981). None of which is allowed by the Pythagorean Talisman. We are, therefore, left to choose vowels at our leisure.

It is also quickly recognized that the middle row of numbers is 3-5-7, the same as the steps of the Winding Stairs to the Middle Chamber which Mackey claims is symbolic of this life and which approximates Truth in a similar way to which the Ineffable Name of Deity symbolizes, for us, Deity itself (Mackey 1882).

In the 5th Degree the number 9 is used again when Adoniram is ordered by Solomon to prepare a funeral consistent with the virtues of Hiram, and in 9 days he prepared a mausoleum and ordered all the Craft to be present.

In the 6th Degree we find the Lodge illuminated by 3 candlesticks, each having 9 branches and forming 3 equilateral triangles. Here again we have another rendition of the square of 3 depicting numerically in flaming lights the Ineffable Name and also in triangular form which almost always represents Deity. Additionally, there is now reference to a triune nature as well. Also, on the apron flap for this degree we find an equilateral triangle with the Hebrew letters Yod He or Y H on the apron itself.

The 7th Degree demonstrates the first two letters of the Ineffable Name on the apron both in Hebrew and in Phoenecian characters while the numerical composition of the Ineffable Name is composed of the 3 sided triangle, 5 lights illuminating the Lodge, (1 in the East, 2 in the West, 1 in the south, and 1 in the North) and of course, the 7 Judges and Provosts central to the theme of the degree. Hence the necessary 3, 5, and 7 equating to 15 and again transliterating to Yod He.

The 8th Degree is styled Intendant of the Building. Here the Lodge is lighted with 27 candles comprised of three groups of 9 in the East, South, and West. Again the square of three is evident.
three times over. Moreover, the Blazing Five-Pointed Star hangs in the East and is emblazoned with the Hebrew letters Yod, He, Vauv or the Samaritan letters of the same.

We can make the case again in the 9th Degree based on the 9 virtues necessary in the pursuit of Justice. They include: Disinterestedness, Courtesy, Devotedness, Firmness, Generosity, Self-Denial, Heroism, and Loyalty. Additionally, 9 Craftmen were appointed by King Solomon to pursue the murderers of Hiram.

The 10th Degree depicts the apprehension of the remaining two ruffians through the additional appointment by King Solomon of 6 additional Craftmen. The total number of Craftmen is 15. Furthermore, the Lodge is again lighted with 3 sets of 5 lights. Again, we have 15 which has been shown to transliterate to Yod He.

In the 11th Degree it is said that the age of an Elu of the Twelve is 18 years (Pike 1982), (2 x 9 = 18). The 9th, 10th, and 11th Degrees are called the elect degrees and in each the Ineffable Name is either evident directly through the sum of 15 or through deriving the numerical value of 15 through the Pythagorean Talisman.

In the 12th Degree a black and white interlaced Seal of Solomon hangs in the East and in the center is the Ineffable Name in Phonecian letters. If the black and white triangles making up the Seal of Solomon are taken to represent the duality of nature, i.e. the male and the female, it is but a mere extension to extrapolate to the Yod He where the Yod is masculine and the He feminine.

In the 13th Degree we are presented with the Cubical Stone in the Royal Arch of Solomon which derives from the Legend of Enoch. On the face of the Cubical Stone is an equilateral triangle containing the Ineffable Name. This is further reinforced by the lines of the cubical stone which are 9 when looking at it face on.

The Cubical Stone is a connecting symbol between the 13th and the 14th Degrees. Wherein the 14th Degree concludes the Lodge of Perfection we find the Ineffable Name presented in the Cubical Stone, in the 9 Arches of the subterranean vault, in the 3, 5, and 7 lights illuminating the South, West, and the Altar of Obligation. We find it displayed in the Lesser Tetractys as the Seal of Solomon depicting the equilibrium of the contraries as in the Yod (masculine) and the He (feminine), and in the 9 visible lines of the cube, and as Hutchens illustrates, in the Phonecian characters on the jewel of this degree.

The Ineffable Name is evident repeatedly throughout the Degrees of Perfection. It is readily found in written characters on aprons, jewels, and symbols. Moreover, we can now identify the Ineffable Name encrypted numerically in each of the Degrees of Perfection. We find the same to be true throughout many of the later degrees as well. In the other bodies we find it in more complex patterns of constellations, Tribes of Israel, triangles upon squares, chains of triangular links, and lengthy transliterations from Phonecian to Greek to Hebrew to numerical values, and they always resolve into the Symbolic Name of Deity in preparation for each of us receiving the Royal Secret and mastering its application.

Bibliography:

1. Book of Exodus, Chapter iii, vs. 15
2. Book of Exodus, Chapter vi, vs. 2-3
3. Hutchens, R., Albert Pike’s Lecture on Masonic Symbolism: The Omkara & Other Ineffable


6. Pike, A., Legenda of the Lodge of Perfection, Southern Jurisdiction, USA, 1956, p. 11


Notes & Appendix:

The ritual of the Scottish Rite degrees is based largely on the revisions and organization of Albert Pike who established continuity and consistency to a hodge-podge of ancient, albeit disjointed Masonic degrees. These degrees have been commented upon, explained and illustrated by many others, some of whom are referenced herein.

Pike makes frequent use of the Ineffable Name symbolism in the Hebrew, Phoenician and Samaritan scripts in direct written, as well as more indirectly in alpha-numerical, transliteration.

Attached here for the reader’s reference are examples of the Hebrew, Phoenician, and Samaritan alphabets as well as the language lineage to help demonstrate the variances and similarities between these languages of the early millennia.

For clarification purposes the numerical equivalent in the Hebrew from aleph (A) to Taw (T) are in sequential order 1-10 where Aleph is the number 1, He is number 5 and Yod is number 10.
# Forms and Pronunciation of Hebrew-Samaritan Scripts

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![Table and Diagram of Hebrew-Samaritan Scripts](image-url)
The Phoenician Alphabet ~ 1400 BC
THE SINE OF MASONRY

By
Thomas J. Driber, Ph.D.

In the more remote past Lodges were dedicated to Solomon and to Moses (Mackey). Today Masonic Lodges are dedicated to the Holy Saints John. When exactly the two Johns became the patrons is not exactly clear, but the late Renaissance and/or the 18th century Enlightenment is likely since the Holy Saints John are the first of several sine wave markers (Webster) that indicate from whence we came and, subsequently, who we really are. Such esoteric concerns were characteristic of Neo-Platonic Enlightenment thinking.

John the Baptist and John the Evangelist were not adopted simultaneously as the Patron Saints of Masonry as Mackey notes that John the Evangelist was not adopted until late in the sixteenth century. (Mackey) Their feast days were arbitrarily chosen and have nothing to do with their conceptions, births, deaths or any other known fact of their lives (Thurston, Atwater) (Pike)

Comprehending the first question and answer of the Entered Apprentice catechetical lecture, where the Holy Saints John first make there appearance to the newly made Brother, requires a clear re-statement and a translation of the terms since they are, as expected, “allegorical” and essentially non-sensical. The question is asked; “… whence came you?” The answer is given; “from the Lodge of the Holy Saints John at Jerusalem.”

If there is such a lodge in Jerusalem it is obscure and of no relationship to any other lodge any more so than any other lodges are to one another. Therefore, the use of the word Jerusalem must have some other reference. We know that Jerusalem is the city where the Temple of Solomon was built. Melchizedek reigned as priest and king there. Christianity, Judaism, and Islam claim rights to that “sacred ground”. Abraham, father of these three religions, was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac there, until Yahweh intervened. John the Evangelist wrote of his vision of the New Jerusalem as a “heaven on earth.”
From the foregoing it is easy to see Jerusalem as an allegorical term used to refer to a place of mystical significance which yet evokes other notions including heaven, immortality, and eternalness. From this translation it seems that Masonry tells of our coming from a place of immortality and eternity as represented by the term “at Jerusalem.”

This translation is further amplified by the explicit use of the Patron Saint, John the Baptist. The Feast Day of John the Baptist is June 24th. This date is of significance because it marks the time immediately following the summer solstice, which shifts back and forth slightly in the Gregorian calendar due to the insertion of leap year and is generally June 21st or June 22nd. Nonetheless, the point of allegorical significance is that Masonry celebrates Saint John the Baptist Day on June 24th and always it is three to four days after the summer solstice in the northern hemisphere.

The summer solstice is that point where in the heavens the sun reaches its highest point for the year. On the date of Saint John the Baptist Day the sun is already in its descent from the Tropic of Cancer to its lowest point in the Tropic of Capricorn. The sun is that great luminescent orb which symbolizes for us as Masons that essence of Divine Truth after which we must continually seek.

The answer to the first question explicitly includes reference to a Lodge of John the Baptist, or the essence of divinity (the sun), in descent. The translation then seems to suggest that we are descendent into this material world from a place of Divine Truth. That Divine Truth is that same Eternity marked by the term “Jerusalem”. And, the fact that the sun is in its descent on that particular date suggests our descent from eternalness into mortality, albeit brief and temporary, in the density of the material world.

But we come from the Lodge of the Saints John. The second John is John the Evangelist who
wrote the Book of Revelations, who was the “Beloved Apostle”. He was a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth and a prophet. If we follow the same method to translate the meaning of Saint John the Evangelist, we find again a Feast Day corresponding to a period immediately following the winter solstice on December 21st or 22nd depending on the leap year insertion. Regardless, the significance here again is that the day of celebration is December 27th and immediately after the date when the sun shines at its lowest point over the Tropic of Capricorn in the northern hemisphere. On Saint John the Evangelist Day the sun is already ascending back to its highest and brightest point in the heavens. Again, and most importantly, we say we symbolically come from that Lodge of John the Evangelist. Then, we too are essentially ascending back to our eternal nature which “re-members” us with the essence of eternalness and infinity, the essence of Deity!

Fig. 2 Above shows the undulations of the sun’s path from June 21st to December 21st. At latitude 40° north, the sun will rise north of true east and set north of true west during the summer and south of true east and west in winter.

A concise translation then might go as follows; “I come from eternity, that place of Truth, into the material world and am ascending back to my eternal nature.”

Here for the first time in Masonry we see the sine in the allegory of our descent into humanness and our return again to eternal spirit. But, for it to be a sine wave it must meet the following criteria:

“...must be a wave form of periodic oscillation in which the amplitude of displacement at each point is proportional to the phase angle of the displacement and that is visualized as a sine curve.” (Webster’s)
The first problem then is in defining the aspect of “periodic oscillation”. That is given in another question and answer where the newly made Brother indicates that, “…has arrived of his own free will and accord and says further that “…has been often tried, never denied and willing to be tried again”.

This makes no sense in the customary manner of usage since an apprentice has no idea of what trial is, nor has he any idea of how to be tried, never mind being repetitively tried. Even though some have argued that his presence at the stationed offices constitutes the manner of trial to which this statement refers, under no circumstance can circumnavigation of the Lodge be considered trial in the sense that a regular Mason would use the term “tried”. So, there must be another allegory here that is not yet readily apparent. And, indeed there is!

Knowing that we have descended into this materiality from our spiritual eternity the answer indicating free will and accord suggests that we have chosen to incarnate here.

Insomuch as this incarnation may represent a kind of trial, the response of the apprentice now makes more sense and, therefore, the fuller translation that fulfills the need for “periodic oscillation” would more clearly be stated as; “I come from eternity, that place of Truth, descended into the material world, and am ascending back to my eternal nature and doing so of my own free will as I have done many times before, am doing now, and will do many times in the future.”

Now the displacement amplitude of the sun in descent and the sun in ascent is repetitively periodic and proportional and therefore is diagramed as a clear sine wave and the first Sine of Masonry (Snodgrass). See the path of the sun in Figure 2 above.

All things in Masonry are given repetitiously and in multiple forms. Can this fact be fulfilled in the Sine of Masonry? The answer is an unequivocal, yes!

The apprentice is told that in more ancient times our Lodges were held atop the “highest hills and in the lowest valleys and most retired groves”. Considering the highs and lows of the “hills and valleys” it is again the appearance of the sine wave and elaborated further by the caution of “most retired groves,” which can only refer to that which is clearly visible but yet out of ordinary sight.

In the allegory of Jacob’s ladder, Jacob is said to have left his father’s house at Beer-Sheba and traveled toward Haran. He stopped for the night and gathered rocks for his pillow, and after falling asleep he dreams of a ladder extending from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth. Angelic beings are descending and ascending the ladder (Gen. 28: 10-22). At the top of the ladder is the voice of God which speaks to Jacob. Clearly we find Jacob in the material world as symbolized by his head laying on the denseness of a rock as he dreams of the voice of God and the ongoing descent and ascent of those angelic beings going up and down the ladder from heaven to earth and back again. Again, the periodic oscillation of proportional displacement is depicted in imagery for us as a sine wave of continuous undulation of up and down on the ladder. With God’s voice at the top of the ladder there can be no doubt as where those beings are going who are ascending up. With Jacob’s being asleep with his head on a rock there can be no doubt as to where those are going who descend the ladder into the density of the material world.
We can substantiate the repetitiveness of the sine wave characteristic throughout the catechetical lecture of the Entered Apprentice. The repetitiveness of the theme is precisely as we find it in many other aspects of Masonic philosophy. If the oscillating theme could be identified in wholly other
areas of Masonry it would provide even greater validity for the interpretation of our descent from eternity into temporal mortality as suggested in the oscillating allegory. Moreover, a daily routine and mundane expression of this repetitious sine wave would clearly support the idea of divine beings here expressing themselves in a material world. That, which is disguised in plain sight is often the most difficult to see. The sine wave is precisely concealed in the expression of the Masonic grips which permit us to know another in the darkness or the light.

In the darkness we are not recognizing Brother A.B. by face or vocal tone but rather that he is a Brother, and by definition a Brother of eternal immortality and another part of the whole just as we are ourselves.

Foregoing a detailed explanation, it is enough to call to mind the respective grips extending from the Entered Apprentice through the grips of a Master Mason. With little or no effort, anyone can appreciate the peaks and valleys across the knuckles when looking at the top of a closed fist or across the back of the hand when a fist is made. Socially, we may greet each other every day on the highest hilltop or the lowest valley, on the descent or on the ascent.

Fig 4 Metacarpal-phalangeal joints, peaks and valleys

In greeting each other then we not only express a social camaraderie, but more especially, we are “re-cognizing” each other’s eternal spirit, and effectively saying, “I know you as an eternal being, a part of the whole to which I too am a part, who has also come here of your own free will, and who has been here before, is here now, and may be here again in the future if you choose.”

Others have proffered an explanation of the grips. Arguably, Brother Albert Pike, known amongst the fraternity and the profane as a giant amongst the Craft because of his superior insight and vast knowledge, tendered an explanation of the grips in his text, *Esoterika*. Explaining the grips from a searching perspective Pike muses on the grips as indicative of science, logic, and faith (Pike). Although the explanations differ significantly from that defined herein, allegory and symbolism often have more than one meaning. However, where a constant thread can be identified in different aspects of the same thing there is more likely to be something of deeper significant meaning. Brother Pike has not argued on behalf of the symbolism of the mystical divine, the eternal, or the immortality suggested in the meaning and evident in the continuity of the theme, but has rather dealt with the grips more narrowly and equivocally as he prepared his treatise for the Royal Order of Scotland.

And so one may ask, what does all this mean and why is this important? The answer lies in the question of whether or not we are Masons, and of course, we are so taken.... So then, what is a Mason? Insofar as we claim the Operative Masons as our “ancient brethren” we must define ourselves according to what our ancient brethren were. They were builders. They built cathedrals,
convents, shrines, priories, etc. They built or created something where before there was nothing other than raw materials. As such we can say that they were builders and builders are in this world Creators. As we do not build with brick and mortar we are now Speculative Masons or philosophical Masons, building a corpus of moral science upon which to guide our lives. Simply put, we are thinking Masons who are building in the vanguard of creation, expanding the universe through our thoughts. In this regard we are the Light after which we incessantly seek creating as in the beginning, in the present, and in the future which is now (Hawkins).

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1. Hawkins, D., The Highest Level of Enlightenment, CD Audio, Nightingale Conant, Niles, IL

Illustrations:

1. Figure 1 is taken from John Pratt.com in a discussion of the internet article Twelve Sons, Twelve Stones as reprinted from Meridian Magazine Aug. 3, 2005.
2. Figure 2 is taken from the internet site Athena.cornell.edu from “The Cosmic Perspective”, Bennett et al. Illustration by Addison Wesley.
3. Figure 3 is an illustration of Jacob’s ladder taken from Clip Art
4. Figure 4 is a “stock photo” showing the prominence of the metacarpophalangeal joints evident in a closed fist.

Notes:

The description herein of Jacob’s ladder is devoid of the usual Masonic references to the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity because the description as found in Genesis fails to include them. Faith, Hope, and Charity are to be found in the New Testament discussion found in Corinthians, Chapter 13. It would seem therefore that the inclusion of these virtues in the Masonic rendition of Jacob’s ladder is an insertion of Christianity into Masonry. Generally Christianity does not recognize the possibility of re-incarnation which seems to be intrinsic to the allegory of Jacob’s dream. Insertion of the virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity detract from the fundamental concept of re-incarnation evident in the story and illustrations of Jacob’s dream. As such the true meaning in the Masonic context is lost and generally without any reference until the Christianization of the Old Testament allegory is restored to its original facts.
ACHIEVING HARMONY

By
Nicholas Leon Gatlin, 32°

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As Masons, we’ve all heard Harmony described as the chief strength and support of all well-governed institutions; more especially, this of ours. On the surface, this appears to be an eloquent way of stating the obvious idea that we should all get along with each other, but there may be a far deeper significance to this seemingly superficial recitation concerning a single duty of the Senior Warden. The key to understanding it may require a journey that simultaneously takes us deep within ourselves, and to the far reaches of the cosmos.

First, what constitutes a “well-governed institution?” Let’s look beyond the lodge room and consider that the entire universe, which has apparently sustained itself for billions of years, must surely be a well-governed institution! The perfection of the Creator is reflected in it, and we’re instructed as Masons that we should seek to understand the Creator “by minutely analyzing his works.”¹ Such analysis quickly reveals that the universe is far from docile. In fact, it’s full of what we’d call opposing forces and violent transfers of energy and matter. Displays of extreme heat and cold, incomprehensible speed and inertia, brilliant light and deep darkness extend throughout a vast, ever-expanding space. It’s nothing like what most of us would picture as harmonious or in equilibrium, but it obviously has the considerable strength and support of the Harmony that a well-governed institution requires. Perhaps our understanding of these contrary forces is not quite complete.

My current understanding of the Contraries is to see them as complementing one another, not opposing one another in the sense that one is seeking to permanently dominate the other. They each serve a purpose and are perfect for their own carefully and divinely-allotted time.

In a literal or physical sense, which is the favored position of a pendulum; far left, or far right? Are high tides better than low tides? Are mountains better than valleys? The fact is that none of the first of these opposites would exist without its counterpart. In fact, the contrary (or complementary) of each actually defines them. In a mental or psychological sense, the same is true. We would not know what happiness feels like if we were never sad. Relief would not actually feel like anything to us if there were no such thing as pain.

So is there really a relationship between the physical demonstration of this idea and the mental and spiritual aspects of it? I think so, and I believe that it is explained in the Hermetic Principles of Correspondence, Vibration, Rhythm and Polarity.²

In my opinion, any serious student of Masonry should be familiar with the basics of Hermeticism. The writings of Hermes Trismegistus are ancient, but in the thousands of years that have passed since the completion of his work, the scientific and spiritual principles that he identified have proven valid in the face of one modern discovery after another. For anyone seeking a condensed and simplified version of the work, The Kybalion³ is easy reading and readily available on the Internet at no cost. The author of this work is apparently known, but he published the document under the name, “Three Initiates” in 1912. (Since this was an obvious attempt to conceal
his identity, I will respect his effort to remain anonymous.) *The Kybalion* remains one of the most important documents in my Masonic study because it explains the basis for such a wide variety of scientific principles, religions and philosophical work. One might even argue that its ideas are an essential element in fully understanding most any esoteric concept; an argument that I find more convincing with each new bit of knowledge I discover. I will add one word of caution regarding *The Kybalion*. Some versions include an introduction that contains some rather superfluous references to certain astonishing and questionable feats that masters have supposedly been able to perform. In my opinion, these references detract from the understanding of the Seven Principles that make the remainder of the book so valuable. Even if the claims are true, their inclusion seems an unnecessary distraction.

Studying Hermeticism rightfully blurs the lines between the scientific and spiritual worlds, demonstrating that the truth in all things will prove consistent in any context when properly understood. The idea that the acceptance of one truth excludes the consideration of another is a creation of our own folly. All truth is interconnected, and all facts support and prove one another. Where gaps seem to exist, they are most likely due to our own ignorance and failure to recognize (or admit) when we have mistaken something for truth that isn’t. The so-called “scientific community” and many organized religions seem particularly notorious for demanding that we accept concepts, theories or doctrines as complete sets of assumptions, even when portions of them are clearly unsound. I find that the simple precepts defined in Hermetic philosophy can help with the job of separating the wheat from the chaff in such cases.

For those who are unfamiliar with Hermetic teachings, a quick summary might be in order here. There are seven Hermetic Principles. I have previously cited four for the purposes of this essay, and offer the following admittedly oversimplified explanations of these four:

**Correspondence**—“As above, so below,” or as Pike put it, “What is above equaling what is below.” Everything in the universe is a reflection of a cosmic principle on at least two planes, including the physical, mental and spiritual.

**Vibration**—Everything in the universe vibrates internally and nothing is truly still. Atoms are held together by vibrations, and as we are rapidly discovering now, atomic components are built from smaller particles that also vibrate. A divine and cosmic energy connects, empowers and disciplines all things; even thought itself.

**Rhythm**—There are larger forms of vibration in which the movements are so slow or large that we don’t think of them as vibrations. Some examples might be the tides, seasons of the year, night and day, and even ages of temperature extremes. All follow a strict adherence to natural law, sometimes predictable, but completely unaffected by human preferences.

**Polarity**—This principle encompasses more than the polarity of a magnet or electrical current flow. It also includes everything that we perceive as opposites or contraries, reducing them to varying degrees of the same things. For instance, we may identify something as being “hot,” but when does something cease to be “cold” and begin to become “hot”? It may be too hot outside to comfortably go for a walk, but far too cold to melt steel on the sidewalk. In reality, our ideas of opposites are purely contextual and often arbitrary. Even something as simple as deciding which way is “up” is dependent upon where we are positioned in relation to the center of the Earth at the time we make the determination. If we move to a point that is a fraction of an inch closer or further away from this center, our reference changes.

The more one understands these Hermetic principles, the more valuable they potentially become. The explanations just provided are by no means complete, but hopefully they will suffice.
for the purposes of this essay.

Each of these principles has something to do with the relationship between seemingly conflicting forces, or what we might call contraries. Contraries are almost always defined by movement or energy of some kind. Unless the contraries are in motion, there is no action, and therefore, no effect. If we have now adequately settled on the conclusion that the complete lack of action is not possible because of vibrational energy, then how is Harmony or equilibrium achieved?

To explain that, let’s look at “harmony” in a musical sense. If I play a chord on a guitar, that chord is made up of something that we would call a combination of individual notes. But what is a note? The idea that a note is a single tone is not accurate. Each note is composed of a set of vibrational frequencies that are created when a string rapidly moves back and forth. The distance that the string travels away from the center and the amount of air it displaces in each direction determines how loud it is. The speed at which it travels this distance determines what we call the frequency or note. Eventually, the string will stop vibrating, at least perceptibly, and come to rest at that center, at which time no air is displaced and no sound is heard. So what we perceive as an individual note is actually at least two contraries. Are they working against each other, or are they complementing one another? What we hear as musical chords are actually combinations of individual “conflict” working together. If one can picture this for what it is, we have a very simple illustration of the entire universe.

In a musical sense, we hear harmonies when certain notes are played together at set intervals, and we have no problem identifying these combinations of notes or chords as harmonies. We hear them and instinctively recognize them as harmonies. Vast, intricate webs of sound go into a single piece of music, all created by what we may not recognize as contraries in conflict, but that’s exactly what they are!

So how are Harmony and equilibrium achieved? Is it by stopping the opposing forces of a vibration? No, we already established that the vibration is responsible for the music, and if the “conflict” is reconciled, the string that is “at peace” produces no discernible sound. (Of course, this may not always be an undesired effect. It may be time for another string to play!) Normally we think of equilibrium as balance, and that it is usually evidenced by the lack of movement, but we’ve just illustrated with the guitar string analogy that this is not always the case. If a variety of notes are balanced according to their volumes so that each note can be detected individually, but no note is so loud that it draws undue attention to itself, we might refer to that as equilibrium. The note is “balanced” and in equilibrium with other notes, but it is quite active within itself. It seems to me that this is a good illustration of who we should be as people, balancing our own attitudes, actions and influences according to the needs of our current and ever-changing circumstances. This is the way of a perfect universe. Any opposing argument would seem to arrogantly demand acceptance that the Creator is inherently flawed. A perfect Creator, by definition, cannot produce flawed work.

Therefore, the fact must be that Harmony and a state of equilibrium are already perfectly achieved, and that the conflicting movements that we see and feel every day are not preventing the Harmony, but are actually responsible for creating and sustaining it! What remains for us is to seek a more complete understanding of this principle and realize that we are all part of this perfect vibration. The entire universe is playing a symphony, and our goal should be to recognize that we can be in tune with it within ourselves. When, and if we can, I think that we will all hear this music that’s playing within each of us and all of creation.
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2 Anonymous; Three Initiates (attributed to Hermes Trismegistus), *The Kybalion* p.10 (Chicago, IL: Yogi Publication Society, Masonic Temple, 1912, 1940.)


EUCLID PROBLEMATIC

By
Joe Kindoll

Brother Joe Kindoll is the Commander of DePaynes Commandery No. 11, Knights Templar, District 6 Deputy Grand High Priest of the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, and Tiler of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid was an invention of our ancient friend and brother, the great Pythagoras, who, in his travels through Asia, Africa, and Europe, was initiated into the several orders of priesthood, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. This wise philosopher enriched his mind with a knowledge of many arts and sciences, more especially Geometry and Masonry. He devised many geometrical problems and theorems, among the most celebrated of which was this, which, in the joy of his heart, he called Eureka, signifying, I have found it, and upon the discovery of which he is said to have sacrificed to Jehovah. It teaches Masons to be general lovers of the arts and sciences.

The above, taken directly from the January 2000 edition of the Tennessee Craftsman, is certainly familiar to all men who have passed through the solemn ceremonies of our order. It has however, long been a puzzle to the serious Masonic student, by virtue of its numerous errors, questionable statements, and general lack of substance by way of any real explanation of the problem at hand.

To begin with, The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid states that, “In right-angled triangles the square on the side opposite the right angle equals the sum of the squares on the sides containing the right angle.” Or to put it in simple mathematical terms:

\[ A^2 + B^2 = C^2 \]

This well-known geometrical proof is depicted here graphically, and in form similar to that presented to the Brother during the appropriate portion of his lecture. This is, of course, familiar to anyone who studied even basic geometry in school, and is commonly known as the Pythagorean Theorem. This simple fact leads to the first significant question which the reflective Mason must ask. Why, if the world regards this as the Pythagorean Theorem, do we insist on giving it a different name? With curiosity thus aroused, other questions begin to form. Was Pythagoras in fact a Brother Master Mason as asserted? Did he actually cry out “Eureka” and make a great sacrifice? Isn’t there some application of this great geometric truth more substantial than to “teach Masons to be general lovers of the arts and sciences?”

A fair amount is known about Pythagoras. The Greek mathematician and philosopher was born...
about 582BC on the island of Samos. It is generally claimed that he spent a significant amount of time traveling throughout Egypt, Chaldea, and Asia Minor, during which he was initiated into various Mystery schools. He eventually settled in Crotona in southern Italy, where he founded a school of instruction. When his school was attacked, he fled Crotona, and died circa 500BC.²

It is widely understood that the famous theorem attributed to Pythagoras was well known long before his time. Commonly referred to as “the Egyptian string trick,” the practical application was to square large structures. Simply, any given length of string can be divided into twelve equal parts which are marked along the length of the string. By placing three sticks in the ground, and adjusting them so that they form a triangle, with sides equal to three, four and five marks, a right angle is formed. Thus, a perfect square angle can be created from a length of string and some measuring device, such as a twenty-four inch gauge. This application makes use of the simplest form of the right triangle - the 3-4-5 triangle, which is the form commonly depicted in Masonic circles. Pythagoras didn’t invent it, but he did provide the mathematical proof, which one can presume gives him naming rights.

While Pythagoras did form a school of instruction which advanced members by degrees, to claim that he received the degree of Master Mason, is a claim too ludicrous to be taken seriously. According to Mackey, the first verifiably authentic mention of Pythagoras with respect to Freemasonry comes in a speech delivered by Sir Francis Drake to the Grand Lodge of York in 1726, in which Pythagoras, Euclid, and Archimedes are mentioned by name only as being great geometers. Writings connecting Pythagoras to Freemasonry are, according to that author, notably absent until the middle of the 18th Century, when the new breed of speculative Masons of the 1717 revival began to connect him with the Fraternity.³

Nowhere in any biography of Pythagoras is the term “Eureka” used, except as published in Masonic ritual. That term is associated with Archimedes, who allegedly worked out his principle of liquid buoyancy while sitting in his bathtub, and leaping from the tub, ran naked through the streets shouting, “Eureka!” No mention is made of ritual sacrifice on the part of Archimedes, and the practice was expressly forbidden to the initiates of the Pythagorean school.⁴

So is there a deeper Masonic lesson to be learned from the right-angle triangle? One fairly obvious application is in the position of the Lesser Lights around the altar of Freemasonry. The very last page of the Tennessee Craftsman illustrates the proper form of a lodge room, and clearly shows that the Lesser Lights are to be arranged as if they were the vertices of a Pythagorean 3-4-5 triangle. This application however, is not universal, as many other jurisdictions provide no such illustration. In fact, many jurisdictions state that the lights are to be placed merely in a triangular position. Often they are arrayed in the form of an equilateral triangle BESIDE the altar, not around it.

Somewhat more obscurely, it has been pointed out that in conducting the candidate through the circumambulations during each degree, the Pythagorean triangle is formed. Indeed, during the Entered Apprentice degree, the candidate “squares” the northeast corner of the lodge three times in a clockwise fashion before changing direction. During the same portion of the ritual in the Fellow Craft degree that corner is squared four times, and five times in the Master Mason degree.⁵ While this is a bit more subtle and serves to illustrate some significance of the 3-4-5 triangle, it does not directly provide any deeper interpretation.

With nothing of any great substance to address these “other questions” previously stated, my attention was returned the original question concerning the naming of this proposition. What is so special about Euclid that Freemasons feel the need to refer to the Pythagorean Theorem using his name? In attempting to address this question, I decided to consult Euclid directly. Almost instantly,
I found myself inundated with meaning upon deeper meaning, and a whole new perspective on the nature of the Craft.

Euclid, often referred to as the Father of Geometry, collected the sum of geometrical knowledge and understanding into thirteen volumes collectively known as The Elements. The first volume of The Elements concerns itself with planar geometry, and contains forty-eight problems or proofs. The Pythagorean Theorem is the forty-seventh, and the forty-eighth is essentially the converse of its predecessor. For all substantive purposes, the Pythagorean Theorem is the last significant proposition of Euclid’s first book of The Elements. It is the Omega of that volume…so what is the Alpha?

Having found Pythagoras at the end of The Elements, I naturally turned to the beginning. To my delight, I found that the First Problem of Euclid virtually drips with Masonic application and esoteric symbolism. It essentially states that, given any finite straight line, an equilateral triangle may be constructed. Using only a straight edge (i.e. a twenty-four inch gauge) and a compasses.

To begin, use a compasses to draw a circle with any given radius (Fig. 2). We have essentially created the “point within the circle” which represents each Brother. Now reverse the compasses in such a way that the other end of the radius becomes the center point, and describe a second circle overlapping the first (Fig. 3).

The resulting overlapping area is shaded in the accompanying figure. Deviating slightly from Euclid, we find in this area one of the fundamental components of sacred geometry, the Vesica Pices. This shape holds many different significations, depending upon the school of thought with views it. In pagan rites, it is held to symbolize the generative union of the male and the female. To the early Christians, it was named the Ichthys, and was displayed horizontally. The most common modern application of this can be seen displayed on rear windows and bumpers, typically with a tail attached to solidify the impression of a fish. Mathematically, the ratio of the length of the Vesica Pices to its width is 265:153. Perhaps one clue as to why this symbol came to be adopted by the early Christians can be found in John 21:11, where it clearly states that the number of fish which Jesus caused to be caught, from which he fed the masses, was 153.

Returning to Euclid, we learn that by connecting the two ends of the shared radius to either the top or bottom apex of the overlapping area, we achieve the goal of the First Problem, by creating a perfect equilateral triangle. This is illustrated in Fig. 4. But the resultant form yields much, much more than is directly given in The Elements, particularly when viewed through the lenses of sacred geometry and Freemasonry. Indeed, the equilateral triangle is almost universally accepted as a symbol of the Deity, with each side representing the principle attributes: directive, supportive, and creative, the Masonic appellations of which are Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

Moreover the upper half of the Vesica Pices, displayed in Fig. 4 as the shaded area around the equilateral triangle, forms the exact mathematical proportions of the gothic arch. This form of arch, while different from that which is symbolically incorporated into a number of Masonic degrees, shows that the medieval operative stonemasons had a firm grasp of this application of Euclidean...
geometry, as this form was commonly used in churches and cathedrals of the time throughout Europe. It can still be seen to be incorporated into churches and Masonic lodges today.

The upward-pointing triangle also alludes to the male generative principle, and when combined with the correspondingly created downward-pointing equilateral triangle, a symbol of the female generative principle, the pagan interpretation is more clearly understood. The left side of Fig. 5 clearly shows these two triangles overlapped, forming a union of these two generative principles. Removing the horizontals of each (or simply not using them in the first place) yields a most familiar symbol, to Freemasons the world over.

Returning to Fig. 2, and its association to the “point within the circle,” we are specifically told that the original point represents the individual Brother. In moving to Fig. 3, we are basically taking that original point, and making a single circuit around another point, returning to the place from whence we came. In doing so, we create another radius (actually two, but we can only move in one direction at a time) around which we can make another circuit. In the course of our journey through the Three Degrees, we make one purposeful circumambulation in the first degree, two in the second, and three in the third for a total of six circuits. Interestingly enough, precisely six circuits around the original center point of the first circle in Fig. 2 can be made. The resultant shape can be seen in Fig. 6, and yields a cornucopia of sacred and Masonic symbolism.

The original circle is visible in the center of this drawing, and I’ve kept the original radius to assist in identifying it. By adding these six overlapping circles to the original, we have created twelve small equilateral triangles. Six of them are within the original circle, and are not shown in the figure. Six are outside the circle, and when highlighted as above, clearly array themselves into the form of the six-pointed star. Within the original circle, we see that by connecting the points where each circle intersects, we create a hexagon, surrounding a central shape which brings to mind the petals of a flower. These petal shapes are almost identical to the proportions of the petals of the water lily of the Nile, and the hexagon represents the individual cell of the honeycomb, the internal (i.e. hidden, esoteric) form of the beehive.

But the Masonic application of what I have come to call “The First Problem of Euclid” does not end there. At least one other form of significance is created by making the six circuits around the original point. To illustrate this more clearly, Fig. 7, highlights several of the intersection points. The resultant form is another equilateral triangle, composed not of
lines, but of points. Specifically, a triangle composed of four rows of points with one, two, three, and four points in each of the rows. This shape, more commonly referred to as the tetractys, which has so many sacred and Masonic references as to warrant an entire volume (or several) on its own.

Firstly, it is comprised of the first four numbers, which when added together, produce the sum of ten, often referred to as the perfect number. For this reason alone, the tetractys was considered to be significant, even holy in a number of the Mystery schools. In the Pythagorean school, the tetractys is composed not of points, but of ten Hebrew Yod’s. In the Hebrew tradition, it is formed with four different letters arranged as shown in Fig. 8. From this, it is easy to see how the sacred Hebrew name of Deity corresponds to that version of the tetractys. Combined with the fact that geometrically, the tetractys is made up of nine (or three times three) small equilateral triangles, the significance of “three times three” to the Royal Arch degree become readily apparent. Pike points out in his dissertation on the Master Mason degree that both Pythagoras and the Hebrew priests alike borrowed the tetractys from the ancient Egyptians. He goes on to say that it “ought to be replaced among the symbols of the Master’s Degree, where it right belongs.”

The Hebrews in all probability learned this sacred form from Moses, who has been repeatedly identified as an initiate of the Egyptian schools, and who plays a most significant part in the symbolism of the Royal Arch degree. Pythagoras most likely learned it from the Egyptians in his reported travels there. The tetractys was arguably the greatest symbol of those who studied under him at Crotona. In fact, initiates into the Pythagorean school took their obligations, “by Him who gave our soul the tetractys, which hath the fountain and root of ever-springing nature.” Furthermore, Pythagoras used the numerical properties of the tetractys to explain mathematically the nature of musical scales and harmonic ratios, and also the seven principle colors of the visible spectrum, emanating from the three-pointed triad of the Godhead.

So, as with many of the journeys typified in the various ceremonies of Masonic initiation, I found that I had come full circle. I began at Pythagoras, and in attempting to discover the reason behind several mistakes and odd phraseology, I found myself going through Euclid only to return to Pythagoras on a much deeper level. Perhaps, this is the exact point of all the confusing details given in the explanation to the newly made Master Mason. It exists as it is presented in order to lead us to explore and discover the deeper, hidden meanings for ourselves.

One cannot examine this very deeply without inevitably arriving at the Pythagorean Mystery school at Crotona, which has much in common with our current system of Masonic instruction. It is not however, my intention to assert that Freemasonry is descendant from this school. To do so would be just as hollow as the myriad “proofs” that our order is the direct descendant of medieval stonemasons’ guilds or the Knights Templar. While both these, and other similar explanations offer interesting, and even some potentially accurate insight concerning the tangible, exoteric, or Operative origin of our institution, it is the more esoteric, or Speculative origin in which I am interested. In other words, it is far less important to prove which political organization from which we institutionally sprang than to understand the schools of thought from which we are philosophically descendant.

It is my assertion, that Freemasonry contains within it one of the last remaining vestiges of the
ancient system of symbolic instruction from a myriad of Mystery schools. In essence, the ancient hidden mysteries of Freemasonry are the mysteries of the Pythagoreans, the Egyptians, the Kabbalists, the Zoroastrians, the Mithras, and a score of others. Our system of symbolic, allegorical instruction carries hidden within it the essence of mystic principles spanning the entire history of human existence, preserving those teachings through a modern age where such thought flies in the face of empirical and scientific reason.


6 Albert Pike, Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry (Charleston: Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree, 1871) 88.

7 Hall, 202.
THE TWO PILLARS

By

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This is a presentation made by Bro. Kindoll to Hiram Lodge #7 in Franklin, TN.

The first time that I ever got a good look at the inside of a Masonic lodge room was on the morning of my initiation. My grandfather took me into the lodge room at Carrollton (Kentucky) Lodge #134, and proceeded to inform me that everything in that room, down to the smallest item, was there for a very specific purpose, and that it all meant something—nothing was merely ornamental. My eyes were immediately drawn to the two large, free-standing pillars, which in that lodge were placed on either side of the entrance door. I asked him what they were and what they meant, and he replied, “Oh, you’ll find out more about them later.” That explanation did come a month later when I was passed to the degree of Fellowcraft.

However, in many ways the information communicated about these most important furnishings is not proportionate to their size and station. In Tennessee, for example, our attention is drawn only briefly to them in the second degree, and then the explanation is limited to their names, dimensions, and a description of their adornments. They are not mentioned again until they appear, almost as an afterthought, in the Royal Arch degree, in the list of those treasures that were taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar as the spoils of war. Little is given to explain the meaning or symbolism of the pillars themselves. In order to determine that, one must dig deeper into other sources, and that is what we will endeavor to do today.

These pillars, of course, are Masonic representations of those pillars that were erected in the building of King Solomon’s temple. Scripture outlines the details of the temple, including the pillars, in great detail.

These descriptions are included in both the book of Kings and Chronicles. 1 Kings, Chapter 7, Verses 15-22 tell us:

15 For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.
16 And he made two chapteris of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapter was five cubits:
17 And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapteris which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter.
18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapteris that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter.
19 And the chapteris that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.
20 And the chapteris upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter.
And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

Most scholars hold that the pillars were not actually made of brass, as the process of making that alloy involves combining copper and zinc, which was unknown at this stage of history. Many contemporary sources that reference brass then are interpreted to mean copper or, more likely, bronze. I am told by W. Bro. Palmer that the pillars here in this lodge (Hiram #7, Franklin, TN) were carefully measured when they were made so that they would preserve the scale outlined in scripture and reflected in ritual.

2 Chronicles, Chapter 3 echoes much of this description, but states that “Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapiter that was on the top of each of them was five cubits.” There are essentially two explanations for the differing heights in the two books. One suggests that the overall height of each pillar was thirty-five cubits (18 cubits for the pillar itself, 5 for the chapiter, 4 for the lily-work, and an additional 8 for a base upon which the pillar was erected). The more commonly accepted rationalization is that, since 1 Kings indicates that the chapiter of each pillar covered one half cubit of the pillar’s body, 17 ½ cubits of each pillar was visible. With both pillars taken together, their total visible height, not including the chapiters, is thirty-five cubits.

Whether these pillars were smooth or fluted is unknown, and they are commonly depicted in both ways. In either case, both Kings and Chronicles place these pillars on the porch of the temple, and therefore they are typically displayed as being free-standing, rather than supporting any portion of the building itself. Therefore, in order to enter the temple, one must of necessity pass between them, and I believe that it is this moment that we specifically refer to when we say that we are “passed” to the degree of Fellowcraft. For this is the moment when we pass from the profane world without and into the holy ground of the temple itself.

This notion of passing between two pillars into some holy space or higher realm is a common thread throughout antiquity. This is particularly evident with respect to the Pillars of Hercules, which stand on either side of the Strait of Gibraltar. On the north side is the Rock of Gibraltar, and its southern counterpart is either Monte Hacho or Jebel Musa (Mount Moses). Plato recorded the location of Atlantis as being beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Renaissance depictions of the Pillars of Hercules sometimes include the phrase “ne plus ultra,” indicating that nothing lies further beyond those gates. This phrase also can be interpreted to indicate the state of perfection that has on some occasions been applied to the craft of Freemasonry itself, more specifically to the perfect ashlar.

But while these naturally occurring “pillars” were interpreted as having a more symbolic, spiritual application, men have been erecting dual pillars in their sacred spaces since the dawn of history. The temple site known as Gobekli Tepe lies in southern Turkey, near the Syrian border. This hilltop site is the oldest man-made religious structure ever discovered, dating to about 9,000 BC (that’s almost 7,000 years before the pyramids and Stonehenge). The ruins at this site clearly show that the temples there were circular structures, with two large free-standing pillars. These pillars are each capped by a rectangular block, which readily calls to mind the capitals described in the Solomonic pillars. They are also carved to take on certain human aspects, commonly believed to be the depiction of temple priests, who are wearing what appears to be loin cloths or aprons.

The Phoenicians placed their westernmost temple to one of their deities, Melqart (who is
analogous to the Greek Hercules) just beyond the pillars in Cadiz. Their temples to Melqart, as with other deities that they worshiped, including Baal, Astarte, and Adon, all similarly were adorned with matching pillars located on either side of the entrance. In fact, it has been suggested that one of the primary reasons why King Solomon sought assistance from Hiram, King of Tyre and his master architect was due to the grandeur of the Tyrian temple to Baal. It is easy to see then how this notion of the pillars marking the entrance to a holy place was carried over from the Phoenicians to Solomon’s temple.

But Solomon was erecting a temple to Yahweh, not to Baal or Astarte. And though the physical elements were virtually identical, they must of necessity hearken back to the Hebrew nation and their God. Mackey says:

It has been supposed that Solomon, in erecting these pillars, had reference to the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire which went before the Israelites in the wilderness, and that the right hand or South pillar represented the pillar of cloud, and the left hand or North pillar represented that of fire. Solomon did not simply erect them as ornaments to the Temple, but as memorials of God’s repeated promises of support to his people of Israel.

This excerpt is included in the explanatory lecture of the second degree in some jurisdictions, though not in Tennessee. It refers to Exodus Chapter 13, verse 21, which states, “By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night,” after setting out from Succoth (which incidentally is also the name of one of the locations where the temple pillars were cast).

These pillars may also have had reference to the two antediluvian pillars of Enoch. In fact, the first Masonic mention of pillars is found in the Cooke Manuscript, dated circa 1410. Enoch, who was the great-grandfather of Noah, was close to God, and according to Jewish tradition, learned much important knowledge from God, including the arts and sciences and the laws of the universe. In order to preserve this knowledge, he and his sons (Methuselah, Elisha and Elimelech) erected two pillars, one of stone, and a hollow one cast in brass, and upon those pillars Enoch engraved his wisdom. These materials were chosen to protect this important knowledge against any future destruction by either “conflagration or inundation,” as the stone pillar would survive a fire, while the hollow brass pillar would survive a flood. Evidence of this connection with the temple pillars, from a Masonic perspective, is still evident in our description of them, which includes a reference to their serving as vessels to preserve the archives of Masonry and to withstand ‘inundation and conflagration,” despite the fact that conflagration would easily destroy two brazen pillars. And here again, we see that these pillars make reference to both fire and water/cloud, as they did in our prior historical application concerning the Exodus.

This recurring association of the two pillars with the opposing forces of water and fire lead us naturally to the most obvious of the symbolic expressions of these furnishings—that of duality. If we accept the association with the pillars of Exodus, one pillar becomes associated with water, and the other with fire—two equal, but opposing forces. The ancient symbol for water was a downward pointing triangle, while that of fire was the same triangle pointed upward. This clearly illustrates the opposing nature of these two columns, and is suggestive of one of the key spiritual concepts that is omnipresent throughout Freemasonry: “As above, so below.” This same concept is repeated with equal force by the Masonic addition of the terrestrial and celestial spheres: “On earth as it is in Heaven.” This also suggests the most tangible of all dualisms—the masculine and the feminine. The
left pillar is named Boaz, which translates roughly to “in strength” and is clearly an active, masculine concept. The right pillar, Jachin, translates to “God will establish,” is a more passive, creative notion, and can be directly associated with wisdom, or “Sophia,” which is feminine.

Dualism is an essential concept in virtually every system of religious or spiritual thought known to man. Whether this is expressed as creation vs. destruction; mind vs. body; or yin vs. yang, the notion of equal but opposing forces is omnipresent. Some depictions of the Solomonic pillars further reflect their oppositional nature by making one pillar in black and the other in white. This is NOT to be interpreted as equating to the notion of good vs. evil, for neither of these equal but opposite forces is inherently “better” than the other. We are told in scripture that there is a time to be born and a time to die, etc. illustrating that neither of the opposites is to be considered evil. Albert Pike further illuminates this distinction by stating that evil is not the opposite of good, but rather the absence of it, just as ignorance is the absence of wisdom and darkness is the absence of light. These dualistic forces that are symbolized by the two opposing pillars teach the concept of the necessary union of opposing forces, an idea which Bro. Ryan Driber names the “equilibrium of the contraries” in his paper of that name (Tennessee Lodge of Research 2005 Proceedings).

But a Masonic lodge is supported not only by the columns of Wisdom and Strength, but by that of Beauty as well. While these three columns are clearly delineated by the three stationed officers, they are also reflected at one particular moment, when the candidate passes between the two pillars. At that time, there are in fact three pillars: the two we have been discussing and the third represented by the candidate himself. As he passes between them, he represents the harmony, or balance between the two opposing forces, between the Senior Warden’s column of Strength and the Worshipful Master’s column of Wisdom. He becomes the pillar of Beauty—the embodiment of the Junior Warden. Just as the union of the downward pointing triangle of water and the upward pointing triangle of fire yield the six-pointed star of Israel, so does the union of King Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre yield the synthesis which is Grand Master Hiram Abif, whose deceased father was a Tyrian and whose mother was a “widow of the tribe of Naphtali.”

Much of the history and symbolism of Freemasonry comes from the Jewish tradition, and often more specifically from the Jewish mystical tradition known as Kabbalah. This school of thought teaches that God created the universe in ten utterances, each of which represents a specific attribute or emanation of the Deity. These emanations or sephirot collectively form what is commonly called the Tree of Life, and are organized according to the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. The organization of these pillars exactly matches the placement of the two brazen pillars—Strength (Boaz) on the left, Wisdom (Jachin) on the right, and Beauty—often referred to as the Middle Pillar, represented by the candidate.
The base of this Middle Pillar is the sephirah (Hebrew for a single emanation of Deity, as opposed to the plural sephirot) named Malkuth, which represents the material world or kingdom that is generated from the other manifestations of Deity. It is the beginning of the Kabbalist’s spiritual path toward enlightenment. The top of this Middle Pillar is the sephirah named Keter, which represents the crown or Godhead. In his journey toward the apex of this mountain of Truth, the seeker of light passes back and forth up a winding path between these pillars.

The goal of the student of this mystery school is to incline neither to the right, nor to the left, but to take from each pillar’s energy, always returning to balance himself in the harmony of the Middle Pillar. The temple cannot stand without the two supporting pillars, and if the initiate fails to build his spiritual temple without harmony between the two extremes, his temple cannot stand, and will suffer the same fate as that which fell to Samson’s might.

While the study of the Kabbalah is a deep and complex subject, even this cursory introduction shows a very clear parallel to the ascension of the candidate in the second degree. I do not claim to be an authority on the mysteries of the Kabbalah, or even on the symbols and meanings of Freemasonry. I do however believe Pike when he admonishes us to follow the streams of knowledge back to their “sources that well up in the remote past” where we will find the “origins and meaning of Masonry.” What I have offered today is one interpretation of the history and symbols of these two omnipresent pillars. It is my hope that in doing so, each of you may be moved to explore these mysteries further, and in turn arrive at your own understanding of their meaning to you. My only charge is that, when you do arrive at a knowledge of this, or any other symbol of Freemasonry, that you do not stop there and say, “I understand this.” Press onward, dig deeper, peel back yet another layer—for it is not the destination, but the journey through the pillars and up the winding staircase that yields the Mason his wages.
PYTHAGORAS AND HIS THEOREM

By
Bro. John R. Meldorf, P.M.

We learn in our Masonic study of an ancient brother named Pythagoras and his discovery of a geometric truth we call the Pythagorean Theorem. What I would like to do today is to examine the man, the theorem, and its significance to Freemasonry.

A few short weeks ago, I knew very little about the man. I didn't even know why his famous theorem, discovered by one man, bears the name of another in our ritual. I was interested to learn that Pythagoras's theorem is called the 47th Problem of Euclid, because Euclid, in his six-volume work, entitled *Elements*, was pleased to list as the 47th of his mathematical proofs the theorem of Pythagoras. This was the first written example and discussion of a secret which heretofore had only been passed down from mouth to ear by Pythagoras's followers.

In my research, I was amazed to learn that modern scientists and philosophers disagree on just about everything about Pythagoras. But they still consider his theorem to be a breakthrough in intellectual and mystical thought, and hence its relevance to our world and ritual.

Like so many of the ancients, many of the exact details of Brother Pythagoras's life are unknown to us. Much of what we did know is subject to revision, simply because modern archeology has unearthed earlier translations of some of the writings of the ancients, which being more contemporary to his time than modern translations, are considered more authentic. But much of the confusion over
Pythagoras's life and philosophy results from two factors: Pythagoras's own admonition against the written word and the desire of some of his later, unscrupulous disciples to use this vacuum in written detail to invent writings allegedly written by him to bolster their own philosophical claims. Thus, even the great Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, professed followers all, misused Brother Pythagoras's name for their own ends.

We know that Brother Pythagoras was born in the late seventh century, B.C., on the Greek island of Samos. We also know that he lived to be about ninety-nine years old. Beyond that, much about his life is in dispute. Born the son of a scholarly man, Pythagoras also loved sports and won an Olympic victory in 588, B.C. He developed an interest in politics from early childhood. Allegedly falling into disfavor with a tyrant, Polycrates, who ruled Samos, Pythagoras fled to Egypt, where he studied for twenty-two years, until captured by the armies of Cambyses, and taken to Babylon. That's a name we're familiar with. Pythagoras reportedly lived in the Court of Cambyses. He was not a captive in the sense that we think of P.O.W.s. As a learned man he was treated somewhat better. He lived in the Court of Cambyses for nine years, where he learned the religious, philosophical, and magical traditions of the magi, the Jews of the dispersion, whose cabalistic theories were just then coming into fruition, and perhaps, even visited India.

Pythagoras then returned to Greece, to the city of Kroton, and founded a school. His classes, which sometimes contained six hundred, and to which he spoke behind a screen, were influential and, in just twenty years, his disciples assumed control of the city without
bloodshed. However, a wealthy citizen named Chrilo, who was denied admission to the school, incited the local population to rebellion, and the fragile, new politics of Kroton was ill-prepared to defend itself.

Pythagoras, and many of his followers, fled to Metipointian, where a second school was formed. Here another rebellion resulted and Pythagoras died, perhaps in that uprising, or perhaps by starvation, in about 506, B.C.

The Order continued on, growing rapidly across Southern Italy, until about 450, B.C. But the massacres appeared to end the political side of the Order, since a doctrine of non-violence and non-resistance left only words to combat the angry swords of irate rebels. The Order survived seven or eight centuries. In the first century, A.D., Justin Martyr, before his conversion to Christianity, sought out an old Pythagorean, but was told he could not be initiated into the Order, unless he sought more learning in music, geometry, and astronomy. At about the same time, the Jewish historian Josephus wrote of the Essenes, comparing them to the Pythagoreans still active in Greece. By the third century, A.D., even those books reputed to have been written by Pythagoras had disappeared.

Much of what is attributed to Pythagoras was not original to him. Indeed, even knowledge of his famous theorem dates back to the twentieth century, B.C., in Egypt, and the twelfth century, B.C., in China. Why then is this ancient friend and brother so important? We must look to the time of his birth. It was an important time in the intellectual history of the world. The sixth century, B.C., was the time of some of the greatest intellects of all time. In China, the philosophers Confucius and Lao-tzu are noted. In India we have Gotama Buddha,
who founded what is today the largest religion in the world. In Egypt, Pharoah Nechroh funded the first recorded circumnavigation of Africa. In Judea, the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah were slowly shifting Judaism from its tribal cultish origins into a religion capable of giving birth to Christianity. In Persia, Zoroaster was founding the first international religion. And in Greece, the Master Builder Theodoras introduced the level, rule, and square.

Pythagoras was the first to encounter, and synthesize, all of these trends into one unified philosophy. Through his travels, he came into contact with all of these emerging ideas. Diogenes tells us that Pythagoras, devoting himself to many years of preparation to qualify for initiation, had himself been initiated into The Mysteries, not only of Orpheus in his native Greece, but also into the Rights of Osiris in Egypt, the Magi in Persia, and many more, including Masonry. In a sense, his massive thirst for more light made him the first and only touchstone of all these important religious and intellectual trends, all of which, still claim yet today, millions of followers in one part of the world or the other. Pythagoras synthesized all this knowledge through his own mathematically trained mind, thus claiming to find a certain quantifiable unity of all this knowledge within the field of geometry.

Now, the Pythagorean Theorem simply stated by Euclid is that for a triangle that has a right angle of ninety degrees, the sum of the squares of the two shorter sides of the triangle will equal the square of the largest side of the triangle, or the hypotenuse. In other words, take the two sides that form the right angle, multiply each by itself, add those squares together, and they will equal the square of the hypotenuse, which completes the right angle triangle.
If we use as an example the right triangle, or the right angle triangle, mandated by our code as the proper alignment of our lesser lights, we can see Pythagoras's theorem in action. The distance between the east and south lights is three spaces, the south to west is four spaces, and the west to east is five spaces. This three, four, five relationship is the smallest whole number example of the Pythagorean Theorem.

Pythagoras was apparently fascinated with the relationships of whole numbers. He is credited with discovering that musical chords, pleasing to the western ear, are composed of exact whole number divisions of the string of a single string harp. He proved that progressive additions of odd whole numbers always resulted in a new number, which was the square of a smaller number. For example, if you add one and three, you come up with four, which is two times two, or two squared. If you add one, three, and five, you come up with nine, which is three times three, or three squared, etc...

He discovered that no matter how hard anyone tries, one can only create five polyhedrons out of the shapes in nature. A polyhedron is a solid having all sides with the same size and shape, such as a pyramid or a cube. Pythagoras became the first mathematician to systematize and require mathematical proofs of his theories. His Theorem was so important and great that the late mathematician Jacob Brunowski says that he was taught the Theorem directly from Euclid's *Elements*, and his famous forty-seventh problem. This was in the schools just fifty years ago.

The fascination with whole numbers, which Pythagoras had, combined with all that he had *learned* in his travels lead to the
THE SEVEN LIBERAL ARTS IN THE FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

By
Philip Edward Phillips, Ph.D.

In the first section of the Fellow Craft degree, we learn that the particular placement of the square and compasses upon the greatest light of Masonry is meant to teach us that Freemasonry is a progressive moral science that is attained only by degrees. The series of three degrees reinforces this idea of the incremental attainment of light: the first degree, corresponding to childhood or youth, concerns the physical aspects of the candidate and emphasizes the curbing of the passions; the second degree, corresponding to young adulthood and manhood, concerns the intellectual aspects of the candidate and emphasizes the attainment and cultivation of knowledge; and the third degree, associated with adulthood and maturity, concerns the spiritual aspects of the candidate and emphasizes the necessary metaphorical death of the old self and the raising of the new self into Masonic light. In all three degrees, the candidate is seeking light, but in increasingly higher levels of understanding and in accordance with the candidate’s ability to comprehend the nature of the light being revealed. As the candidate is literally brought from darkness to light in the Entered Apprentice degree, he is figuratively brought from ignorance to knowledge in the Fellow Craft degree, whose emblems and rituals are meant to illustrate the mind’s struggle to attain truth, both moral and intellectual, on the pathway to divine truth. That truth is humanity's ultimate goal, whose full attainment and realization is beyond human
comprehension but nevertheless the goal that all human beings ultimately seek.

In order to represent the ascent of the mind to knowledge of the Divine, it is appropriate that in the second section of the Fellow Craft degree the candidate is conducted to a set of winding stairs—consisting of five, three, and seven steps—which are necessary to ascend in order to reach the Middle Chamber of King Solomon’s Temple so that he may have his name enrolled among the workmen and may be taught the wages of a Fellow Craft Mason. The final set of steps, appropriately correspond to the seven liberal arts, which historically constituted the medieval curriculum in Europe and which, in themselves, symbolized the appropriate pathway to higher philosophical or theological knowledge. A consideration of the nature and significance of the liberal arts in the late antique and medieval curriculum, especially within the cathedral schools of twelfth-century France, the liberal arts themselves and their traditional order, beginning with the trivium and progressing through the quadrivium, and the function of the liberal arts as the final seven steps, ultimately leading to the to the Middle Chamber, will reveal that the seven liberal arts are not only necessary for the attainment of a liberal education but that they are also, and more importantly, necessary for the attainment of divine truth and knowledge.
Just as the three steps and five steps preceding the seven steps under discussion have their own symbolic values in respect to Freemasonry, so do the seven steps metaphorically allude to many sevens, some of which include the number seven as a perfect number, the number seven as the symbol of completeness, the seven days of creation, the seven years required for the erection of King Solomon’s Temple, the seven principal officers of the Lodge, and, more particularly, the seven liberal arts and sciences—grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy—enumerated here in the order in which they appear in the second section of the Fellow Craft degree. In the Tennessee ritual, the candidate is instructed that the number seven represents completeness, both moral and spiritual, which is the aim of the three degrees, and that it refers to the seven liberal arts, which were anciently studied in order to complete a liberal education. The ritual singles out geometry, in particular, for fuller explication, as it is considered to be the foundation of Masonic science and that which enables the architect to draw his plans and execute his designs. In like manner, geometry becomes emblematic in Freemasonry of the Deity as the Great Architect of the Universe, who created the heaven and the earth, a conception famously expressed by John Milton in *Paradise Lost*:

[The Father] [s]tay’d the fervid Wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden Compasses, prepar’d
In God’s eternal store, to circumscribe
This Universe, and all created things:
One foot he centred, and the other turn’d
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, Thus far extend, thus far the bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O World.
Thus God the Heav’n created, thus the Earth…¹

In this literary example, the Deity is depicted as the architect who
fashions the universe with materials from his own store, the tools of
the Master Mason. This is not to suggest that Milton himself was a
Freemason but rather to demonstrate one example of the rich tradition
of the liberal arts as expressed in epic literature that may have
reinforced the image of the Deity as architect employed in the Masonic
ritual. Aside from the representation of the Architect of the Universe in
this passage, the principal theme of *Paradise Lost* is the fall of
humanity and the restoration through the Son, a pattern of unity
followed by separation ending in eventual restoration that can be seen
as well in the pattern of the Masonic ritual, in which a candidate,
created in the image of the Deity, finds himself in total darkness, seeks
and receives light, and ultimately experiences rebirth and regeneration,
ending where he began.

Masonic scholar W. L. Wilmhurst observes that, to the ordinary
person, geometry “means nothing more than the branch of
mathematics associated with the problems of Euclid” or the “Science
of earth-measurement,”² subjects that are seemingly unrelated to the
Craft, but that, on the contrary, geometry means something much more
profound within the context of Freemasonry. According to
Wilmshurst, geometry is “synonymous with self-knowledge, the
understanding of the basic substance of our being, its properties and
potentialities.”3 To understand the Deity in this way, perhaps, can lead to self-knowledge if we accept that within each one of us resides a spark of the divine. Although the order and relative significance of each of the seven liberal arts could differ slightly within the classical tradition, the purpose of progressing through the arts of the trivium and the sciences of the quadrivium remained the same: that is, the attainment of higher knowledge, specifically, the attainment of divine knowledge, accessible only through the study of philosophy.

THE SEVEN LIBERAL ARTS, THEIR SEQUENCE, AND THE PATH TO SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

In order to be duly and truly prepared to study philosophy, one had first to study the full range of the seven liberal arts, not in a piecemeal fashion but in the particular order in which they were established and taught from late antiquity through the middle ages. The revival of classical education in the cathedral schools in Europe during the twelfth century could be witnessed in the flourishing of liberal arts instruction during the period, which included the study of the individual arts and sciences as “professional disciplines in their own right as well as for their ability to mold character or to inform biblical exegesis, homiletics, and theology.”4 Thus, not only did the liberal arts education offered in the medieval monasteries of Europe become a vehicle for converting to Christianity the various Germanic and Celtic peoples under such rulers as Gregory the Great, but it also provided an intellectual bridge between early medieval thinkers and their classical and patristic forebears.5 The progression from what Aristotle labeled
practical philosophy to what he labeled theoretical philosophy manifests itself quite literally in the order of the two divisions themselves: the *trivium*, or “three-fold path,” is founded upon grammar and culminates in dialectic, or logic, while the *quadrivium*, or the “four-fold path,” as coined by Boethius, is founded upon arithmetic and culminates in astronomy. In order to reach the highest levels of learning, one must first study and master the fundamentals, or the basic building blocks, of knowledge.

In his critical commentary included with his translation of Boethius’s *De Institutio Arithmetica*, a sixth-century Latin treatise on Pythagorean number theory that was widely known and frequently used as a textbook throughout the medieval period, Michael Masi writes that there was some disagreement on the proper sequence of the liberal arts, arising primarily in respect to the placement of music and geometry in the quadrivial sequence. The traditional order, established by Boethius in his *De Arithmetica*, was as follows: grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy. According to Boethius, often called the “schoolmaster of the West,” in order to comprehend the order of the universe, one has first to concede the primacy, or priority, of arithmetic as the basis for the remaining three quadrivial arts. The relationship between them is discussed in Book I of his treatise on number theory: “arithmetic considers that multitude which exists of itself as an integral whole; the measures of musical modulation understand that multitude which exists in relation to some other; geometry offers the notion of stable magnitude; the skill of the astronomical discipline explains the science of movable magnitude.” Arithmetic, then, may be regarded as the source and end of all things,
representing in its simplest form that which is prior to creation and that which is simplicity and sufficiency itself. From arithmetic come all the other quadrivial arts, and an understanding of those arts is prerequisite to an apprehension of higher wisdom.

Boethius underscores the significance of mastering the *quadrivium* when he writes, “If a searcher is lacking knowledge of these four sciences [arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy], he is not able to find the truth; without this kind of thought, nothing of truth is rightly known…. He who spurns these, the paths of wisdom, does not rightly philosophize. Indeed, if philosophy is the love of wisdom, in spurning these, one has already shown contempt for philosophy.”

Therefore, the *quadrivium* equips the mind to rise above the senses and to progress to those things apprehensible to the human intellect. The difference of opinion concerning the placement of music and geometry, according to Masi, “depends upon whether music is considered a mathematical study and is paired off with arithmetic (Boethius) or an harmonic study and paired off with astronomy (Capella).” In the case of Freemasonry, the preference seems to be for the latter, resulting in the placement of geometry after arithmetic. While geometry is considered to be the foundation of architecture and the root of mathematics, its placement as second in the sequence of the four quadrivial arts does not diminish its symbolic Masonic significance.

In his discussion of the iconographical representations of the liberal arts throughout the ages, Masi draws particular attention to a series of woodcuts printed in a compendium of learning assembled by Gregorius Reisch entitled *Margarita Philosophica*, which first
appeared in Freiburg in 1503 and which was republished no less than twelve times.\textsuperscript{10} It contains chapters on all of the seven liberal arts, on moral philosophy, metaphysics, and theology, with accompanying woodcuts for several of the chapters depicting an aspect of each study. The \textit{Typus Grammaticae} (concerning the first trivial art, grammar), for example, reveals the persistent vitality of the tradition of the liberal arts into the early Renaissance. The woodcut depicts an allegorized woman, with one hand, presenting her student with a tablet containing the alphabet and, with the other, holding and extending a key towards a door. Beside them stands a structure meant to resemble a university, the levels of which correspond to the seven liberal arts with rooms on each level housing the authors of the ancient texts for each discipline. This allegorized teacher holds the key to the first floor of the university, in which Priscian and Donatus (authors of grammatical texts) reside. On the second level we find Aristotle (for logic), Cicero (for rhetoric), and Boethius (for arithmetic). On the third floor we find Pythagoras (for music), Euclid (for geometry), and Ptolemy (for astronomy). Above them, on the fourth level, we find two faces bearing the titles of \textit{philosophia practica} and \textit{philosophiae theoretica}, with Peter Lombard hovering above and meant to symbolize theological studies. This illustration of the liberal arts reinforces the Boethian order of the liberal arts and recalls the ascent from practical to theoretical knowledge depicted on the robe of his allegorized personification of wisdom, Lady Philosophy, as depicted in \textit{De Consolatione Philosophiae} 1p1.8-25:

\begin{quote}
It was difficult to say how tall she might be, for at one time she seemed to confine herself to the ordinary measure of man, and at
\end{quote}
another the crown of her head touched the heavens; and when she lifted her head higher yet, she penetrated the heavens themselves, and was lost to the sight of men. Her dress was made of very fine, imperishable thread, of delicate workmanship: she herself wove it, as I learned later, for she told me. Its form was shrouded by a kind of darkness of forgotten years, like a smoke-blackened family statue in the atrium. On its lower border was woven the Greek letter Pi, and on the upper, Theta, and between the two letters steps were marked like a ladder, by which one might climb from the lower letter to the higher. But violent hands had ripped this dress and torn away what bits they could. In her right hand she carried a book, and in her left, a scepter.\textsuperscript{11}

Boethius's narrator, by following the instruction of Lady Philosophy and by ascending the rungs of the ladder depicted on the front of her robe, will gradually recognize his teacher, remember who he is, where he is going, and from whence he came, and ascend to the source of light and truth, symbolized here by the Theta at the top of Lady Philosophy's garment.

**CONCLUSION**

The Masonic ritual for the Fellow Craft degree clearly draws upon this medieval and early Renaissance educational and iconographical tradition of the classical liberal arts, albeit with a greater emphasis upon geometry as the dominant science and the characteristic most representative of the Deity. Likewise, the journey from operative to speculative masonry corresponds to the gradual progression from practical to theoretical knowledge as taught in the cathedral schools of
medieval Europe, as depicted upon Lady Philosophy's robe in Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, and as suggested by numerous iconographical representations of the liberal arts in the medieval manuscript tradition. The inclusion of the seven liberal arts in the second section of the Fellow Craft degree is therefore meant to take the candidate on a similar curricular journey as that experienced by the medieval scholar with the similar purpose of developing and cultivating the human intellect in order, ultimately, to contemplate the divine.
NOTES


3 Ibid, p. 89.


7 Ibid, p. 72.

8 Ibid, pp. 73-74.


WHO ARE THE STEWARDS?

By
Bro. Albert E. Piatt, Ed.D., KYCH, MPS

Who are the Stewards? At face value, the answer is obvious. In most Lodges, the Stewards are at the bottom of the line of Lodge officers. They are the last of the appointed officers whose place is inside the Lodge. Their duties (Tennessee Craftsman, p. 123) are "to see that the tables are properly furnished at refreshment and that every brother is suitably provided for, to prepare and instruct candidates, to serve as escorts during the circumambulations, and to generally assist the Deacons and other officers in the performance of their duties." In short, they are the servants of the Lodge. The Lodge Officers Training Manual (pp. 18-19) further states that "...it is their duty to:

1. Be early to arrive and set up the Lodge for the meeting.
2. Become proficient in rod and floor work.
3. Prepare and introduce candidates.
4. Assist when the Lodge is at refreshment.
5. Extend to visiting brethren such attention as circumstances may suggest.
6. Begin learning lectures for degree conferral.
7. Attend to such other duties as may be directed by the Worshipful Master."

Many brothers aspire to be Master of the Lodge, but few seek the office of Steward. Because of the lowly position of the Steward, many brothers do not take the responsibilities of the office seriously. Many
accept the honor of being appointed Steward, but do not accept the responsibility that accompanies it. With declining membership, many Lodges have begun starting their progressive line of officers at Junior Deacon, or even Junior Warden, and often do not appoint Stewards. This is indeed unfortunate, for it denies the young Mason, in his progress toward becoming Master of the Lodge, the chance to learn the valuable lessons taught by the office of Steward—those of service and responsibility.

Where did the Stewards originate? What were their responsibilities? The word steward is Middle English, stiward, derived from the Old English, stigweard, or stig, meaning enclosure or hall, and weard, meaning keeper. Thus a steward was literally, the keeper of the hall, responsible for the day-to-day operation of the household of the Lord or Master. Compton's Encyclopedia further defines a steward as "...a person morally responsible for the careful use of money, time, talents, and other resources, especially with respect to the principles or needs of a community or group." It is this definition that holds particular interest for Freemasonry.

Freemasonry inherited the office of Steward from the medieval Craft Guilds (Jones, p. 380). Brother H. L. Haywood (p. 75) informs us, that in the early days of Speculative Masonry in England, the Lodge often met in a banquet room where, after the "meeting," a "feast" was held. The Stewards were responsible for obtaining the food and drink, having it prepared and served, providing the entertainment, and keeping account of expenses. Even today in England, and other jurisdictions overseas, a "feast" or "festive board" is frequently held after the regular meetings of the Lodge. In some
Lodges, the annual subscription, or dues, includes the cost of these meals. Other duties of the early Stewards included the preparation of the Lodge room for each communication, collection of dues and fees, introduction of visitors, and provision of such assistance to the higher officers as might be required. Brother Bernard Jones (p. 380) informs us that, in the early Modern Lodges, Stewards performed some or most of the duties, which in the Antient Lodges were done by the Deacons. Unfortunately, since the union of the English Modern and Antient Lodges, many of the duties, formerly performed by the Stewards have been assigned to committees, to the Tiler, to the Secretary/or to the Deacons, leaving the only the duties of preparing candidates and attending to the brothers at refreshment to the Stewards in many Lodges today. This loss of precedence and importance of the Stewards' office has greatly influenced the way Stewards are perceived today.

These changes in duties and responsibilities were not intended to trivialize the importance of their principal duty of preparation of the candidate or their traditional duty of the preparation of banquets. Haywood (p. 76) reminds us that the period a candidate spends in the Preparation Room is where "...he receives an impression of Freemasonry which will remain indelibly fixed in his feelings...; for if he there and then receives the impression that Freemasonry is not to be taken seriously, or even that there is buffoonery in it, a man will find it hard to rid himself of that feeling which is an indignity to him and an injustice to the Lodge." Similarly, it would be better if the feasts were in the care of these two stated officers [the Stewards] of the Lodge who could, because of their authority and out of knowledge
accumulated in their office, protect a Lodge against those amateurish 'lunches,' improvised at the last moment, which strike a man as a sad reflection on the Lodge's hospitality."

As with everything in Masonry, the Holy Bible tells us that the office of Steward has a noble and more glorious meaning. In Genesis 2:15-17 (KJV) is recorded, "...and the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Thus God chose Adam to become the first Steward. God provided the place of work, decided what work was to be done, defined what was expected of His steward, and described the consequences of failure. This established the basic concept of stewardship for both the Old and the New Testaments.

As we know "the rest of the story," Adam failed to fulfill the God's expectations and lost most of his benefits. He was still provided with food, clothing, and shelter, but he faced a harder time acquiring them. Reading further in Genesis, God chose Noah, as his second Steward, to save mankind and God's creatures from the destruction of the flood. Noah did as he was instructed "...and God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."(Gen 9:1) And God provided Noah and his sons with food, clothing, and made a covenant with them and every living creature of the flesh that "...the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh..."(Gen 9:15) and He set His bow in the cloud as a token of the covenant between God and the earth."
In Genesis 39-41, we read the story of Joseph who was sold by his brothers. Potiphar recognized Joseph's talents and made him a steward over his house. Joseph performed his duties well and was rewarded with greater responsibility. It was only when Potiphar perceived that Joseph failed in his duties, that Joseph was stripped of his responsibilities and thrown into prison. But the story did not end there. When the Pharaoh recognized Joseph's talents, he made Joseph his steward over the land of Egypt, and Joseph was blessed by increased responsibility, received great praise, and prospered.

The Old Testament provides us with numerous other examples of stewards. At the building of the Temple, King Solomon had 3300 (3600) stewards or overseers to supervise the work (1 Kings 5:16/2 Chr 2:18). Hezekiah appointed stewards over the Levites to repair the house of the Lord (2 Chr 29). Josiah appointed stewards over the workmen restoring the temple (2 Kin 22/2 Chr 34).

The New Testament is not without its examples of stewards. Matthew 25:14-30 gives us the familiar parable of the three stewards. A master, setting out for a long journey, called his stewards unto him and delivered unto them his goods, each according to his abilities, and then he set out for a far country. Upon his return, the master reckoned with his stewards. The two faithful stewards who did with their allocation what the master had desired and so were rewarded with praise and greater responsibility. But the steward who did nothing with his allocation was stripped of his responsibility, chastised for his failure, and cast out of the master's house. By simply doing nothing, he had lost everything.

Our Greatest Steward, Jesus, explains the nature of his stewardship
when he said, "...for I came down from heaven, not to do My will but the will of Him who sent me" (John 6:38). The most humble example of stewardship is given us when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples (John 13:3-20) - for only by first learning how to serve can we then learn how to lead.

"So we see we have an underlying concept running through scripture which started at Eden. We have a master who appoints a steward and sets him a task according to his talents. He gives the steward a job description and expects that his instructions be carried out carefully. In return the steward is cared for physically and if he is successful, will be rewarded with praise and a greater area of responsibility" (Eldred, p.2). "...Stewardship is primarily a relationship between the master and the steward. The role of the steward is to bring about an increase in whatever task he has been set. The steward is chosen by the master on the basis of his talents. His task is set by the master on the basis of these talents. The master will set out what the task is and the steward must know what is expected of him. He is expected to operate on his own within these parameters whether the master is present or not. It is the master's task to provide the wherewithal to accomplish these tasks and it is his responsibility to take care of the steward who fulfills his responsibilities. The reward for the steward is praise and more responsibility..." (Eldred, p. 19) by being advanced to a higher position given the opportunity to earn more praise and still further responsibility, eventually resulting in the prospect of a glorious retirement.

The Worshipful Master appoints his Stewards. In addition to the duties and responsibilities outlined in the Craftsman and the Lodge
Officers Training Manual, the Master should explain exactly what he expects from the Stewards and the consequences of failure. It is the responsibility of the Steward to make sure that he understands the will and pleasure of the Master and then carries it out to the best of his ability. How well a Steward performs his duties should determine if he is ready to assume greater responsibility in the Lodge. If a Steward fails to perform his duty, some other Lodge officer must make up for that failure, thus detracting from the performance of their own duties and responsibilities. If a Steward succeeds in his task, he may receive praise and be rewarded by being advanced to an office of more responsibility, thereby beginning his journey to "...tread round after round of the ladder that leads to fame in our mystic circle..." (Craftsman, p. 59), eventually arriving at the Master's Station, or even ending with the purple of our Fraternity upon his honored shoulders.

Stewards should not be viewed as lowly servants, but overseers within the Lodge. The records of early Speculative Masonry (Mackechnie-Jarvis) indicate that it was the duty of the Stewards to receive the tickets for the feast and to direct the brethren appointed to attend the tables. It is the Stewards' responsibility to ensure the Lodge is set up, the candidates are properly prepared, refreshments are provided for the brethren, and the other officers receive such assistance as they may require. If necessary, the Stewards should select brothers from among the Craft to assist them in performing these tasks.

So, who are the Stewards? As Master Masons were stewards or overseers at the building of King Solomon's Temple, we are all Stewards of Freemasonry, within whose care the safekeeping of the
Craft has been entrusted for the benefit of future generations. How well we serve the Craft and carry out our responsibilities will determine whether Masonry grows and prospers, or fades away. We must all be morally responsible for the careful use of money, time, talents, and other resources with respect to the principles of our great Fraternity! In other words, we must all strive to become better Stewards!
REFERENCES

THE SQUARE AND COMPASSES

By
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This paper is presented as a portion of the Masonic Cooperative Education Program sponsored by the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite as a Masonic learning tool for Craft Masonry. It is printed here by permission from Brother Samples.

One of the earliest lessons that we are taught in Freemasonry is that the three great lights are the Holy Bible, square, and compasses. While it is relatively easy to understand why the Holy Bible is given us as the rule and guide of our faith and thus considered one of the great lights, it may require additional explanation to understand why the square and compasses are also considered two of the great lights of Masonry.

When most people are asked what constitutes the “secrets” of Freemasonry, many would justifiably reply that the grips and words are the secrets of this fraternity. However, the grips and words can be obtained by non-Masons through a brief perusal of the Internet or basic research at a local library. In a much more complete sense, Freemasonry can best be understood as being a fraternity based on symbols, and it is perhaps the meaning of such symbols which constitutes the true “secrets” of Freemasonry.

In that regard, the square and compasses must be very important symbols if they are given such an elevated status in our fraternity. Thinking about a square reveals that it is an instrument that can only be applied to flat surfaces. In ancient times, the Earth was presumed to be flat, and so the square became a symbol of that which is earthly. Likewise, the Earth was thought to be square and thus the phrase “the four corners of the earth.”

The compasses are used to describe circles and shapes in trigonometry and geometry that cannot be adequately described by a square. Thinking for a moment, you will realize that the sky or heavens above constitute a half-sphere or half-circle which can be drawn by the compasses. Thus, the compasses came to symbolize the heavenly or spiritual.

Every human being has a double nature. One aspect of human nature involves the animal and material, while the other involves the intellectual and spiritual. Man’s body is said to be formed from the dust of the Earth, while his soul, spirit and intellect are formed in the heavens. The physical body arises from the Earth and returns to the Earth and is considered earthly and material. The soul, spirit, and intellect are immortal and are heavenly and spiritual in nature.

There are competing forces affecting human conduct. The compasses represent those forces which are heavenly and spiritual, while the square is a symbol of those forces which are earthly and material.

The compasses’ two arms represent man’s moral sense and reason. Moral sense can be defined as that which has been given to man to discern right from wrong. The concept of reason is one in which a man discerns what is the wisest and best course of conduct.

On the other hand, the square represents the earthly, material nature of man and can be described as the sensual appetites and passions of a human being. These characteristics are those that man shares with animals, and so far as they rule a man, he is but an animal.
When a candidate is prepared to be initiated, he represents man in the state of barbarism, ignorance, and subjugation. You will recall that the candidate is neither naked nor clad, barefoot nor shod, meaning that his faculties are but half developed and that moral sense and reason, though they exist in him, are in a dormant condition.

Furthermore, the candidate is hoodwinked and so symbolically deprived of the light of knowledge.

The candidate is also deprived of all metals. This was originally directed at the most precious metals of gold and silver and symbolized the deprivation of the light of reason and moral sense. Going even further, gold originally represented the sun and silver the moon. Therefore, a blindfolded candidate deprived of all metals is denied a vision of the light and vision of the sun and moon, or, in other words, deprived of the ability to find moral sense and reason.

During the obligation, the candidate’s attention is drawn to the square and compasses on the altar. Remembering that the two points of the compasses represent moral sense and reason and the two arms of the square represent man’s sensual appetites and animal passions gives us great insight into the real meaning of these most significant symbols.

It is with great care that it is pointed out to the candidate that the two points of the compasses are under the square in the entered apprentice degree. As the candidate is deprived of light, the candidate’s moral sense and reason are symbolically overpowered and ruled by his earthly (represented by the square) appetites and passions which constitute his animal nature. Thus, without moral sense and reason, man is destined to be no better than an animal and governed only by the basest instincts.

In the Fellowcraft degree, one point of the compasses is elevated above the square, and this fact is specifically pointed out to the candidate. Such teaches the candidate that by zealous work he can begin to attain light and that the progressive journey of a faithful man is from darkness to light. In our teachings, the candidate is reminded that Freemasonry is a journey and can be attained only by degrees. This represents the journey of a man traveling from darkness to light and that of a man maturing from his animal instincts to a willingness to serve the greater good. The Fellowcraft degree represents that the candidate has attained a moral and intellectual condition whereby his earthly appetites and passions no longer have complete control over his moral sense and reason.

The third degree is the cement of the whole, and as a Master Mason, the candidate is instructed that both points of the compasses are elevated above the square. This is designed to teach the candidate that he is supposed to have obtained the condition in which the moral, intellectual, and spiritual forces of his nature have become superior to his material and animal forces. This represents the progressive journey of a man from darkness to light. It is the recognition that man owes a greater duty than just to himself and that the best expression of his nature is one of self-sacrifice and service to others. Thus, as a Master Mason, one is supposed to have obtained the condition in which the moral, intellectual, and spiritual forces of his nature have become superior to its material and animal forces. The candidate becomes a Master Mason because, symbolically, he has become a Master of himself.

We are all familiar with the phrase describing a Master Mason as one who has “passed from the square to the compasses.” Knowing the meaning of the symbolism gives us much greater insight and a more complete understanding of this phrase. As one “passes from the square to the compasses,” one is growing in maturity and evolving from the earthly and sensual appetites to those heavenly and spiritual virtues which are the ultimate rewards for those who seek the true light.

We are also taught that the principal tenants of Masonry are said to be included between the two
points of the compasses when properly extended. By understanding that the principal tenants are the whole moral law, we can now see that the moral law can only be discerned by the application of moral sense and reason, which are the two prongs of the compasses. Likewise, the compasses are said to circumscribe our desires, which means that by the application of moral sense and reason, we keep our sensual appetites and desires in check and make them subordinate to those higher and nobler virtues of service to God and our fellow man.

One of the great Masonic scholars of all times was Albert Pike, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of the Southern Jurisdiction from 1859 until his death in 1891. He felt very strongly that symbolism was of critical importance in the Blue Lodges, and one of his goals was to help Masons understand the symbolic meanings and applications of the symbols in their Lodges. Our ritual is what sets Masonry apart from other good and useful charitable and fraternal organizations. Grand Commander Pike realized this and noted that the ceremonies of Freemasonry served two primary purposes: (1) to inculcate and promote moral and social virtues; and (2) to serve as a vehicle for transmitting symbols.

Thus, we would be well-served by undertaking a diligent study of Masonry’s symbols whereby we can obtain the true secrets and gifts that Masonry has to offer.
THE ESOTERIC GEOMETRY OF THE TRIANGLE

By
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This article was published in the August 2006 Issue of The Philalethes, the bi-monthly magazine of The Philalethes Society. From their website: “The sole purpose of this Research Society is to act as a clearinghouse for Masonic knowledge. It exchanges ideas, researches problems confronting Freemasonry, and passes them along to the Masonic world.” (http://www.freemasonry.org)

Degree work is a pivotal part of the Masonic Lodge. Virtually every lesson taught in Masonry is imparted through the use of ritual. This mode of instruction is most impressive. Modern educators stress the importance of making the learner an active participant in the learning process. New research has also shown that in order for teachers to truly be effective, they must have a strong mastery of the skills and lessons to be taught by them to students. A no brainer, right? Well, within the workings of the rituals of Masonry it is not. Too often we have great ritualists that have no understanding of what the ritual is teaching to the candidate. I was recently at a lodge for a School of Instruction. Under the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, each lodge’s new officers are usually instructed by a Grand Lecturer on the proper way to conduct the Tennessee Ritual. After a few months, the Grand Lecturer returns to grade the lodge on its proficiency in the ritual. At this meeting I posed the question, “What is one significance of the repeated illustration of the triangle within Masonry?” I asked the question only for the benefit of those present who were not Masonic readers. It was a room scattered with 32° Scottish Rite Masons, and the meeting was being conducted by a 33° Scottish Rite Mason. I thought at least these brethren could look at their prestigious rings and share some enlightenment. No one was able, or possibly willing, to answer the question. I made an announcement that after the meeting I would take five minutes to give a brief example of the repeated use of the triangle in Freemasonry. Only the 33° Brother, the Worshipful Master, and the Chaplain cared to show any interest. After this occurrence, I decided to write a brief article about the triangle. The product follows. It is not intended to be academic, yet I hope it serves the purpose of giving a little needed light upon a very important Masonic symbol, the triangle.

Articles in both the October and December 2005 issues of The Philalethes discuss Geometry and its application in Masonry. The principles of Geometry were held sacred by the operative masons and the ancients alike, and there is little wonder why mystical and moral symbolism and lessons have been attached to geometric figures; after all, thousands of Masons in the United States and the world over wear the initial letter of the great science as a representative of the Craft. One geometric figure that is repeatedly illustrated within the rituals of the Craft is the triangle. The triangle is a fundamental Masonic symbol that is visible not only in the degrees of the Order, from Entered Apprentice to the higher degrees of the various obediences, but within the structure of the lodge room itself. It behooves all Master Masons with a desire to learn to examine the significance and symbolism of the triangle.

Within the layout of the lodge room there are at least two prominent examples of triangles. The first is seen within the center of the lodge (this description varies by Grand Jurisdiction). In the center of the room are three lights or tapers placed in triangular form around the altar. The tapers are to be appropriately spaced in 3, 4, and 5 units. This construction creates a right triangle with the
angle measurements of 37°, 53°, and 90°. The tapers represent the sun, moon, and Master of the lodge. Corresponding with these tapers are the stations of the three principal officers of the lodge: the Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, and Junior Warden, who are also in a triangular relationship with each other.

A triangle is formed by the three stationed officers when the candidate is conducted to the center of the lodge for benefit of lodge prayer in the first degree. The candidate is placed in a position bisecting the longest side. If a perpendicular were to be drawn from the candidate to the Junior Warden it would bisect the triangle formed by the officers into two right triangles with a base made by the vertices of the candidate and the Junior Warden.

As the candidate is conducted around the lodge room and presented at each station for inspection, a right triangle is formed by the principal officer of each station, the candidate, and the Senior Deacon. A triangle is also formed in all three of the Craft degrees when the candidate is conducted to the West to be instructed in how to approach the East in order to obtain light. Initially the Senior Deacon, the candidate, and the Senior Warden form a horizontal line. Upon following the instructions of the Senior Warden, the candidate takes his first, second, and/or third step(s) in Masonry. With his step(s), the candidate moves from a horizontal to form a perpendicular to the line formed by the Senior Warden and Senior Deacon. With this fluid movement the candidate has moved from a horizontal to a perpendicular to form a triangle. (Note the right angles, horizontals, and perpendiculars.)

The greatest presence of the triangle within all of Masonry is within the most recognizable symbol of the Order, the Square and Compasses. Within the Square and Compasses is present at least two dominant triangles. Within some Obediences, mostly irregular or fringe, a rule is added to the Square and Compasses bisecting them at the points where the Square and Compasses intersect. This makes readily visible an equilateral and a right triangle. It is customary within Masonic tradition to open the compasses at a sixty degree angle when preparing the altar for all three Craft degrees. The triangle formed by the compasses and the rule has three angles all measuring 60°, an equilateral triangle. The triangle formed by the square and the rule is an isosceles right triangle, it has one angle measuring 90° and two measuring 45°.

The point within the circle alluded to within the Entered Apprentice Degree has a resonance of the triangle. This geometric figure, as well explained by Buta (2005), is an instrument made use of in order to accurately draw both equilateral and right triangles. As the Entered Apprentice Degree is

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an initiation into the science of Masonry, the point within a circle is an initiation into the process of constructing triangles and other geometric forms.

The most direct reference to a triangle within the three degrees is the presentation of the Forty-seventh Problem of Euclid within the Third Degree Stereoptics. The candidate is informed of Pythagoras’ great travels in search of light and his presumed induction into the mysteries of secret orders, including the science of geometry and Masonry. This brief excursion is summed by telling the candidate that the symbol is to teach Masons “to be general lovers of the Arts and Sciences” (Duncan, 1976). The candidate is led to believe the inclusion of this figure in the Masonic mysteries is only as a symbol of Pythagoras’s love for and acquisition of knowledge.

The afore is a collective rendition of the occurrences where the triangle is used within the Three Symbolic Degrees of Freemasonry as conferred with the York Rite Ritual. Hutchens (1995) in *A Bridge to Light* asserts that the triangle plays a more prominent role in the working of the Craft Degrees in the Scottish Rite system; however, this emphasis upon the Pythagorean Tetrctys is little known in the United States since virtually all Americans “take the first three degrees in York Rite lodges” (p. 33). Even so, the presence of the triangle is still undeniable. Undoubtedly there are examples of the triangle within the three degrees not related in the paragraphs above; however, for the purpose of this article, the afore illustrated examples will suffice.

The goal of this article is to provide a brief explanation of the more esoteric meaning behind the triangle. The most obvious reasoning for use of the triangle within Masonry is the use of the number three. Within Masonry there is no number that appears more often than three. A sacred number, the numeral three is repeatedly illustrated by the great lights, lesser lights, stationed officers, number of degrees, three pillars, and three sides to a triangle. The triangle also contains the three signs mentioned within the Entered Apprentice Degree. Why should an organization affixed upon the numeral three not have as a principal symbol the geometric figure with three vertices, three sides, and three angles? In a statement representing the importance of the triangle to Masonry, Brother Albert Pike (1956) in *Morals and Dogma* declared that the naming of one of the Liberal Arts and Sciences geometry was a misnomer. He asserted that in the Masonic usage of geometry the more appropriate science would be trigonometry, the mathematical study of the triangle (p. 34).

Beyond this point, assumptions, theories, and postulations must be used to illustrate the triangle’s significance and meaning. The following is not presented as Masonic fact, only as possible esoteric meaning. Beginning with the square and compasses, it was afore asserted that they hold both an equilateral triangle and a right triangle. The equilateral triangle is not directly mentioned or often illustrated within the Craft degrees of Masonry; however, in the higher degrees of both the York and especially the Scottish Rites the equilateral triangle is revered (Hutchens, *A Bridge to Light*, 1995; Hutchens, *Pillars of Wisdom*, 1995; Pike, 1956; Steinmetz, 1976). Steinmetz postulates that the equilateral triangle has different meaning depending upon the direction in which it points. When pointing downward, Steinmetz asserts the triangle represents Deity. When pointing in an upward direction it is a symbol of the perfect man. The brother continues to assert that the Blazing Star within the Mosaic pavement consists of two equilateral triangles, one pointing up and one pointing down representing the union of man, in a perfect state, and God (p. 87). Pike concurs that the Seal of Solomon or Star of David is a symbol of the duality and balance of man and God.

In *A Bridge to Light*, Hutchens (1995) states that the equilateral triangle is always a symbol of Deity (p. 23). Mackey (1927) states that the equilateral triangle was adopted by most all nations of antiquity as a symbol of Deity (p. 945). The sides of the equilateral triangle are much like the leaves of the clover. Three separate but united figures. Just as the three leaves of the clover are combined
to form one plant, the three line segments of a triangle are combined to form one figure. In both cases the individual pieces represent one part of the Trinity Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). Within the equilateral triangle each side is equal in length just as each figure in the Godhead is equal in Supremacy, separate but one, different but equal (Hutchens, 1995, *A Bridge to Light*). In *Pillars of Wisdom*, Hutchens (1995) stipulates that the purpose of opening the compasses to 60° is to symbolize Deity.

As alluded to previously, various Masonic Jurisdictions mandate that the tapers around the altar be spaced in units of 3, 4, and 5. All triangles spaced 3, 4, and 5 unit or multiples thereof are right triangles bearing the measurements afore described. The ancients were very partial to the mystical belief in numbers. Due to this reason, “they considered the most beautiful triangle of all, the right angled triangle with sides of 3, 4, and 5 units of measure” (Hutchens, 1995, *A Bridge to Light*). Both Mackey (1927) and Pike (1956) assert that the sides of the sacred 3, 4, and 5 unit triangle are representative of the Egyptian deities Osiris, Isis, and Horus respectively. This assertion has a Masonic tinge in that according to myth, Osiris was killed leaving Horus a widow’s son.

The relationship of Osiris, Isis, and Horus and their representation in the 3, 4, and 5 unit triangle brings the discussion to the Pythagorean Theorem. The theorem states, “the area of the square built upon the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the areas of the squares upon the remaining sides” (Morris, 1997). The formula is written \(a^2 + b^2 = c^2\). The theorem is most often attributed to Pythagoras; however, it is most likely that the Babylonians, a thousand years before Pythagoras, were in the possession of the knowledge (Morris). In relation to the Egyptian myth, the sum of Osiris and Isis was manifested in the being of Horus.

If this figure were representative of the 3, 4, and 5 unit right triangle of Masonic fame, the length of each side would correspond with the following: a-4 units, b-3 units, and c-5 units. Completing the formula is quite easy since the length of each side is given. The formula \(a^2 + b^2 = c^2\) becomes \(4^2 + 3^2 = 5^2\). After solving the squares, the problem reads 16 + 9 = 25. The sum of 16 and 9 is 25; thusly, the sum of the area of the squares of “side a” and “side b” (25) is equal to the square of “side c”, the hypotenuse (also 25).

It is repeatedly stated by many Masons and Masonic Jurisdictions that one of the principal purposes of Freemasonry is to take good men and make them better. This purpose is beautifully illustrated within the lecture and explanation of the ashlars. The goal of a Master Mason is to hewn and improve himself, breaking off the superfluous pieces and perfecting the character of man. The same illustrations could be attributed to the inclusion of triangles within the three degrees. Steinmetz (1976) asserts that the right triangle is a representation of the imperfect man and the equilateral triangle of the perfect man. The goal of a Mason is to take his imperfect state, the right triangle, and manipulate it to the formation of the perfect figure or the equilateral triangle. Two right triangles both with the angle measurements of 30°, 60°, and 90° can be placed together to form a perfect equilateral triangle.

The right triangle formed within the square and compasses may carry the same illustration. It is said by many to represent man in an imperfect state of being. One initial thought on the inclusion of a right triangle below an equilateral triangle within the square and compasses is to symbolize the purpose of man’s endeavors on Earth is
to learn to subdue his passions, thereby improving himself before the world in the hope of attaining a
status of perfection with God at the final day.

These are only a few of the possible meanings and interpretations of the triangle. It is hoped that this brief exploration will serve as a benefit to some inquiring Masonic mind. The reasoning and meaning behind the implementation of the triangle within the Masonic Degrees is for every Mason to interpret for himself; however, that the triangle was included and displayed within the degrees for a purpose would be very difficult to debate. There is very little that is held within the lectures, rituals, and interactions of the lodge that does not have significant meaning. Many of the symbolic meanings have been blurred and lost through the ages; however, the rich gems of purpose are still there waiting to be discovered and bring illumination to the hearts of those who are willing to journey in search of light. It not only behooves all Masons to search for these hidden meanings but it is an obligation.

References


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PARALLELS OF FREEMASONRY AND
PLATO’S ALLEGORY OF THE CAVE

By
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July 13, 2005

Throughout history there have been many men who have attained a stature of high regard in the halls of Freemasonry. These men were usually individuals who added great triumphs to the world about them whether it be socially, academically, philosophically, or masonically. Each of these men may not have been raised in the Order but are believed to have been prepared and made a Mason in his heart. These are men who embraced the enlightenment thought either with or without the guidance of the Craft. One such man is the great philosophical teacher Plato. In the writings of Brother Albert Pike, Plato’s time honored teachings are alluded to repeatedly. Some Masonic authors even attribute a veiled lineage to the philosophical academies of Plato’s time. Of all his writings, there is at least one lesson from this great educator’s repertoire that has parallels with the system of Freemasonry. Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* should have great Masonic resonance for all who have been inducted into the roll of the Craft.

Before undertaking the task of exploring the parallels between Freemasonry and Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*, it is prudent to examine what, if any, connection Plato has with the Craft and its development. First and foremost, it is important to assert, at the onset of this exploration, that there will be no claim that Plato was inducted into the mysteries of Freemasonry or that it traces its lineage from his, or any other, ancient mystery school. This examination will only look at what the shapers and formers of modern Freemasonry thought about and gleaned from Plato’s writings and example. Any obvious connections that can be drawn between Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave* and the modern institution of Free and Accepted Masonry will also be reviewed.

**Plato’s Life and Academy**

Although there is some debate as to the date of Plato’s birth, it is generally accepted that he was born around the year 428 BC (Guthrie, 1979). His given name was Aristocles. The name *Plato* was seemingly a nickname meaning broad, perhaps in reference to his physical appearance. Plato’s early life is blurred by antiquity and unreliable accounts. His immediate family, while politically connected and affluent, was not overly impressive, and Plato most likely lived an early life of little difficulty (Guthrie).

Plato was a student of the acclaimed teacher Socrates. This relationship was very impressive upon the life and personal views of Plato. Perhaps the most influential experience in Plato’s life was the death of his revered teacher. According to Nails (2002), Plato was twenty-eight when Socrates was condemned to death by drinking the notorious hemlock. Following Socrates’ death, Plato left Athens and traveled to Megara, Cyrene, Italy, Sicily, and Egypt (McEvoy, 1984). It is during this time of travel that, according to Wilmshurst (1922), Plato sought initiation into the Egyptian Mysteries but was rejected by the high priest. “You Greeks are but children in the Secret Doctrine” Sais, the priest, was reported to have replied to Plato’s requests to being inducted into the mysteries. The ancients, according to tradition, did instruct Plato in the sacred and spiritual doctrines, and he
was advanced in knowledge and understanding of the ancient mysteries.

Following his travels and intellectual search for light, Plato returned to Athens around the age of forty, and he established a school, the Academy, in the Grove of Academus (Cairn, 1961). Plato’s school was geographically located within a grove or a public park filled with gymnasiums, altars, statues, and temples. Plato’s Academy most probably was a loose connection of men who came to learn criticism of method by listening to his dialogues and instruction. The leader or head of the Academy was apparently elected for life by the majority vote of its members. Plato remained the Head of the Academy until his death in 348/347 BC. It was in the Academy that Plato instructed some of the greatest intellectual minds of Western Civilization, including Aristotle.

Ancient and Masonic Writers and Plato

The Illustrious Brother Albert Pike, who incidentally was called by some the “Plato of Freemasonry,” held the teachings of Plato in high esteem (Hall, 2006). In Morals and Dogma, Pike (1956) reveals his position that Plato is among the greatest revelers of truth and light. Pike stated that Plato expounded and expressed the noble doctrine of nature “in the most beautiful and luminous manner” (p. 617).

Wilmshurst (1922) refers to Plato in his revered work The Meaning of Masonry. Wilmshurst stated that in order to fully understand the Fellow Craft Degree, a student of Freemasonry must study two ancient sources. The first of these is Plato’s Dialogues. “The other is the records of the classical Christian contemplatives . . . .” (p. 123). Of interest is Wilmshurst’s reminder to the reader that Plato refers to the four cardinal virtues in Phædo and the Book of Wisdom, ch. viii, 5-7. If the studying Mason researches this point, he will not find the traditional Masonic virtues of fortitude, prudence, temperance, and justice. Instead he would find justice, temperance, wisdom, and courage.

Mackey (1882) in The Symbolism of Freemasonry stated, “And Plato says that the design of initiation was to restore the soul to that state of perfection from which it had originally fallen”. This being taken from the Phædo, it is evident the general esoteric goal of both the ancient mysteries and modern Freemasonry are similar in concept.

The Dionysian Artificers refers to Plato numerous times. The work points out the importance of understanding that fables and allegories often contain numerous meanings (De Costa, 1936). It further asserted that Plato’s teaching of “the descent of the soul into the darkness of the body, the perils of the passions, [and] the torments of vices” are shared by Virgil and illustrated in writings (p. 22). Of these, the descent of the soul into the darkness is relevant to the topic at hand. Fakhry (2004) connects the Allegory of the Cave and Ibn Sina’s Allegory of the Bird. Fakhry asserted that both illustrate the destiny of the soul to only be released from bondage through an attainment of knowledge. It is recommended that all seek out and study the Allegory of the Bird. It has meaning and purpose to all men, but without a doubt it has great importance and is worthy of examination by those who are called seekers of light.

The Allegory of the Cave

In Plato’s Allegory of the Cave, human prisoners are held captive deep in the earth. Their necks and ankles chained, they have never seen the outside world, the sun, or each other. They are bound facing a stone wall. Light from the outside world shines in the cave casting shadows on the stone wall each prisoner is facing. Also behind the captives is a fire, and in front of the fire a walkway on
which men carry puppets and items from the outside world. These items include statues of gods, men, animals, and trees. The bondsmen have no understanding of their condition: their world is made up only of the illusions of distorted shadows cast upon the stone wall before them. The sounds and voices heard by those kept enslaved are only echoes and reverberations from the outside. As they sit in darkness, their reality is limited and their morals only based on their own understandings of distorted truths and skewed sounds from the outside world.

The allegory continues to explain that the prisoners cling to their own prejudices and self-conceived notions of reality. Plato asserts that if all the prisoners were released to turn and see the elements that created their reality, the prisoners would be blinded by the light of the fire. The prisoners, according to Plato, would quickly become angered by what they viewed and desire to return to their shackled condition. However, Plato suggests that if only one prisoner had his chains removed, the response would be vastly different. The prisoner would turn to see the fire, the walk way, and the other prisoners bound in a blind state. The allegory continues with the prisoner being dragged out of the cave by an agent and presented to the sunlit outside world. There he sees that the realities and morals of his world are only an illusion of the world about him. Without any argument, it may be asserted that Plato believed a return to the cave would be almost impossible because the prisoner would have seen his previously darkened condition as an enslaved state.

**An Initial Examination**

In the centuries between Plato’s first oration of the afore described allegory and today, there have been countless numbers of interpretations of its meaning. Nearly every civilized culture and society has examined and synthesized the allegory to extract meaning and support to their lives. It is this allegory’s ability to be interpreted in varied ways that makes it such a fundamental and enduring legacy of the thoughts and teachings of Plato. Why then should it not be appropriate to ascertain a Masonic interpretation of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave?

The allegory’s first element of Masonic resonance is its ability to be interpreted in varied ways. Just as it is asserted that the allegory’s ability to be varied in interpretation has added to its popularity and survival, the same may be said of Freemasonry. No institution which is austere, unbending, and disobliging can have a true global existence, spanning geographic, religious, political, and cultural boundaries. It is the ability of Freemasonry to meet the needs of men from all creeds and walks of life that has led to its survival over the centuries. Without this ability to be relevant to Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and Deists alike both the allegory of the Cave and Freemasonry would either be isolated or lost in the ages of time.

In *From Socrates to Sartre: The Philosopher Quest*, Dr. T. Z. Lavine (1984) of George Washington University describes the allegory in such a way that one could use the same sentences to describe the Craft itself. “It is an allegory of our time as needing to be born again, to emerge from the darkness of corruption into the light of truth and morality. It is an educational allegory of our time as needing to ascend through stages of education from the darkness of intellectual and moral confusion in its everyday beliefs, to the light of true knowledge and values” (p. 28). Freemasonry hopes to lead its initiates to higher understandings of truth and life, to put away the dim light of superstition and passion, to embrace the illumination of reason, intellectual knowledge, and immutable values. Dr. Lavine’s brief interpretations of the allegory provide a Masonic aura and a spring board for its analysis.

Both Freemasonry and Plato’s allegory begin with men in a darkened condition. The men in the
cave are groping in darkness and bound to the blighted beliefs of superstition and self-prescribed truths. It is noteworthy to point out that the allegory takes place within a cave. Caverns have long been considered, masonically, to be “a symbol of the darkness of ignorance and crime impenetrable to the light of truth” (Mackey, 1927, p. 169). In the Ninth degree of the Scottish Rite, “the cave is a symbol of the imprisonment of the human soul and intellect by ignorance, superstition, deceit, and fraud” (Hutchens, 2000). The neophyte, who has petitioned Freemasonry, is held in the bondage of ignorance just as the mass of mankind is held in ignorance to the great and true teachings of the Craft. “There disinterestedness vanishes, every one howls, searches, gropes, and gnaws for himself. Ideas are ignored, and of progress there is no thought” (Pike, 1956, p. 3). Just as the profane is satisfied by the broken image of himself, so are the individuals in the cave content with living in darkness without any hope of intellectual growth or true fulfillment. It is also noteworthy to point out that the three ruffians, in the Ninth degree, are found hiding in a cave. Where else do ignorance, tyranny, and fanaticism belong?

In his allegory, Plato presents us with a very interesting assertion. He presents an occurrence where all the prisoners are released to turn and see the images within the cave. As they view the darkness around them, their eyes are not able to adjust to the protruding and offensive brightness of the fire’s light. They quickly become disillusioned and repulsed by the image and desire to return to their once darkened condition. Does this image not hold great Masonic meaning? The totality of the prisoners represents the mass of mankind. Brother Pike (1956) in _Morals and Dogma_ states “people, as a mass, (are) rude and unorganized” (p. 6). Mankind, as an innate passion, loves squalor and ignorance. It is only through the instruction of an agent, such as Freemasonry, that the individual, not the mass, can be raised above his inborn breeding and grow intellectually. All men are not suited for the secret teachings of the Craft. They are unable to grasp its rich meaning and hidden gems of purpose. It is only the few, the minority of intellectually prone individuals, who can be lifted up from the mire of mankind’s filth to be bettered by the teachings of the Craft. The mass would be unable to perceive the teachings of the allegories of Masonry and would quickly be blinded and wish to return to their previous status in life. As the Hebrew proverb states, “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.”

Freemasonry has always known that the masses are not compatible with its teachings; therefore, it has only admitted the best and most lofty individuals of society to attain the progressive instruction it has to offer. The degrees of the Craft are only represented within Plato’s allegory when considering the individual, just as only one man should be introduced to the mysteries of Masonry at a time. Within the lodge, the uninitiated is hoodwinked and blinded to the occurrences about him. He is kept in darkness for two reasons. The first reason is a reminder of the vow of secrecy soon to be taken. Secondly, it is intended that the candidate for the Entered Apprentice Degree, and all others, perceive the forms of the lodge in his heart before he views the beauties thereof with his eyes. The individual in Plato’s allegory is kept in darkness to reality. During this time, he uses shadows and distorted noises to conceive the reality that is around him, and the proselyte is not brought to light until after his cable tow has been removed. In the allegory, the prisoner is not brought to light until his shackles are opened. The agent who brings him to initial light walks him around the cave and points to objects and demands the individual to name them (Plato). The parallel exists that neither the individual released from bondage nor the newly made brother within the lodge are brought to complete light. The teachings of both are only partial. The two initiates are allowed to adjust to the new light that has been shown them and expected to progress through further stages to attain more light and greater understanding.
The next development in the journey of a man seeking Masonic enlightenment occurs through the teachings and philosophy of the Fellow Craft’s Degree. This second degree of Masonry is filled with great and enduring ideas and teachings for the neophyte seeking further light in the Craft. The legend of the winding staircase holds lessons of the utmost importance, and within its beautifully illustrated lessons lie one word that most suitably expresses its meaning. That single word is ascension. The passage taken to the Holy of Holies is sacred and dominated by the ascension of a winding staircase. This winding staircase is symbolic of the journey of one seeking a liberal education (Mackey, 1927). Mackey explains, “the path of the Fellow Craft requires him to ascend, step by step, until he has reached the summit, where the treasures of knowledge await him” (p. 1007). Education is the great equalizer and is the one thing that a man can do to elevate himself above others. H. L. Haywood (1922) stresses the second degree’s importance in elevating men intellectually. All men who seek elevation are destined to ascend the enlightened path of knowledge. Education and academics are the paths by which Masonry teaches one must take to truly find enlightenment. The experience of the freedman, within Plato’s allegory, being dragged from the darkness of the cave can be compared to the winding staircase of the second degree. It is through this ascending passage that he finds the most brilliant light. The contradiction between the allegory and the second degree is the fact that the individual in the allegory is “reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent” (Plato). Freemasonry never forces itself upon initiates. It is through one’s own freewill and accord that an individual is exposed to the teachings of the Craft.

“When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities” (Plato). This passage is true for both the allegory and the newly passed Fellow Craft. In each degree of Freemasonry, the brilliant light to which the candidate is exposed is so bright he at first is blinded by it. It might be prescribed that for this reason a period of at least twenty-eight days, in most jurisdictions, and a lecture are required before advancement might be made. This allotted time allows maturation of and ample reflection upon the seeds sewn within the lessons of the degree (Driber, 2004).

It is through the maturation of a candidate spiritually and intellectually, his listening to the instruction of well informed brethren, and the reflection upon the lessons taught him that a man is prepared to experience the life changing episode of the Third Degree of Masonry. Only after a candidate has first been brought to light and shown the initial beauties of the lodge and passed through the ascension of growth intellectually that a man can be raised to the newness of life as a Master Mason. The same journey, symbolically and allegorically, had to occur to the released prisoner. He had to first be brought to the understanding that he was in a state of bondage, after which he was caused to pass through the ascension of knowledge to seek the bright light at the pinnacle of the summit. It is at this summit that the freedman is truly brought to full illumination and entitled to freely see the realities of the world about him.

“First he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day? Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another; and he will contemplate him as he is” (Plato). Through the lessons of the Third Degree a man is shown his place in the world as an immortal being destined to be resurrected by the ultimate Creator. The teachings of the Third Degree are explained to the newly raised brother; however, the truer and deeper realities and meanings of the degree are much later discovered, if ever. The freed prisoner in Plato’s allegory is
able to view all the glories of the real world once he has completed his ascent from the cave; so too, the Master Mason is entitled and does receive a full explanation of the mysteries of Craft Masonry. Neither individual is at once able to comprehend the beauties he is caused to behold. It is through the reflection and consistent study upon what is seen and experienced that the true lessons are learned by both.

Other Writers’ Parallels

Fanthorpe and Fanthorpe (2006) stated that the Allegory of the Cave illustrates “the significance of free and independent thought as a pathway to truth” (p.110). They continued to state that the prisoner who first escaped “from the cave of deceptive shadows and discovered reality is someone who has learned Masonic truth” (p. 110). According to the authors, Plato taught the things we see, touch, smell, and hear are not reality. They assert that Plato believed that all that we perceive with our senses must be elevated through the mind before true understanding can occur. It was, according to Plato, the role of the philosopher to help others release the light within his students to allow them to understand the world around them through a stimulated mind. Fanthorpe and Fanthorpe allude to the conclusion that this goal is shared with Freemasonry.

Conclusions

It is not suggested that the intent of The Allegory of the Cave was meant to be an illustration of Freemasonry. The absurdity of such an assertion would be a gross injustice to the honor of the fraternity. It is also acknowledged that many works of literature and philosophy could be stretched to illustrate some Masonic teaching. It is hoped, those who read this will find it Masonically enlightening rather than a mere stretch of Masonic thought. The thought Plato tried to impart through his allegory clearly parallels the high teachings of the Craft. It is only natural for an institution defined as “a peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols” to be interested in the parallels of those great minds who so effectively used allegories as tools of instruction. We are taught in the Second Degree of Freemasonry to cultivate the Arts and to grow in usefulness. This can only be achieved through consistent and intense reflection upon the Craft, and by paralleling and searching the philosophies and ideals that so closely resemble the morals of the Craft. May the Order of Freemasonry be as enduring as the teachings of the great philosopher Plato.

References


THE FOUR MASONIC ELEMENTS

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Freemasonry has been described as being veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Through the centuries of time, the allegories and symbols of the Craft have been obscured and made only partially recognizable to the meanings they held in antiquity. The ritual, as used in each jurisdiction, has evolved and been pruned in such a manner that within the work are blurs and sections that have little meaning in its present context or to modern Masons; however, it is within these scattered gems of purpose that a studying Mason may find great enlightenment. One such portion of the ritual may be found with the seemingly haphazard mentioning of the four elements, water, fire, earth, and air, usually found at the conclusion of the stereoptics in the Entered Apprentice Degree. Their inclusion within the ritual seems a little awkward and misplaced, but as will be discussed within this paper, other Masonic rites use the elements in a more prominent and pronounced manner than does the common York/American Rite system. In either event, it raises the question as to why the classical elements of water, fire, earth, and air were ever introduced to the rituals of the Craft.

The American Ritual

The rituals used in American lodges are for the most part similar. Most US grand lodges confer a derivative of the Preston/Webb ritual. There are but few exceptions. The variations within the majority of the rituals adopted by US grand lodges are usually only associated with verbiage and sequence of events. Although this ritual does illustrate the importance of our Mother Earth, the elements are not mentioned at all within the ritual of the First Degree as practiced under the auspice of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, to whom the author owes allegiance. The following is from the 2003 edition of the Tennessee ritual, and it is very similar to Indiana’s (Taylor, 1975).

Our ancient brethren, we are told, served their Master with Freedom, Fervency, and Zeal, which are symbolically illustrated by chalk, charcoal, and clay. For there is nothing more free than chalk, which upon the slightest touch leaves a trace, nothing more fervent than charcoal, which when properly ignited melts the most obdurate metals, and nothing more zealous than Clay or our Mother Earth, for from the earth we came and unto the earth we must all inevitably return.

Another common passage found within the Preston/Webb Rituals pays little to no attention to freedom, fervency, and zeal and a larger amount to the elements. McCoy (1855) and Sickels (1868) are both examples. It will later be shown how this passage is extremely similar to the wording of an ancient Greek authority. On page 98 of Daniel Sickels’ 1868 edition of The General Ahiman Rezon and Freemason’s Guide the ritual reads:

Our Mother EARTH alone, of all the elements, has never proved unfriendly to man; the bodies of water deluge him with rain, oppress him with hail, and drown him with inundations. The air rushes in storms, prepares the tempest, and lights up the volcano; but
the earth, ever kind and indulgent, is found subservient to his wishes. Though constantly harassed, more to furnish the luxuries than the necessaries of life, she never refuses her accustomed yield; spreading his path with flowers and his table with plenty; though she produces poison, still she supplies the antidote, and returns with interest every good committed to her care; and when at last he is called upon to pass through the “dark valley of the shadow of Death,” she once more receives him, and piously covers his remains within her bosom: this admonishes us that from it we came, and to it we must shortly return.

The Freemason’s Guide to the Symbolic Degrees (Reed, 1968) welds the two afore quoted passages together in the Entered Apprentice Degree. The combination is found in the same place within the ritual, after the discourse on the virtues and before the charge. The same is done in the Kentucky Monitor, the Louisiana Masonic Monitor, New York’s monitor, and the Masonic Manual of Missouri (Carman, 1952; Huckaby, 1927; Missouri, 1952; Pirtle 1990). The Tennessee ritual includes the latter discourse not in the First Degree but within the Masonic Funeral Service.

These three variations appear to be the most common within the York/American Rite Craft Degrees as practiced in the United States. Within the context of the entire discourse of the third section of the First Degree, the inclusion of references to any of the elements seems a little out of place. The reason for the inclusion of any of these variations has been questioned for at least the last sixty years, and it would probably be safe to say for much longer (Barbour, 1946; Wells, 1947).

The Elements in Other Rites

In various rites and obediences, a candidate for the First Degree of Freemasonry must endure a series of trials to prove his sincerity and character. Perhaps the trial that would be familiar to most American Freemasons would be the chamber of reflection, for many have experienced a similar trial in at least one of the concordant bodies. According to Mackey (1927), the use of the chamber of reflection prior to the Entered Apprentice Degree is common in the French and Scottish Rites, neither of which are widely practiced within the regular grand lodges in the United States. The chamber of reflection will be discussed and examined later in this work.

In a 1946 article found in The Philalethes, Barbour discusses the use of the four elements as trials in the Rite of Misraim. Pike and Cummings (2001) spent a great deal of time in combating the legitimacy of this rite and that of Memphis in the United States. They clearly assert the spuriousness of the Rite of Misraim, the Rite of Memphis, and the one formed through their union. All three of these are frequently, albeit perhaps harshly, called Masonic bastards (Stevens, 1899). The modern irregularity of the rite in the United States is without question; however, according to Barbour, Marc Bedarride, a former Grand Master of the Rite of Misraim in France and accused charlatan, recorded a “quite lengthy, detailed, and perhaps imaginary” description of the rite’s trials. The description includes the prostrate being caused to transverse an underground cavern, pass between two engulfing flames, to wade a swift current of water of unknown depth without extinguishing his torch, being
exalted through space where his light is darkened by a blustering gust of air, and finally being hastened into a “chamber of horror” just outside of the room where he is to be initiated. This is a dramatic account of this obedience’s trials, but it illustrates the passage presumably required of those seeking enlightenment within the French Rite of Misraim, at least in spirit.

Although extremely unpractical within the setting of a lodge hall, the description corresponds, in narrative, to the trials detailed within Pike’s (1993) Porch and the Middle Chamber: Book of the Lodge and Ambelain’s (2006) Freemasonry in Olden Times: Ceremonies and Rituals from the Rites of Mezaraïm and Memphis. At least one current Rite of Memphis and Misraim in the United States is purportedly in the use of Ambelain’s work (Brother Methodius, personal communication, July 15, 2008). Robert Ambelain is of Martinist fame. It appears the ritual is more heavily influenced by esoteric and occult thought than is mainstream American Masonry; however, the ritual shows a very strong similitude to Pike’s Craft Ritual. This is not surprising since both find their origin developing within France. Ambelain’s ritual warrants a review by anyone who is interested in variations of Masonry.

Pike’s Craft rituals are not widely known within the United States. He revised the Scottish Rite version of the Craft Degrees not to be worked within the halls of a lodge but instead as a requisite reading for a York Rite Mason venturing through the Scottish Rite’s fourth through the thirty-second degrees (Pike, 1993). This objective explains the frequent digressions within Pike’s ritual to clarify the differences between York Rite work and Scottish Rite work. It was believed by Pike that the rites contrasted so greatly in presentation that the York Rite Mason would not be able to fully understand the lessons within the Scottish Rite without some exposure to its Craft Degrees. Pike believed that after familiarizing himself with the Scottish Rite version of the Three Degrees that a candidate for the “higher” degrees would not be puzzled by their order. To provide one example of the differences between the American/York Rite Craft ritual and that of the Scottish Rite, within the American/York Rite ritual, the ruffians are apprehended and punished before the conclusion of the Third Degree. This is not so within the Scottish Rite workings of the degree, it is not until the completion of the 10th degree, or Elu of the Fifteen, that the fullness of retribution is paid to the ruffians. The following is an examination of Pike’s use of the elementals within the First Degree.

Pike’s “Blue Degrees” and the Elements

Pike’s version of the First Degree involved four tests or trials by the elements. The first trial experienced by the candidate is that of earth and involves the Chamber of Reflection. The following three trials are known as “The Journeys” and are made up of circumambulations around the lodge with various barriers and experiences to encounter. Each journey is accredited with an element, ordered air, water, and fire. The following is a description of each trial paraphrased from Pike’s (1993) Porch and the Middle Chamber: Book of the Lodge and (1996) Esoteric Work of the 1st through 3rd Degree, According to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.
The first trial of a candidate for the first degree is that of earth. The proselyte is delivered to the lodge by the individual who recommended him to Masonry. The profane is promptly left in the hands of a conductor, who blindfolds the proselyte and leads him about the lodge in the allusion of descending into a deep pit or catacomb. The candidate is then seated on a stool and turned over to the instruction of the preparer. The room is prepared with images of death and despair. Present also is a cup of water, a piece of bread, and dishes of salt, sulfur, and mercury. The proselyte is left to explore the crypt and answer four written questions before him. Each question is related to the candidate’s duties he owes to himself, fellow-creatures, his country, and his creator, respectfully. He is instructed that once he has answered the questions and followed all instructions to ring a bell signifying his completion.

The preparer observes the candidate through a hidden wicket, and when the candidate begins to answer the questions a disturbance outside of the chamber occurs. The proselyte hears chains rattling, cries, and a loud explosion followed by silence. Once he answers the questions, the candidate is required to write a will, drink the water, eat the bread, and reflect upon the salt, sulfur, and mercury. The latter substances’ connections to alchemy are explained. They are described as being representative of man’s three fold being: body, mind, and spirit. The salt is a reminder of the endless cycle of the dead becoming part of the living. The smoke from burning a particle of sulfur represents good and evil thoughts. The mercury with its inability to be easily divided into portions is representative of the spirit in simple oneness. After the proselyte has completed his tasks, the preparer blindfolds him and leads the candidate back through the path from whence he arrived at the chamber.

The First Journey

The first journey represents trial by air. During this journey the candidate is conducted three times around the lodge. He is caused to traverse objects on the floor as if passing over rocks and through hollows. All the while, sounds of thundering and loud claps are made about the journeyman. The candidate is stopped by the Junior Warden and made to make an alarm by striking the Junior Warden on the left shoulder three times. At this point, the candidate is given a light electric shock accompanied by a loud clasp of thundering sounds. After
answering the Junior Warden’s brief interrogation, the first journey is completed. The candidate is then informed that the element air is a representation of vitality or life. In a deeper explanation, the trial by air is said to be emblematical of the whims of life and more especially the quality of tolerance and progress from a terrestrial to a celestial state of being.

The Second Journey

The second journey represents trial by water. During this trial, the candidate is conducted three times around the lodge. After each circumambulation, the candidate’s right hand is dipped in a laver of water. The lodge is completely silent during the journey. After the third revolution, the candidate is stopped at the Senior Warden and made to make the regular alarm by striking him three times on the left shoulder. It is explained to the candidate that baptism by water is a symbol of purification and used by the Essenes and John the Baptist. It is to be a reminder to the candidate that all men must be driven by a desire to serve his fellow creature; otherwise, when fortune finds opportunity to invest him with rank and honor, he will serve himself and not the people who gave him opportunity.

The Third Journey

The third and last journey represents trial by fire. To best convey the venture taken by the candidate on the third journey, much of the description to follow is taken directly from Pike’s (1996) *Esoteric Work of the 1st through the 3rd Degree. According to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*. The profane is once again conducted three times around the lodge. “He is continually exposed to heat, which is produced by means of a long metallic tube, having at one end a mouth-piece and at the other a spirit-lamp, surrounded with wire-gauze. The tube contains lycopodium or arcanson powder, which, blown upon the spirit-lamp, inflames, and passes through the wire-gauze, making a hot flame. Torches may be used, with cotton saturated in alcohol, and powered with lycopodium, which rains out in flames when the torch is shaken” (p. 12). The candidate is to clearly feel the heat from the apparatus but not be burned. Upon the last circumambulation, the candidate is stopped by the Worshipful Master and caused to make an alarm on the Worshipful Master’s shoulder just as before. The candidate is then taught that through the baptism of both water and fire, he is symbolically free from all sin and vice. He is then instructed that the flame teaches all Masons to aspire for perfection and labor with aspiration, ardor, and zeal (very similar to freedom, fervency, and zeal in the York/American ritual).

Ambelain’s Ritual and the Elements

Ambelain’s *Freemasonry in Olden Times* contains two separate sets of rituals, those of the Rite of Memphis and the Rite of Mizraim. It is suggested that any reader with an interest in various Masonic Craft rituals spend some time in studying these unique and beautiful systems. There are some interesting differences between Ambelain’s ritual and that of Pike. The first variation of Ambelain’s ritual from that of Pike’s is the absence of mercury, sulfur, and salt from the Chamber of
Reflection. The order of the trials is different in the rituals. In Ambelain’s ritual the order is water, air, and fire (air, water, and fire in Pike’s).

The first journey includes the candidate being conducted around the lodge with immense noise and harassment. At the conclusion of the circumambulation, at the Junior Warden, the candidate’s hand is plunged into pure water for purification.

The second journey being a test of air, the candidate is lead around the lodge in silence, although obstacles are still present. Stopping at the Senior Warden, the Master of Ceremonies blows three times on the candidate’s forehead.

The third and last journey is a trial by fire. The candidate is once again conducted around the lodge and stopped by the Worshipful Master. The Master of Ceremonies takes the right hand of the candidate and passes it three times through the flame of a lit candle.

These differences are only presented to give the reader a little broader view of how the elements are used in different rituals. It is hoped that a reader with an interest will seek out these rituals and read them fully, for they all have a great many gems of purpose to impart to the Masonic student.

**The Elements in Literature**

Throughout antiquity and the more modern era, the four elements have been included in literature ranging in genre from poetry and science fiction movies to academic works on conservation and physics (Besson, 1997; Laurie, 1929; Rupp, 2005; Sylvester, 1979). Of particular interest is that the majority of the passage concerning the four elements from Sichel’s monitor, and various other York Rite renditions, is lifted from the ancient writings of Pliny the Elder. Practically word for word, depending on translation, the Sichel and McCoy monitors recite Pliny’s discourse from Book II, Chapter 63 of *Naturalis Historia* (Laurie, 1929; Pliny, 1987). *Naturalis Historia* was completed around the year 77 AD, and it is considered to be one of the largest works, consisting of 37 books, to have survived from the era of the Roman Empire until today (Rupp). Pliny reads:

> It is the earth that, like a kind mother, receives us at our birth, and sustains us when born. It is this alone, of all the enemies around us, that is never found an enemy to man. The floods of waters deluge him with rains, oppress him with hail, and drown him with inundations; the air rushes on in storms, prepares the tempest, or lights up the volcano; but the earth, gentle and indulgent, ever subservient to the wants of man, spreads his walks with flowers, and his table with plenty; returns with interest every good committed to her care, and though she produces the poison, she still furnishes the antidote, though constantly teased more to furnish the luxuries of man than his necessities, yet even to the last, she continues her kind indulgence, and when life is over, she piously hides his remains in her bosom.

Joshua Sylvester (1979) in the robust work *The Divine Weeks and Works*, first published in 1621, presents a stanza that is very reminiscent of Pliny the Elder’s writing. All four elements are referred to; however, it is the earth that is most revered. Pay particular attention to the commonality of line 467.

459: The Earth receives man when he first is born:
460: Th’Earth nurses him; and when he is forlorn
461: Of th’other Elements, and Nature loaths-him,
462: Th’Earth in her bosom with kind buriall cloaths-him.
463: Oft hath the Aire with Tempests set-upon-us,
464: Oft hath the Water with her Floods undon-us,
465: Oft hath the Fire (th'upper as well as ours)
466: With wofull flames consum'd our Towns and Towns:
467: Onely the Earth, of all the Elements,
468: Unto Mankind is kind without offence:
469: Onely the Earth did never it displace
470: From the first seat assign'd it by thy grace.

In recent literature, the four elements have received considerable attention for their prominent inclusion in Dan Brown’s (2000) work Angels and Demons. The book fictionally connects the four classical elements with the practice of an Illuminati conspiracy and assassin. On page 360, Brown depicts what he refers to as The Illuminati Diamond, an artistic creation forming the words Earth, Air, Fire, and Water into a square figure. The novel repeatedly mentions political figures’ connections to Freemasonry and Freemasonry’s supposed and illusionary connection with symbols such as the eye within a triangle and the Great Seal of the United States. In the fictional novel, bodies are found branded with an anagram of one of the four elements somewhere on their person.

There are numerous other references in literature that compare favorably to the subject at hand; however, it would be beyond the scope of the current focus to expound more fully upon them. Let it be made very clear, the similarity of our modern ritual to these older works does not in any way point to the age of the fraternity; yet, it does indicate that the ideas and thoughts propagated within the lodge are linked to those of a more ancient time.

The History of the Four Elements

It would now be prudent to briefly examine the development of the four elements. Throughout all ages and even today, man sought to identify the prima materia, prime matter or primary material, of all substances (Vorhand-Ariel, 1998). The debate over the fundamental building blocks of all material is as old as civilization itself. It was the group of thinkers belonging to the school of natural philosophers, in the sixth century BC, who first begun to seriously debate the elements (Rupp, 2005). Thales is accredited with being the first to develop a theory of elements. He proclaimed that water was the most basic of all elements and that all things were made of some variation of this base material. The debate continued for centuries. Anaximander, Thales’s student, proclaimed that air was the basic unit of matter. Heraclitus proclaimed the simplest element must be fire, and Xenophanes asserted that all things were made of the fundamental element of earth (Rupp).

It was Empedocles (494-435 BC) who is accredited with combining the theories of his predecessors and developing a four-prong theory of the elements, although Buddha’s teachings of the four elements pre-date Empedocles’. In Tetrasomia or Doctrine of the Four Elements, Empedocles postulated that all things were made up of various combinations of earth, air, fire, and water. According to Rupp (2005), the development of a set of basic elements was not exclusive to Greece, the cradle of Western Thought. Japanese and Hindu traditions taught of a five element belief. Both taught the four classical elements and a fifth element akasha, aether, or the void which explains the unseen, spiritual influences of life and nature. Within the Greek philosophy, the
presence of a fifth element, ether, was regularly discussed and debated. Aristotle added a fifth element he called aether, later it was termed quintessence. The peoples of India developed a three element theory and those of China a five element theory. The Indian theory contained fire, water, and earth to which the Chinese added wood and metal. The Indians later expanded the theory to include air.

The Greek thought of the four classical elements has been greatly confused in modern time. When the Greeks debated and discussed the four elements they did not have a physical substance in mind. When the Greeks discussed earth, they did not necessarily intend for it to be taken as soil; although it would often be represented as such. The four classical elements more readily referenced physical states of being. The following excerpt clearly explains:

For Aristotle, matter (hyle), inert and shapeless by itself, gained its shape and properties by the action of form (morphe) which could be expressed by such factors as hot, cold, dry and humid, giving in turn, by their combination, four elements: earth (cold and dry), water (cold and humid), air (hot and humid) and fire (hot and dry). The elements were eternal and indestructible and by synthesis (chemical reaction), mixis (mechanical mixing) or krasis (dissolution) gave birth to different substances whose properties depended solely on the contents of each element.²

During the Middle Ages, Western thought was stifled and oppressed. Alchemy and the study of the four elements was overcome in the Western world by superstition and blind faith in the church; however, in the East, the same period was a time of great growth in science, literature, philosophy, and overall intellectual achievement. Alchemy “developed in close relation with metallurgy and medicine” within the Islamic Arabian-Persian world (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, 2007, p. S6). It was during this time that the Arab scholar Abu Musa Jabir ibn Hayyan, more readily known as Gerber (720-780 AD), lived and worked (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer). Gerber was profoundly interested in alchemy, and he believed that all metals were made up of a combination of sulfur and mercury. Gerber’s sulfur-mercury theory was expanded by Al-Razi (850-940 AD), a Persian physician, to include salt (Rupp, 2005).

“In the late Middle Ages (12-14th centuries), alchemy was studied by such eminent personalities as Albertus Magnus—Albert von Bollstadt (1193-1280), professor of philosophy and theology at the Universities of Cologne and Paris, or Arnoldus de Villanova (1235-1313), rector of Montpellier University” (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, 2007, p. S6). In the 16th Century the Greek theory of elements and the Arabian three elements were combined. “Paracelsus (Phillip von Hohenheim, 1493-1541) determined that, though the Greek four were indeed the fundamental components of all matter, earth, air, fire, and water in turn were composed of the three Arabic ‘principles,’ mercury, sulfur, and salt’ (Rupp, p. 23).

The classical elements composing of either four or five elements dominated philosophic, scientific, esoteric, and mathematical thought from Empedocles through Socrates, Plato, Aristotle,
Gerber, Paracelsus, and their dominance began to weaken in the middle of the 17th Century with the scientific research of Robert Boyle. Boyle’s (2008) *The Sceptical Chymist* signaled the end of the four elements dominance in science. For the next 100 years, the dominance of alchemy and the four elements over Western society waned. The death of alchemy has been symbolically represented by Antoine Lavoisier, who listed thirty-three elements classified as gases, metals, non-metals, or earths in his 1789 dissertation entitled *Elementary Treatise on Chemistry* (Donovan, 1996; Rupp, 2005). From this point, the number of identified elements increased at a steady if not amazing rate (Rupp). It is noteworthy to mention, however, that even today the classical elements and alchemy are used in astrology, esoteric thought, and several other occult philosophies.

It was not uncommon for cultures to connect their belief of the elements with other basic knowledge such as colors, seasons, symbols, directions, religious iconography, virtues, or planets, attributing one of each to a specific element. The Greeks were no different from their global companions. The Pythagoreans, those philosophers who followed the teaching of Pythagoras, had a natural affection for numbers, and to them, the world of nature and reality seemed to divide itself nicely into units of four. They observed four elements, “four prime faculties, four societies, four seasons, four ages of man, and four parts of living things” (Rupp, p. 12). It was the Pythagoreans who are accredited with developing four of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, the quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music (Stahl, Johnson, & Burge, 1991). Hippocrates took this fascination with four and connected the four elements to his four essential fluids of the human body (yellow bile, black bile, blood, and phlegm).

Ginsburgh (1995) asserted that the Hebrew people saw a correspondence between the four classical elements and the letters of the Tetragrammaton. In Ginsburgh’s view water correlates with Yod, fire with Heh, air with Vav, and earth with the final Heh. Bogdan (2007), Castells (2005), and Ozaniec (2005) concurs that there is a correlation between the name of God and the four classical elements. According to some writers, the four classical elements when corresponded with the Tetragrammaton may be further associated with the four senses, four evangelists, four angels ruling over the corners of the world, and the four triplicities (Castells (2005); Goldstein, 1990; Labriola & Simmonds, 2000; Ozaniec). “A triplicities is a set of three zodiacal signs: there are four triplicities in all, each of which is associated with one of the four elements” (Goldstein, p. 1). Bogdan stresses that the illustration of this connection is displayed more fully or clearly in rituals of the Order of the Golden Dawn than they are within Freemasonry. Kabalistic philosophy is deeply rooted within the study of the Tetragrammaton. The Tetragrammaton and Kabalistic philosophy are repeatedly seen within the degrees of the Scottish Rite, including the Craft Degrees (Hutchens, 1995a; Hutchens, 1995b).
Within the American/York Rite’s “higher” degrees is a very clear example of how units of four were associated with each other. In the Royal Arch Degree, the candidate is caused to pass through four veils, each representing one of the principal tribes of Israel. The first veil represents the tribe of Dan and is represented by a blue banner bearing the representation of an eagle. The second veil represents the tribe of Rueben and is represented by a banner of purple bearing the representation of a man. The third veil represents the tribe of Ephraim and is represented by a scarlet banner bearing the representation of an ox. The fourth veil represents the tribe of Judah and is represented by a banner of white bearing the representation of a lion. According to Royal Arch and early Christian tradition, each of the four veils is said to represent one of the four Christian Gospels of John, Matthew, Luke, and Mark, respectively. The representations of the eagle, man, ox, and lion are further described as corresponding to four astrological symbols of the Zodiac: Scorpio, Aquarius, Taurus, and Leo, respectively.

In *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike (1956) connects even more units of four with the four representations on the Royal Arch’s banners while discussing the twenty-eighth degree of the Scottish Rite. On page 791, Pike presents an illustration connecting the eagle with azoth and air; the man with mercury and water; the ox with salt and the earth; and the lion with sulfur and fire. Pike continues to explain how the Zohar further connects each illustration on the banners with an angel: the lion with Michael; the ox with Gabriel; the eagle with Uriel; and the man with Raphael.

**Alchemy**

The four classical elements are intimately related to the ancient science of Alchemy. The discipline, not unlike Freemasonry, is divided into two denominations: material and spiritual or operative and speculative (Tramer,Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, 2007). Alchemy was very en-vogue with the thinkers of the Renaissance (14-17 centuries) but fell out of popularity with the rise of the “rational and critical philosophy of the enlightenment” mind (Tramer, Voltz, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, p. S6). It is not to be assumed however that alchemy instantaneously
disappeared from the social, political, and scientific scenes.

Whereas the material practice of alchemy sought to explain and manipulate the physical world, the spiritual alchemist sought to use the terminology, science, and ideas of the material to explain the psychological, spiritual, and sociological existence of man. Alchemy was interested in transmuting one thing into another. Of course the most widely known idea of alchemy is the search for a technique of converting base metals into silver or gold; however, within the spiritual denomination of alchemy there was a search to return man to a pure oneness with the divine creator. Although the once prominent theories of alchemy lost position in the open scientific world view, its spiritual half found refuge in the esoteric beliefs of organizations such as Freemasonry and the Rosicrucian movement. The traditional quest within alchemy was transmutation, or change, into another substance or form (Von Franz, 1980). This quest in relationship to the four elements can still be found within The Elemental Trials of Freemasonry.

Before going farther, it would be advantageous to explore what connections the framers of the Craft have with alchemy and its practice. The beginnings of Freemasonry are shrouded in mystery. At what point the operative lodges transformed into an organization accepting men of stature and prestige is blurred; however, it is generally accepted that Elias Ashmole, Robert Moray, and Christopher Wren were among the first to transcend the barriers and become speculative or accepted Masons (Beresiner, 2004; Koltko-Rivera, 2007; MacNulty, 1998). It is also noteworthy that all three of these men were founding members of the Royal Society. It is possible that more members of the Royal Society were Freemasons; however, even of the three afore mentioned, Wren and Moray are occasionally questioned as Freemasons. It is not suggested that the Royal Society has any connection in origin to Freemasonry; however, it is implied that both organizations developed during the transition from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment thought. It is also suggested that the men in both organizations probably shared similar interests, one of which being alchemy and the rapidly developing science of chemistry.

Elias Ashmole was born on the 23rd of May 1617 at Lichfield, Staffordshire England (Beresiner, 2004). Ashmole was made a freemason in 1646 within the lodge at Warrington (Koltko-Rivera, 2007). From an early age, Ashmole found a fond interest in esoteric teachings. He had a passion for botany, astronomy, and alchemy. He became fast friends with William Backhouse, a noted alchemist, and this relationship was so strong that, according to Koltko-Rivera, Ashmole became the alchemical successor to Backhouse. Ashmole also had an interest in Rosicrucianism; however, there seems to be no record of him ever being a participant in Rosicrucian activities. Ashmole published several works with esoteric and alchemic connotations including Fasciculus Chemicus, Theatrwm Chemicum Britannicum, and The Way of Bliss (Beresiner; Koltko-Rivera; MacNulty, 1998).

Robert Moray was born March 6, 1609. He was initiated into Masonry in 1641 at the Lodge in Edinburgh. Moray was a lover of hermetic philosophy and alchemy, and he was the patron of Thomas Vaughn, an active alchemist (MacNulty, 1998; McGregor, 2005).
Christopher Wren was born October 20, 1632 (McGregor, 2005). It is believed that Wren was initiated into Freemasonry in May 1691 as evidenced by John Aubray’s *Naturell Historie of Wiltshire*. There is little to no firm evidence, however, to substantiate the assertion that Wren was definitely a Freemason. His interests in intellectual endeavors, however, are unquestionable. Wren was raised in an Anglican family that leaned towards the Royalist agenda during the civil unrest in England. He was educated at an early age by his father and Reverend William Shepherd. He attended Westminster School for several years. Following a change in prosperity, the Wren’s resided with William Holder. It was here that Wren was exposed to William Scarburgh, a physician. Scarburgh was a member of a small group of thinkers who met weekly to discuss such topics as alchemy, physics, astronomy, statics, and the like. Wren was allowed to attend many of these meetings. Christopher Wren was among the first twelve founding members of the Royal Society and served as president for several years (McGregor, 2005).

The Elemental Trials as Illustrations of Transmutation

“According to Aristotle, the prima material combines with the four qualities of coldness, dryness, heat, and moisture, to develop into the four elements. He believed that manipulating these qualities would change their elemental composition, resulting in transmutation” (Vorhand-Ariel, 1998, p. 110). Within alchemy, it was believed that the elements could be manipulated in order to produce a mystical substance, or the philosopher’s stone. This belief in manipulating what was found in nature into a supernatural substance, transmutation, transposed itself into the philosophy of Rosicrucian and Freemasonry. Nowhere within all of Freemasonry is this more clearly evident than in the elemental trials.

Earth

Within the York/American Rite, it is taught that “our Mother EARTH alone, of all the elements, has never proved unfriendly to man”. The ritual further “admonishes us that from” the earth “we came, and to it we must shortly return”. The element of earth represents man’s alpha and omega, his beginning and his end. Man’s body was molded together with the dust of the earth and water. His mortal temple was an earthen clay vessel into which God breathed air through his nostrils to transmute him into a living soul. The first living man was Adam, who is recognized within Masonic tradition and myth as being the first Freemason. The name Adam comes from *adamah*, meaning earth or ground (Mackey, 1927; Vorhand-Ariel, 1998). It may be of interest to mention here that according to Jewish law it is unlawful for a corpse to be cremated. One explanation for this edict is that a body that is returned to the earth “is capable of bringing forth new life”; whereas, a body that is turned to ash through burning by fire represents complete destruction (Kaplan, 1990, p. 149). The Jewish religion and Freemasonry both teach that man is an eternal being that awaits resurrection after death. It is therefore proper that man’s body be laid under the solemn clods of clay as a symbol
of his awaiting resurrection and return to the endless cycle of life.

It is appropriate that the Masonic rituals of elemental trials begin with the candidate being placed deep within the earth. It may be interpreted as a symbol of his beginnings. When the profane candidate leaves the Chamber of Reflection, he is born anew and prepared to receive instruction as a tabula rasa or blank slate (Zeldis, 2008).

Air

The word wind is intimately related to the word spirit. It has already been mention that it was breath that made man a living soul. God breathed air into man’s nostrils to make him a free moral agent, made in the likeness of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Arabic word ruch and the Hebrew word ruach are words meaning both soul and wind (Kaplan, 1990; Vorhand-Ariel, 1998). Jung (1989) asserted that it was only natural for man to associate air with the soul, for life begins with a baby’s first gasp for breath and ends with a man’s last struggle to breathe. When a man breathes his last breath and the air leaves his body, his soul vacates the carnal clay vessel and transmutes to eternal reward or damnation.

Water

The second journey within Pike’s ritual is the trial by water. In Western, alchemist, and Jewish thought, water has a deep rooted connection with creation, birth, and renewal (Rupp, 2005; Vorhand-Ariel, 1998). The first two elements mentioned within the Christian and Jewish Bible are earth and water. In modern science, it is taught that life on earth began within the primordial ooze of the ancient oceans. The process of a mother delivering a baby is signaled by the breaking of her water. Through a study of ancient civilizations, it is found that the earliest societies developed on the banks of the fertile rivers of life: the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Nile, the Indus, and the Yellow Rivers; thusly, it might be suggested that water has always been a source of life and fertility to the human race (Kaplan, 1990; Vorhand-Ariel, 1998).

Water has played a vital part in the rituals of the world’s major religions. Although much of the Christian world views baptism and ceremonial immersion as a rite isolated within their practice, mikvah is a ritual bath practiced in Judaism (Vorhand-Ariel). The Holy Scriptures of the Jews require followers to participate in a ceremonial immersion in order to purify themselves. Causes for such a requirement are varied but include women after childbirth or menstrual cycles, converts to Judaism, and the Cohen Gadol or High Priest before performing a ceremony representing the people (Vorhand-Ariel). Within the Muslim religion, practitioners are required to go through purification by water before prayer. It is thereby a safe assertion that the washing of the body in water is an ancient symbol of the purification of the immortal soul and the carnal vessel. Its use within the Craft is no different. The alchemist used water as a sign of transmutation and purification. Before setting to work, the alchemist prepared his tools and vessels by immersing and washing them in a bath of water (Vorhand-Ariel). Perhaps it is only fitting for the first degree of Freemasonry to purify and prepare a candidate for the Ancient Mysteries within a symbolic water baptism.

Fire

To the ancient Hebrews and to alchemists, fire was the most active of the elements. It was fire that served as a catalyst. According to Vorhand-Ariel (1998), “Heraclitus regarded fire as an agent of transmutation and as a symbol of renewal, representing light, spirit, the sun, radiance, and
purification” (p. 111). The alchemists used fire, as well as water, as a source of purifying their tools. The alchemist and metallurgist both used fire to refine metals and make them pure. It separates the base from the precious metal (Tramer, Volts, Lahmani, & Szczepinska-Tramer, 2007). Fire was used by them to transform a crude convoluted mixture into a separated collection of base and precious metals. “The Zohar says the flaming sword [referred in Genesis as being placed east of the Garden of Eden] symbolizes the trials with which God overwhelms man that he may be purified and restored to the way of goodness” (Vorhand-Ariel, 1998, p. 112). It might be mentioned here that the tiler’s sword was traditionally wavy in shape to represent the sword placed in the Garden of Eden (Lawrence, 1999; Mackey, 1927). As afore mentioned, fire is a symbol of renewal and has been since time immemorial. Perhaps one of the best images of this is the traditional phoenix. The phoenix is a mythical bird that after an extensive life combusts into flames and is reborn from its own ashes. In Thus Spake Zarathustra, Nietzsche (2003) wrote, “You must be willing to burn in your own flame: how could you become new unless you had first become ashes?” (p. 49). The ancients implemented a trial by fire perhaps similar to Pike’s variation of the Entered Apprentice degree. Perhaps it is a reminder to the neophyte that he must set aside or destroy his old image of life and self to receive the teachings of Freemasonry and become a new and better creature.

Conclusion

At the onset of this work, the question was raised concerning the inclusion of the classical four elements within the Entered Apprentice Degree in various ritual variations. The examination of this topic has transcended time passing through the studies of religion, philosophy, and history. In the study of the elements, the topic of alchemy repeatedly revealed itself. It has been illustrated how the discipline of alchemy dominated the religious, political, scientific, and social aspects of human existence. Tramer, et al. said of alchemy, “alchemy, an integral part of the medieval world-view, was doomed to death by the spirit of enlightenment well before its official death which coincided with the appearance of the modern chemistry of Lavoisier and Dalton. [Now] Only its phantom is still alive” (p. S5). It is most probable that a very prominent place where alchemy is still shining is within Freemasonry. The early speculative Freemasons came from the ages of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. It is without question that these patriarchs of the Craft were knowledgeable in both denominations of alchemy and their relationship with the four classical elements. It is proposed, and hopefully supported, that sporadic mentioning of the four elements within the York Rite system and the blatant use of the elements within the rites of continental Europe are direct decedents from the reign of alchemy in pre-Enlightenment Europe. The early framers of the Craft, during the Renaissance, probably drafted the rituals to include the philosophies of spiritual alchemy that aligned with the spiritual needs and goals of the fledgling organization of Speculative Freemasonry.


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THE RESURRECTION STORY

By
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Prologue

The purpose of this paper is to explore the teaching of resurrection within and with context to Freemasonry. Before embarking on this journey, there needs to be some clarification put forth to avoid offense from the subject matter or material presented. The first disclaimer is that the material presented is put forth in the view of historical perspective of religion, ritual, and the maturation of human society. Secondly, for the purpose of full disclosure, the author is a Baptist minister; however, great effort is afforded to avoid bias with the text of the work. Lastly, it is hoped that the reader will embark on the historical survey of this paper in the efforts to grow in knowledge, setting themselves at distance from their own theological persuasion and attempt to grow in knowledge, tolerance, and understanding. With all of this being said, this work is presented with the assurance that all Masons will read it with the tenants and principles set forth in the lodge.

Introduction

One of the primary teachings within Craft Masonry, either overtly or covertly, is the doctrine of the immortality of man and the hope of a resurrection. It is the intent of this work to examine, historically, the concept of resurrection. Where within human history does the doctrine of resurrection originate? What does it denote? Is the thought of resurrection universal within the ideology of the human race? Is it innate? These are only a few of the questions that are hoped to be explored through this journey through history, religion, and the maturation of human thought.

Perhaps the best place to begin is with defining the word resurrection. In Noah Webster’s 1828 Dictionary, resurrection is defined as “a rising again; chiefly, the revival of the dead of the human race, or their return from the grave, particularly at the general judgment”.¹ A contemporary Oxford dictionary defines resurrection, outside of the Christian context, as “the revitalization or revival of something”.² Resurrection therefore refers to the reanimation, resurgence, or revival of a person, place, or thing, more especially a person or entire race.

Before examining resurrection within the confines of Freemasonry, it is important to look from a broader lens on the subject in order to provide context. For this purpose, it is necessary to first consider where the initial concept of resurrection occurred within human nature. Secondly, it is beneficial to examine a few historical figures, gods, or tales within human history which teach lessons of resurrection. After this is accomplished, in as much brevity as possible, the primary subject of resurrection with the Craft will be taken under consideration.

The Sun

The earliest picture of resurrection within the life of man had to be within the context of nature. From his earliest intellectual times, mankind has observed the sun transverse its path through the sky bringing life, plenty, and prosperity only to fade away into the bleakness of cold, gloomy, and dark days of winter. The onset of autumn signaled to early man that winter was at hand, and it
was time to harvest\(^1\) and prepare for the absence of growth and substance. The human race observed the sun rising in the east each day to ascend through the heavens only to fade into obscurity each evening in the west. Religion for early man, out of necessity, must have revolved around the life giving presence of the sun. Soon mankind began to develop detailed myths and legends revolving around their visual observations of the rise and fall of the sun’s path in the sky. Illustrious Brother Albert Pike, while discussing comparative religion in his great compendium *Morals and Dogma* stated:

*The worship of the sun became the basis of all the religions of antiquity. To them he was the innate fire of bodies, the fire of Nature. Author of Life, heat, and ignition, he was to them the efficient cause of all generation, for without him there was no movement, no existence, no form. He was to them immense, indivisible, imperishable, and everywhere present. It was their need of light, and of his creative energy, that was felt by all men; and nothing was more fearful to them than his absence. His beneficent influences caused his identification with the Principle of Good; and the BRAHMA of the Hindus, and MITHRAS of the Persians, and ATHOM, AMUN, PHTHA, and OSIRIS, of the Egyptians, the BEL of the Chaldeans, the ADONAI of the Phoenicians, the ADONIS and APOLLO of the Greeks, became but personifications of the Sun, the regenerating Principle, image of ‘that fecundity which perpetuates and rejuvenates the world’s existence.’\(^3\)*

In connection with the observations of the sun were the simpler patterns observed in vegetation. Some early civilizations centered deity on the emergence, growth, harvest, and assumed death of plant life. In either event, the source of deity was found in the death, burial, and resurrection of the sun, now to be expounded upon.

To begin an examination of resurrection and the sun, it would be prudent to first look at the observable patterns of it. The Vernal (Spring) Equinox occurs around March 21, depending on the year’s relationship to leap year. In the Persian calendar, this day is known as Nowruz, the new day, and is the first day of the new calendar. It marks the first day of Spring. In the tradition of sun worship, the Vernal Equinox also signifies the rebirth or resurrection of the sun. The word equinox is derived from a combination of the Latin words for equal (aequus) and night (nox). At the equinox, the Earth’s equator is at the sun’s center. The Earth’s axis is neither leaning toward the sun nor leaning away from the sun, so in laymen’s words, the sun’s center is directly above the equator during either equinox. Each day following the Vernal Equinox grows in length of daylight until the Estival (Summer) Solstice. This lengthening of the day was observed by the ancients, and it appeared to them the sun was being reborn and growing following the long harsh winter months.

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\(^1\)harvest (n.)
Old English hærfest “autumn,” as one of the four seasons, “period between August and November,” from Proto-Germanic *hharbas* (source also of Old Saxon hérfezt, Old Frisian and Dutch herfst, German Herbst “autumn,” Old Norse haust “harvest”), from PIE *kerp-−* “to gather, pluck, harvest” (source also of Sanskrit *kṛpāna−* “sword,” kṛpāni “shears,” Greek *karpōs−* “fruit,” karpizomai “make harvest of;” Latin *cāpere−* “to cut, divide, pluck;” Lithuanian *kēru−* “cut;” Middle Irish *cērbain−* “cut”).

In Old English with only implied reference to the gathering of crops. The borrowing of autumn and the use of fall (n.) in a seasonal sense gradually focused the meaning of harvest to “the time of gathering crops” (mid-13c.), also to the action itself and the product of the action (after c. 1300), which became its main senses from 14c. Figurative use by 1530s. As an adjective from late 14c. Harvest home (1570s) was a festive celebration of the bringing home the last of the harvest; harvest moon (1704) is that which is full within a fortnight of the autumnal equinox. --http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=harvest
As afore alluded to, between the Vernal Equinox and the Estival (Summer) Solstice, the sun’s center progressively moves from the Earth’s equator to the Tropic of Cancer. At the Estival Solstice, the sun’s center is directly above the Tropic of Cancer. This occurs around June 21. For people living north of the Tropic of Cancer, it is at this time that the sun appears to have reached its highest point in the sky. The lengthening of the number of hours of daylight reaches its pinnacle, and the Estival Solstice is the longest day of the year. Each day following begins to decline in the amount of daylight until the Autumnal Equinox; however, the sun’s intensity, in the Northern Hemisphere, is most intense through June, July, and August. The intensity is due to Earth’s Northern Hemisphere being tilted toward the sun through these months. Reference Figure 1 for more detail. This is a result of the Earth’s axis being tilted toward the sun in the Northern Hemisphere. During this period, the center of the sun migrates down from the Tropic of Cancer to the Earth’s equator. Sun worshipers often recognized this season as being the sun’s shining glory.

Around September 21, the sun’s center has once again returned to the equator. The day is roughly equally divided between day and night. This is called the Autumnal Equinox. The sun’s center is, as afore explained, directly above the equator. Following this event, the Earth’s axis begins to tilt away from the sun, in reference to the Northern Hemisphere. As the day is shortened due to the sun’s center being below the equator moving to the Tropic of Capricorn, a sense of urgency in harvest was naturally felt by early man. The trees began to brown and give up their leaves. The days began to become cooler, and signs of vegetative life began to slowly diminish and dissipate. In the eyes of early man, it is not difficult to understand it appeared that death was coming on every hand.

Around December 21 or the Hibernal Solstice, the sun’s center reaches the Tropic of Capricorn. Of masonic interest is the observance of St. John the Evangelist’s Feast Day on December 27, in obvious reference to the Hibernal Solstice. This is the shortest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. The sun has reached its lowest point in the sky or its lowest southern declination. This is the official first day of winter. The following three months are cold and harsh. The sun’s intensity is at its weakest, and ancient man faced great hardship and obstacles of survival. The life giving sun that was warm and brought life has sunken low in the sky. It is easy to imagine why ancient man felt the sun had succumbed and laid in a grave during this season. Between the Hibernal Solstice and the return of the Vernal Equinox, the sun’s center begins to move back to the equator. Following a cold, windy, and snowy winter, the ancients must have been brightened by the arrival of spring and the return of
the warmth of the sun. When the Vernal Equinox arrived and the days began to lengthen, it had to appear the sun had miraculously been resurrected.

Robert Brown in *Stellar Theology and Masonic Astronomy* takes on the explanation of the sun’s path in the sky in relation to the Hiramic Legend and ancient religion. The work has been highly cited by Masonic researchers, and it is greatly recommended to Masons of such interest. Brown asserts that the movement of the sun from equinox to solstice to equinox to solstice is the launching point for resurrection deities.\(^7\) Figure 2 depicts Brown’s assertion presented on a sine wave. At the Vernal Equinox, the sun is born and grows in strength as days lengthen through the months of March, April, and May, the spring months. These months coincide with the zodiac symbols of Aries, Taurus, and Gemini. The sun as a deity reaches its greatest strength at the Estival Solstice, for the reasons already explained. Of particular Masonic interest is of course the occurrence of St. John the Baptist’s Feast Day being observed traditionally on the Estival Solstice and Masonically observed on June 24. Although the length of the day begins to shorten after the Estival Solstice, the intensity of the sun’s rays are the greatest due to the Earth’s orientation and the center of the sun being between the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator. The months of June, July, and August, corresponding with Cancer, Leo, and Virgo, are said to be the strongest period of the sun’s strength. At the Autumnal Equinox, the sun’s intensity begins to greatly decrease in the Northern Hemisphere due to the sun’s center being below the Equator. Brown illustrates that ancient tradition asserts that the sun is accosted by three enemies, namely September/Libra, October/Scorpio, and November/Sagittarius. The final assault is an attack to the sun’s head and is the death blow to the great life giving disc. The sun is laid in the grave, and there it stays for three months, December/Capricorn, January/Aquarius, and February/Pisces. At the Estival Equinox, the sun is miraculously resurrected from the grave, and the cycle of life, death, burial, and resurrection begins anew.

It now becomes needful to explain what all of this discussion of the sun has to do with the story of resurrection in general. Within almost every ancient civilization is recorded evidence of a deity representing the sun or straight out worship of the sun itself. Charles Francois Dupuis in his renowned work *Origins of Worship* presented argument that most all worship of deity originated with solar adoration. Dupuis was a French savant living from 1742 to 1809. He is accredited with developing and perpetuating the Christ myth theory, the belief that Christian religion is an amalgamation of ancient deities and myths. In basic summation, Dupuis described the basic tenants of solar religion with the following:

The god is born about December 25th, without sexual intercourse, for the sun, entering the winter solstice, emerges in the sign of Virgo, the heavenly Virgin. His mother remains ever-virgin, since the rays of the sun, passing through the zodiacal sign, leave it intact. His infancy is begirt with dangers, because the new-born Sun is feeble in the midst of the winter’s fogs and mists, which threaten to devour him; his life is one of toil and peril, culminating at the spring equinox in a final struggle with the powers of darkness. At that period the day and night are equal, and both fight for the mastery. Though the night veil the urn and he seems dead; though he has descended out of sight, below the earth, yet he rises again triumphant, and he rises in the sign of the Lamb, and is thus the Lamb of God, carrying away the darkness and death of the winter months. Henceforth he triumphs, growing ever stronger and more brilliant. He ascends into the zenith, and there he glows, on the right hand of God, himself God, the very substance of the Father, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, upholding all things by his life-giving power.
Admittedly, Dupuis’ arguments are grounded in logic; however, the breadth of poetic license within his claims are somewhat far reaching. In any regard, the majority of the myths and legends surrounding solar deities reference death and resurrection. Time and space does not permit an exhaustive examination of these deities; however, for the purpose of masonic education, it is needful to survey a few of the most prominent resurrection deities associated with the sun, vegetation, or both.

**Hades and Persephone**

The story of Hades and Persephone was once a common part of popular culture, and by once, is meant during the Twentieth Century. In order to prepare for the animation of Walt Disney’s classic *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, a test film was created. This *Silly Symphonies* was released in 1934 and entitled *The Goddess of Spring*. The musical opens with Persephone dancing through a field of flowers and being seated on a cornucopia throne. The music shifts from whimsy to jazzy upon her abduction by the underworld god Hades.

Persephone was the virgin daughter of the Greek gods Zeus and Demeter. Zeus was considered the father god and Demeter was the goddess of grain and fertility. That being said, Persephone was a beautiful virgin maiden who ran through fields of flowers. Through Demeter’s love for Persephone, the flowers of the fields were always in bloom and beautiful. Zeus’ brother Hades fell in love with the damsel, and he devised a plan to kidnap Persephone and take her to the underworld with him. While Persephone was gleefully playing in a field with friends, Hades swooped down in his chariot and captured Persephone. The violent kidnapping “deflowered” the damsel and was so quick no one knew what had occurred. The only exception was Helios. Being the god of the sun, he saw all things that occurred on earth. As a side note, Helios is where the image of a smiling face in the sun originated. Demeter realized her daughter was missing, and in a state of grief cast the earth into a state of darkness killing all vegetation. This harsh retribution lasted for a year. Finally Demeter through the help of Helios and other gods discovered the whereabouts of her daughter. Demeter demanded Persephone’s release. Hades agreed; however, up until that time Persephone had not eaten any of the underworld’s food due to grief. When Persephone heard of her impending release, Hades convinced her to partake of a pomegranate seed. Once she tasted of the Hadean fruit, Persephone was doomed to remain in the underworld. Anyone who tastes of food from the underworld must remain there. After a great debate, it was agreed for Persephone to be allowed to leave the underworld for a portion of the year. Depending on source, Persephone would spend a space of three to six months with Hades as the Queen of the underworld and the rest of the time with her mother. Each year, when Persephone is carried away by Hades, Demeter refuses for the trees to bear fruit and allow the flowers to bloom. The space of time when Persephone is with Demeter, Demeter makes the flowers bloom and trees blossom, corresponding to spring and summer. When Persephone is hastened away to the underworld, Demeter’s depression and sorrow cause the vegetation to die and wither—the latter of course corresponding to fall and winter.

On a yearly basis, Persephone passes from life into the underworld which brings cold, bleakness, and a loss of growth upon the earth. She is later resurrected from the underworld to bring a renewal of life and growth upon the Earth. This cycle obviously coincides with the cycle of the seasons and the sun.
By the Summer Solstice, the sun has regained its previous glory and power. June 21 is the longest day of the year. The intensity of the sun and its heat is greatest through June/Cancer, July/Leo, and August/Virgo.

The Spring Equinox represents the rebirth of the sun. Upon entering Aries, the length of the day begins to grow longer, and the sun seemingly begins to regain its power and glory.

The Autumn Equinox signifies the entrance of the three assaults upon the sun, September/Libra, October/Scorpio, and November/Sagittarius.

From December 21 to March 21, the sun is said to be symbolically in the grave. This period of three months covers the signs of Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces.

The final death blow to the sun is cast on December 21/23 at the Winter Solstice. This is the shortest day of the year, and it is the day when the sun is in its lowest declination in the south.

**Figure 2 - The Sun's Movement on a Sine Wave**

**Dionysus**

The connection between vegetative growth and the sun is undeniable. The myth cycle between vegetation gods and sun gods are so similar that many have categorized them together through the years. Where Persephone is a hybrid, combining elements of both sun and vegetation deities, Dionysus is a Greek god associated with a particular type of plant, the grape vine. Dionysus is a god of fertility and wine. He is the son of Zeus and the mortal woman Semele, a virgin maiden. Zeus was anonymously involved with Semele in a romantic manner. Semele was a virgin and repeatedly declined Zeus’ advances. Each time only increasing his desire for the virgin maiden. During one of their encounters, Semele was impregnated by one of Zeus’ lightning bolts. When Hera, Zeus’ legitimate wife, became enraged about her husband’s infatuation with a mortal woman, Hera convinced Semele to trick Zeus into showing Semele his truest self. Semele, during a sexual romp, made Zeus promise to grant her one wish. Zeus, being a god with great sexual appetite, could not resist the promise. Semele’s wish was to see the unnamed god as he truly was. When Zeus revealed himself to her, Semele was consumed in his glory. Zeus was unable to save Semele, but he saved the
child, Dionysus from death by sowing Dionysus into Zeus’ thigh. When Dionysus had grown enough to be born, Zeus removed the child from his thigh, occurring on December 25. It was this event of being suckled within Zeus’ body that caused Dionysus to become a god. He was the only god with a human mother.

Dionysus’ problem with his father’s wife did not end there. Hera convinced the Titans to hunt and kill Dionysus. The Titans ripped Dionysus apart and casted him to the four winds. Rhea collected his disembodied pieces and returned Dionysus to life on March 25.8 Dionysus is considered by the Greeks to be the god of wine and fertility; however, he is also known to have a dual character. Whereas he is the god of joy and divine ecstasy, he is also the god of rage and madness. The dual character is representative of the effects of wine upon mankind. Dionysus is usually visually represented as holding, wearing, standing near grape vines. The grape vine was considered a strong symbol of resurrection to the ancient Greeks. At the close of harvesting grapes, the vines were cut back harshly to prepare for the winter. Through the winter months, the vines appear to be completely dead with no signs of life at all. When spring arrives, the vines burst forth in vigorous growth in a form of resurrection.

The Phoenix

The phoenix is a symbol of resurrection that is well-known in popular culture today. Perhaps the popularity of the phoenix was resurrected by its inclusion in the Harry Potter series of movies and novels. In Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets, Harry sees Fawkes the Phoenix on a burning day. The bird combusts into flames and is reborn from the ashes. The reader should not, however, consider the phoenix as trivial or simply the fancy of children’s books. The phoenix is, in reality, an ancient symbol of renewal, rebirth and resurrection.

A phoenix in Greek mythology is a large bird of purple and red hues. The bird had a great life-expectancy with legends of phoenixes living between five hundred and fourteen hundred years.9 When the bird began to reach the end of its life, the phoenix recognized its own feebleness and began to prepare for its death. Upon death, the great bird would combust into flames and be consumed. From its ashes, the phoenix would be reborn, and the next generation of bird would rise.10 With little extension from this thought, the reader should be able to see a pattern developing in the cycle of the phoenix. The bird would begin young and vigorous, and after years of success and triumph, it faces its old age, decline into fragility, and demise in a flaming combustion only to be revived into a state of youth from its own ashes over and over in an endless cycle.

It was Saint Clement of Rome, also known as Pope Clement I, who is credited with most famously applying the mythology of the phoenix with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.11 Clement is said to have been Bishop of Rome from 92 to 99 AD.12 Throughout the ages, there have been a number of writings that were attributed to Clement; however, modern scholars currently recognize only one as being authentically written by Clement. This is The Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians. The letter was written in response to the Corinthian Christian Church removing a number of bishops, pastors, or elders from the ruling body of the church. Clement, in his epistle, calls for the church to restore the men to their offices and to repent of their disrespect.

In chapter 25 of this epistle, Clement gives an account of the life, death, and resurrection of the Phoenix. In his account, the bird, when approaching its own death, builds a nest of frankincense, myrrh, and other spices. The bird dies in this nest, and from a worm eating upon the dead carcass, the rebirth of the Phoenix occurs.13 Clement’s account tells of the mystical bird’s flight from Arabia to Egypt and finally to the city of Heliopolis.
It is interesting here to give a brief exploration of Heliopolis. First, Heliopolis is one of the oldest cities in ancient Egypt. The city’s name literally means “City of the Sun” and was given by the Greeks. Previously, it was known as the “House of Ra”. Today, it is located in the suburb area of Cairo, called Ayn Shams, meaning “Well of the Sun”. It is located in the northeast corner of Cairo. Heliopolis was the cult center for Ra. Most Egyptian gods originated as local deities with a cult center in a single town. Heliopolis was this center for the Sun god. It is interesting that Clement illustrated clearly the Phoenix traveled to the City of the Sun.

In Chapter 26, Clement assures the Corinthian Church, if God can raise the Phoenix from the dead through a worm, surely, the Christians in that city should have no wonder or doubt that God is able to raise up man in a glorious resurrection. Following the popularity of Clement’s Epistle, the Phoenix became a common early Christian symbol for both Christ and the resurrection of the dead.

Jesus

There is no questioning that Christ is a resurrection god. The New Testament clearly relates the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The question concerning the story of Christ and his classification as a resurrection god is more debatable when considering whether he is classified as a sun god. There are elements of modern Christianity which point to such a classification. Jesus had twelve apostles. Each apostle is representative of certain human characteristics observable through the nature of man. Could these twelve represent the twelve signs of the zodiac? Within Christian churches across the world, four of Jesus’ evangelists are correlated to four major zodiac signs, man, lion, ox, and eagle—these being Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John respectively. Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ on the Sunday following the first full moon after the Vernal Equinox. The celebration of his death is the preceding Friday. This is of interest for a number of reasons. First, the Vernal Equinox marks the resurrection of the sun. Second, it does not coincide with the scriptural statements of Christ being in the grave for three days and three nights as Jonah was in the belly of the fish. So, it must have more of a relationship with timing of the solar and lunar calendars than historic accuracy. It might also be interesting to recall the sun is said to be slain and entombed for the three months following the Hibernal Solstice. How long was Christ in the grave? Three days.

There are also correlations between the three attacks on the sun in the autumn and Christ’s trials before crucifixion. Christ faced three ecclesiastical trials and three sectarian trials. Ecclesiastically, Christ was tried by Annas, the former high priest, Caiaphas, the current high priest, and thirdly by the Sanhedrin. The three sectarian or worldly trials were before Pilate, sent to Herod, and finally back to Pilate. This represents three attacks on Christ as a spiritual leader and three attacks on Christ the worldly leader.

In the opening verses of the Gospel of John, Christ is referred to as the light.

John 1 – King James Version (KJV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 The same was in the beginning with God.
3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

On an obscure reference, why was Jesus’ birth set by the Catholic Church on December 25? This question, which has been previously alluded, is one that is shrouded with debate and theological
conjecture. The mostly commonly cited purpose of establishing December 25 as the birthday of Christ is the acclimation of pagan worshipers into the Christian fold. Sol Invictus was a Roman sun god and the patron saint of soldiers. The cult and god was popular during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. The first recorded occurrence of a Christian observance of Christ’s birth was in the Church at Rome in 336. The worship of Sol Invictus included a feast day on December 25, Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, being translated as birthday of the unconquered sun. This view for the reasoning of setting Christ’s birth on December 25 was reportedly first asserted by Bishop Jacob Bar-Salibi of the Syrian Christ church. In the 12th Century, he penned the following in the margin of a manuscript: “It was a custom of the Pagans to celebrate on the same 25 December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and revelries the Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that the Christians had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnized on that day.”

Another explanation of why December 25 was selected to celebrate the birth of Jesus is even more directly aligned to traditional sun worship. As afore stated, the spring equinox is noted as a time of rebirth for the sun and most sun deities; however, we see Jesus being born at the winter equinox, a time of death and surrender for the sun. How is this a parallel for sun worship? The traditional length of human gestation is considered to be roughly nine months. If Christ was born around the date of the winter solstice, he would have been conceived at or around the date of the spring equinox, March 21-25. This means that Jesus’ mother, Mary, experienced the overshadowing of God and conceived her divine son at the calendar date that signifies the revitalization of the sun.

This short and brief examination of Christ is not decisive evidence that Christ or the modern worship of him is influenced by sun worship, but it is important to consider and keep in mind as the next example of resurrection is given.

**Hiram Abiff**

Hiram Abiff is a character within Freemasonry that is fictional. The legend has elements rooted within Judeo-Christian scripture, but the character himself and his experiences as related within the Craft are solely a means to impart knowledge and understanding. The historical Hiram is mentioned in the seventh chapter of I Kings and the second Chapter of II Chronicles. Accordingly, Hiram Abiff was a craftsman in brass called for by Solomon to cast and work the two brazen pillars for the temple. He was a son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre who was also a worker in brass. All other conjectures of the character, history, or story of Hiram are solely literary and connected to the Craft itself.

According to Masonic Legend, King Solomon made arrangements with King Hiram of Tyre to provide lumber for the construction of God’s Temple. Solomon also sent for Hiram Abiff from Tyre to superintend the construction of the Temple. The three men compacted together to withhold the word of a Master Mason from the workmen until the construction of the Temple was completed and all three were present and in agreement. The word would have allowed the workmen to travel to foreign lands and earn a Master’s wages. It was prudent for Solomon and the two Hiram to withhold the word in order to assure enough labor to complete the project. A group of fifteen fellow craft workmen became disgruntled by the length of time it was taking to complete the temple and desired to obtain the word of a Master Mason so they could acquire more wages for their work. Through this disgruntled band, a plan was devised to extort the word from Hiram Abiff, their superintendent. Of the fifteen, only three decided to carry the sinister plan to fruition.
These three workmen conspired to harass Hiram Abiff and acquire to word of a Master Mason at any cost. In turn, the three devious fellow crafts assault Hiram Abiff at the South, West, and East gates of the Temple. Blows were administered to Hiram’s throat, chest, and head, and each accosted demands of Hiram the word of a Master Workman with no avail. Hiram Abiff, being a man of solid character, refuses to give the word even at the peril of his own life. The final assailant, becoming frustrated with Hiram Abiff’s refusal to concur with his demands, strikes a fatal blow to Hiram’s head, and the original secret word of a Master Mason is lost forever.

The three malefactors hide the body and attempt to flee for their lives. The minute details of their troubles in escape are known to all true Masons. In the meantime, it becomes apparent that foul play had met the superintendent of the work. The twelve fellow crafts who originally conspired with the three confess their anguishing story of woe before King Solomon. Solomon instructs the twelve to divide into four equal bands, each traveling in separate cardinal directions, to search for the criminals. The party traveling in a Westerly direction locate the criminals and the body of Hiram Abiff marked by an evergreen shrub.

The untimely death of Hiram Abiff created a seemingly impossible problem. Solomon and King Hiram had entered into agreement with Hiram Abiff not to give the word of a Master Mason without all three being present. Now one of the three required in order to impart the needed knowledge was expired. A plan was devised to create a new word and to raise the body of Hiram Abiff from its hastily prepared and unprofitable burial place so more appropriate funeral arrangement could be made for him. At the grave of Hiram Abiff, a new word is instituted and the body is exhumed and reburied with the appropriate pomp and circumstance. In short, that is the legend of Hiram Abiff as related in Masonic Lore.

Within the written record of the legend what is observed? There is a compact between three powerful men, a hidden secret that is lost, a conspiracy carried about by three men, a death of one of the three compacted men, a search made by four bands of three men, a body is exhumed from a grave, a body is buried three times, and a substitute secret is given. It may be said that this does not seem like a resurrection story. The body is exhumed and reburied, but no resurrection. Hiram Abiff is killed, but life is not returned to him. There may not seem to be an element of resurrection within the legend, but the ritual that reenacts the legend adds an additional layer. Within the ritual itself, the candidate portraying Hiram Abiff is killed and buried. When his body is exhumed, the candidate, portraying Hiram Abiff, is an active participant not a dead one. In most jurisdictions, a discourse follows the raising of Hiram Abiff’s body on the topic of resurrection. So, even though the written legend leads a reader to believe the body is only exhumed, the practice and imparted knowledge is one of a resurrection of what was once dead! There are actually two resurrections, the first is Hiram Abiff himself and the second is the word of a Master Mason.

Let us look at or overlay an examination of the solar events over the occurrences of the afore described story. We begin with Hiram Abiff in the prime of his life. Hiram is strong and the superintendent of the work on God’s House. It may be suggested here that Hiram represents the sun in its power, the solar season we know as summer. He is then accosted by three ruffians, representing September, October, and November. Hiram is buried or concealed three times (once in the rubbish of the temple, once on the hill overlooking the temple, and once by Solomon in an appropriate location). These three burials align with the darkness of December, January, and February. The resurrection of the body is attempted three times (Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason). The resurrection attempts align with March, April, and May.

Space and time does not allow for a more detailed or exhaustive exploration of these ideas, but it
is hoped that the brief narrative above will be sufficient to spawn investigation and contemplation by the reader.

**Conclusion**

This work is not written to lessen the deification of any religious icon. It is only to illustrate the commonality of views and its connection with the solar patterns of nature. It may be suggested that the correlations suggested in this work should actually serve as a reinforcement of the power and splendor of the Great Artificer of the Universe and His power over all things.
Works Cited


http://books.google.com/books?id=jwIVAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA160&dq=the+resurrection+phoenix&hl=en&sa=X&ei=1CsKVIJWYB8iWgwT98oHg&ved=0CCsQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=the%20resurrection%20phoenix&f=false.


3 (Pike 1965, 220)

4 The Tropic of Cancer is so called due to the Zodiac sign of Cancer taking prominence on the Estival Solstice.


6 (Brown 2012)

7 (Brown 2012)

8 (Otto 1965)

9 (Lundy 1976)

10 (Broek n.d.)

11 (Broek n.d.)

12 (Herron 2010)

13 Chapter 25 – “Let us consider that wonderful sign [of the resurrection] which takes place in Eastern lands, that is, in Arabia and the countries round about. There is a certain bird which is called a phoenix. This is the only one of its kind, and lives five hundred years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense, and myrrh, and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then, when it has acquired strength, it takes up that nest in which are the bones of its parent, and bearing these it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to the city called Heliopolis. And, in open day, flying in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the sun, and having done this, hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the registers of the dates, and find that it has returned exactly as the five hundredth year was completed.”

14 (Lewis 2009)

15 (Breed 1948)

16 (Church of England Liturgical Commission 1991) (Roll 1995, 88)

17 (MacMullen 1997, 155)
WHAT DO THE SQUARE AND COMPASSES REALLY MEAN?

By
Bro. Thomas Patrick Witkowski

PREFACE

In March 1999, in a Blue Lodge not far from the banks of the Pend Oreille River in Washington, Brethren raised me to the sublime Degree of Master Mason. My mentors, Ill. MWB Bob Van Zee, 33°, PGM, and Ill. WB Ted Shrum, 33°, PM, made it clear that “my journey, on the upward pathway to Light, was just beginning.” They knew something else. They also knew that I was going to be no stranger to seeking the origin and meaning of the ceremonies and litanies we practice and profess at our altars and within our Lodges. They were right! I’m forever grateful for their encouragement and brotherly love.

Although our Order’s precise beginning remains obscure, most Masonic scholars concede the antiquity of Freemasonry, and look upon our Fraternity of Brethren as the custodian of great and sublime truths. I believe that is certainly true, because they are leading me upward and onward to a higher and better condition. I also believe we should educate one another, be able to explain our ceremonies, trace them to their primitive sources, and have knowledge of our history and antiquity. However, I ask none of you to believe that this tract is complete or without errors. I hope that you will find it to be
provocative, and an aid in enhancing your knowledge of a part of the “rights, light, and benefits” of our gentle Craft.

This tract is neither systematic nor profound. It is pure “Personal Symbolism”, my interpretation as a Freemason, dictated by my conscience and values; a personal view, which your thinking and beliefs may accept or reject. The first iteration of this essay appeared in 1999, in the website I designed and launched for Newport Lodge No. 144. www.newportlodge.org In June of this year, excerpts of the Web page appeared in the 2004 Diary published by the Provincial Grand Lodge South Wales Eastern Division, under the direction of RWB Hywel Davies, Provincial Grand Master.

WHAT DO THE SQUARE AND COMPASSES REALLY MEAN?

When the “grinders cease,” and the “golden bowl” is finally broken, dust returns to the earth as it was, and our spirits return to the Supreme Architect of the Universe. So, while we are on earth, toiling away with only childlike clarity, often blinded by experience, how do we understand our lives? Where are our beacons? How do we know our actions are correct? In our Gentle Craft, the Great Lights of Masonry, guiding lights for centuries, help steer Fellows and Brethren in Lodges around the world.

In most Lodges in America, the Holy Bible spreads open upon the Altar of Masonry, and upon the Holy Bible rest the Square and Compasses. In other Lodges around the world, the Square and Compasses may rest upon the Upanishads or other Books of Sacred
Law. The Grand Lodge in Israel, for example, places three volumes of the Sacred Law on its Altars: the Tanach (Hebrew Bible), the New Testament, and the Koran. Universally, the Great Lights of Masonry are symbols of discovery, honor and atonement, and teach us to walk in the Light of Truth, obey the Law of Virtuousness, and thereby overcome the baneful handcuffs of our earthly weaknesses.

According to Robert Freke Gould, “In the first ages of the world, mutual converse was upheld by a mixed discourse of words and actions; hence came the Eastern phrase voice of the sign; and in use and custom, as in most other affairs of life, man kept improving what had risen of necessity into ornament.” Because the first learning of the world consisted chiefly of symbols, the Square and Compasses, ancient and ubiquitous symbols of Operative Masonry, appear in allegorical and symbolic friezes, adorn obelisks, frescos, facades, grace headstones atop graves, and become conspicuously visible in canvas paintings. By tradition, a stonecutter’s square represented earth, while the compasses (also compass) symbolized the arc of heaven. Today, by convention and through the passage of time, most everyone recognizes the Square and Compasses as emblems of Freemasonry.

The Square is an implement and symbol originating in Egypt, whose form is suggested by the division of a circle into four equal parts by lines drawn at right angles to each other……it was a symbol of land measure and also of justice.” George Oliver, The Historical Landmarks of Freemasonry
For architects, stone-cutters, and builders, the square was a simple tool used for testing the accuracy of angles, and the precision with which apprentice masons cut stones. Since the square ensured that angles were suitable, it essentially became a pictogram for accuracy, integrity, and decorum. Just as squared stones must fit firmly together to make a sound building, Egyptian High Priests taught that man’s acts and thoughts should build an unyielding structure of Character. For them, the Square was a symbol of morality, truthfulness, and honesty to guide adepts, regents, and pharaohs alike to square their actions with Virtue. In the Kingdoms of the Nile, to ‘act upon the square' meant to act honestly.

The compasses allowed designers and craftsmen to represent a circle about a given centre point. The name of the instrument comes from the Old French compasser, thence through the Middle English compas, both meaning “to measure” and also proper proportion.” This also is the derivation of the old expression “to compass about,” which means “to encircle” or “to circumscribe” an area. The compasses represent a circle, which is a symbol of the all-embracing principle of Divine manifestation that is perfect and entire, including everything and wanting nothing, having neither beginning nor ending, timeless and absolute. The Compasses directs Masons to be well rounded, and to comport ourselves within due bounds through watchfulness and restraint. The Compasses evinces our duty to be truthful to ourselves, and is a symbol of control, skill, and knowledge. That which is harmful or unworthy should remain outside the circle of the Compasses. We read in Proverbs 8:27-29:

When He established the heavens I was there,
when He set a compass on the face of the deep,
when He made firm the skies above,
when He established the fountains of the deep,
when He assigned the sea to its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when He marked out the foundations of the earth.

Because the Square and Compass are universal symbols of Freemasonry, a thousand passionate symbolists have read as many meanings into both working tools. However, both symbols are much older than Freemasonry. Socrates opined ‘that human nature is universal because when men think around a problem, and think deeply, they disclose a common nature and a common system of truth.” In 1876, Dr. Albert G. Mackey suggested that ‘the analogies of Freemasonry might be attributed to the coincidence of a natural process of human thought, common to all minds, and showing it’s outgrowth in symbolic forms.” Can we glimpse the insight of Socrates and Mackey as we track how man may have mixed thought and worship with his work and the materials he used? Let’s begin by looking at additional “Masonic” imagery and emblems in the Bible:

Exodus, 20:25 – ‘If you build altars from stones, use only uncut stones.
Do not chip or shape the stones with a tool, for that would make them unfit for holy use.”
Exodus, 27:1 – “And thou shalt build an altar… [that] shall be four square.”
Exodus, 28:15 – “And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work;… foursquare it shall be.”

Deuteronomy, 27:5-6 – “Then build an altar …. using natural stones.

Do not shape the stone with an iron tool.”

1 Samuel, 2:8 – “For all the earth is the Lord’s, and he has set the world in order.”

Job, 26:7 – “God stretches the northern sky over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.”

Isaiah, 28:16-17 – “Behold I lay in Zion a foundation stone, a tried stone,

a precious cornerstone, a true foundation. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet…”

Now, let us look to the East…. a little further to the East than Solomon’s Temple.

Chinese philosophers, Confucius (Kongfuzi – K’ung Fu-tzu) 500 B.C. and Mencius (Menfuzi – M’en Fu-tzu) 300 B.C., taught that man would be in harmony with the universe if he behaved with righteousness and restraint - ren (humanity), li (propriety), and yi (rightness) - and both wrote in terms readily familiar to intelligent Masons, although there is no evidence of anything like Freemasonry existing in China that long ago:

“Man should apply the square and compasses morally to their lives and the level and marking lines if they would walk in the
straight and even parts of wisdom and keep themselves in the bounds of honor.”

“A master mason, in teaching apprentices, makes use of the compasses and the square. You who are engaged in the pursuit of wisdom must also make use of the compasses and square.”

“You officers of the Government, apply the Compasses.”

Do these ancient admonitions and their symbols hold the same meaning for us today? Should they?

As far as I know, there is no perfect square in Nature. Only man, toiling with materials provided by Nature, makes a Square: Right angles cased by intersecting lines dividing a circle. Can we suppose that man must work with the GAOTU to secure the bounty he bestows upon His creatures? Many scholars say “Yes!” and believe that is precisely the reason man placed squared objects he could create with his hands into the many elements and rites of his worship. The Stone of Memnon in Egypt, the “Cut Cube” and the “Squared Stone” in rituals for Hercules, Mercury, Apollo, and Neptune; the rituals of the nomads of the Levant, and the sea farers in Scandinavia have “Black Stones.” Is this the beginning of architectural symbolism?

Operative freemasons employed three types of squares: the square gauge, the try square, and the gallows square. They applied the square gauge to test a cubic ashlar or the cross section of a running stone. The try square has two arms of equal length that include an angle of 90° and tests, or “tries,” the angle between the two faces of a stone
along the axis where they meet, to ensure that they subtend a right angle. Masons used the gallows square to set out right angles, and it has two arms of unequal length that include an angle of 90°. Masters calibrated both arms on the inside and outside edges to facilitate measuring dimensions when scribing stones for cutting. These craftsmen also administered the gallows square to set out column bases, wall recesses, and other details of structures. The size of gallows squares wielded in Operative lodges were in the ratio of 2:3 and having 12”x18” arms, a general purpose square in the ratio of 3:4 called a Pythagorean square and having 18”x24” arms, and a large square in the ratio of 2:3 and having 24”x36” arms, which the builders handled to check corners and other wall intersections both internally and externally.

Some researchers believe the gallows square, with arms in the 3:4, or Pythagorean ratio, is the traditional emblem of the Master, selected by Operative freemasons from time immemorial. Some jurisdictions still make the gallows square the Master's emblem today.

As the Master used the gallows square to set out the work, it is the most appropriate square to use as the emblem of the Master's office. However, during the 1830s, Euclid's 47th Proposition formed the design of the Past Master's jewel in England, and the Speculative Master's emblem changed to a try square. Was this perhaps a result of our Speculative passion for symmetry?

Because of its ancient roots and universal use, symbolism of the Square can be easily found outside of our Order, and such symbolism graces colloquial usage and idioms around the globe:
Square – Meaning honest and equitable as in “square dealing” or “square deal”

“Play upon the square” – Is to play honestly

In the *Canterbury Tales* (1386) we find Masonic language:

“Now Thomas, Leve brothere, lef thyne ire; Thou shalt me finde as just – as is the squyre.”

William Shakespeare’s popularity and income depended upon the patronage of the wealthy as well as the “unwashed.” In *Anthony and Cleopatra* we find writing that needed to be easily understood by the Elizabethan audiences:

My Octavia,
Read not my blemishes in the world’s report:
I have not kept my square, but that to come
Shall be my rule

In 1617, Edmund Spenser, *In the Faerie Queene* painted the picture for the reader’s mind about the Castle of Temperance in these Masonic forms:

The frame thereof seem’d partly circulare
And part triangulare; O worke diuine!
Those two the first & last proportions are.
The on imperfect, mortall, foeminine;
The other immortall, perfect and masculine;
And twixt them both quadrant was the base.
Proportion’d equally in seauen and nine;
Nine was the circle set in heauens place
All which compacted, made a goodly Diapase.
In Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1665) we read of the Supreme Geometer, and how he marks the boundaries of the universe:

> Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand
> He took the golden compasses, prepared
> In God’s eternal store, to circumscribe
> This universe, and all created things.

In 1830, in Limerick, Ireland, engineers demolishing Baal’s Bridge found a brass mason’s square buried in the northeast corner of the foundation, which had the following inscription:

> I. WILL STRIUE. TO. LIUE.--WITH. LOUE. & CARE.--UPON.
> THE LEUL.--BY. THE. SQUARE -1507

> “I will strive to live, with love and care, upon the level by the square – 1507”

In the corner of the Baal Bridge Square, on both sides, we find another inscription – a heart. There are also holes punched into the extreme end of each arm. The Baal Bridge Square arms, forming the right angle, are only four inches in length. While the Baal Bridge Square may well have served as an “Operative” tool, its inscriptions form a conjectural, though suggestive, question about the probability that this early 16th century, or late 15th century, instrument might have been worn around the neck of a “Speculative” Mason, symbolizing the idea of living on the level and by the square borrowed from the Operative Brethren of former times.