

THE MASONIC RELATIONSHIP TO SYMBOLISM

INTRODUCTION

This piece of Architecture is intended to suggest to each brother that the system of Masonry is far more than a means of making good men better. It is a spiritual path that each brother is on. The path of Masonry is designed to fulfill the greatest desire of every pilgrim. Every Mason, by his own declaration desires to be brought from darkness to light. After being brought to Masonic light and through a series of preparations and progressive degrees, the brother is brought symbolically to greater stages of **LIGHT**. Receiving graded stages of light lie at the very center of the Masonic quest and Masonic revelation. The subject of light and the different conditions in which it exist is a whole subject within itself. The degrees of the Blue Lodge symbolically allude to this phenomenon.

The statements made in this piece of architecture are based on the basic presentations given during our ceremonials and lectures. The degrees and lectures are filled with opportunities to ask questions and explore the secrets of Masonry. If a brother is in earnest then he will ask questions at every stage along his path for he must, if he seeks revelation, inquire about the way ahead. if The following is just a preliminary approach to the examination of the content presented to the candidate and attempts to understand what it actually means to be made aware of the various stages of the Masonic path.

As a candidate is being prepared to be made a Mason he is asked several questions to assure the lodge of his motives. The basic questions deal with the following points.

Do you seriously declare, upon your honor, that unbiased by the improper solicitation of friends, and uninfluenced by mercenary motives, you freely and voluntarily offer yourself a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry?

In this question the motives are examined and the candidate is informed that it is the **MYSTERIES** of Masonry that he is a candidate for. Have each of us taken the time to explore the mysteries of Masonry? How do we move forward when there are so many voices informing us that Masonry has no real mysteries or secrets?

Do you upon your honor seriously declare that you are prompted to solicit the privileges of Masonry by a favorable opinion conceived of the institution and a desire of knowledge, and a sincere wish of being serviceable to your fellow creatures?

In this question motives are once again examined. The candidate is also informed that there are privileges of Masonry and that the primary motive here is to obtain knowledge and enter into the service of his fellow creatures.

Do you seriously declare, upon your honor, that you will cheerfully conform to all the ancient usages and established customs of the Fraternity?

Here the candidate is questioned about his ability to **CONFORM** to usages and customs. Masonry is not a free for all whereby one can make innovations and change the laws and procedures anent to initiation. These reasons for conformity are given in some of the later statements presented to the candidate in the preparation room or chamber of reflection. Before attending to these statements let us examine the essential points presented in the questions.

These essential points are:

- That he must offer himself voluntarily to the mysteries of Masonry
- That the candidate seeks the Privileges of Masonry
- That the candidate seeks knowledge and to be serviceable to his fellow creatures
- That he will conform to the ancient usages and customs of the Fraternity

Things happen quickly in these ceremonies and there is little time for the candidate to reflect, grasp, and understand the manifold object lessons presented to him as early on as in the preparation room. These preliminary questions presented before admission into the Temple lie at the core of Masonic Philosophy and training.

After the series of questions the candidate is informed that he is about to go through ceremonies that are of great importance and solemnity. He is further informed that Masonry is:

- A beautiful system of Morality
- Veiled in allegory
- Illustrated by symbols.

He is further informed that the ceremonies and instruction are given through the use of:

- Moral Instruction
- Types of symbols
- Allegorical figures.

He is further told that these instructions are designed to impress upon the mind wise and serious truths and that they have come down to us through a succession of ages.

The examination of the points presented to the candidate reveals the amazing journey that lies ahead. The journey consists of receiving more light as one makes progress in the mysteries of Masonry through the study of the arts and sciences thus gaining knowledge that renders him eligible to be serviceable to his fellow creatures. The means by which this process unfolds is through a series of allegorical trainings revealed through the medium of symbols.

Masonic and Symbolism

We are told that Masonry makes good men better. This statement is true enough as far as it goes. This however does not do justice to the deeper transformations that are possible through the Masonic training should an individual truly submit himself to all the indications presented in the several Masonic lectures.

From the very beginning of our Masonic studies we are presented with symbols. The number and types of Masonic symbols are manifold. What is it that makes symbolism so important in Masonry and what course of action should we take relative to understanding the manifold symbols presented in Masonry?

Before taking on the subject of Masonic symbolism let us examine two specific definitions, the definition of symbols or a symbol, and the definition of Masonry.

There are several definitions of the word symbol. We may find, depending on the context upon which a symbol is being employed, that it may have an arbitrary meaning established by the agreement of a particular culture. For example when we see a stop sign, or a green light we recognize these symbols as representing the need to stop or proceed upon our way. These two symbols have a meaning employed by convention. If we did not all agree that a stop sign meant stop it would be ineffective as a symbol not to mention the loss of the rules of the road.

We can therefore say that a symbol is a sign. Because a symbol is perceived by the senses we can also say that a symbol is a sensible sign.

Symbols are employed in our use of Grammar. The symbolism of letters is employed to arrange words that give meaning to our thoughts; not only to ourselves but to those we wish to communicate with. Because a particular culture agrees upon the letters of an alphabet, and establishes grammatical rules of usage, a particular people can communicate through the employment of a symbol system. In fact symbols are the means by which we communicate with each other whether it is through the written word, through a mathematical formula, a piece of music, or the Mendeleev Periodic Chart of the Elements. Some symbol systems are specific to a particular people such as the English or Japanese language. The symbols of each of these languages are different and consequently require training in understanding the series of sensible signs that are organized according to convention. The key word in the above sentence is training. What most individuals lack, and this can certainly be said of Masonry, is that most members lack training in the proper use of symbols whether it be grammatical, musical, or the actual interpretation of symbols that convey concepts that exist in the world of ideas. The following are three different alphabets the Latin style, Hebrew and Greek. Unless one is trained in the meaning of each of these symbolic forms called letters communication will be most difficult.

LETTERS

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

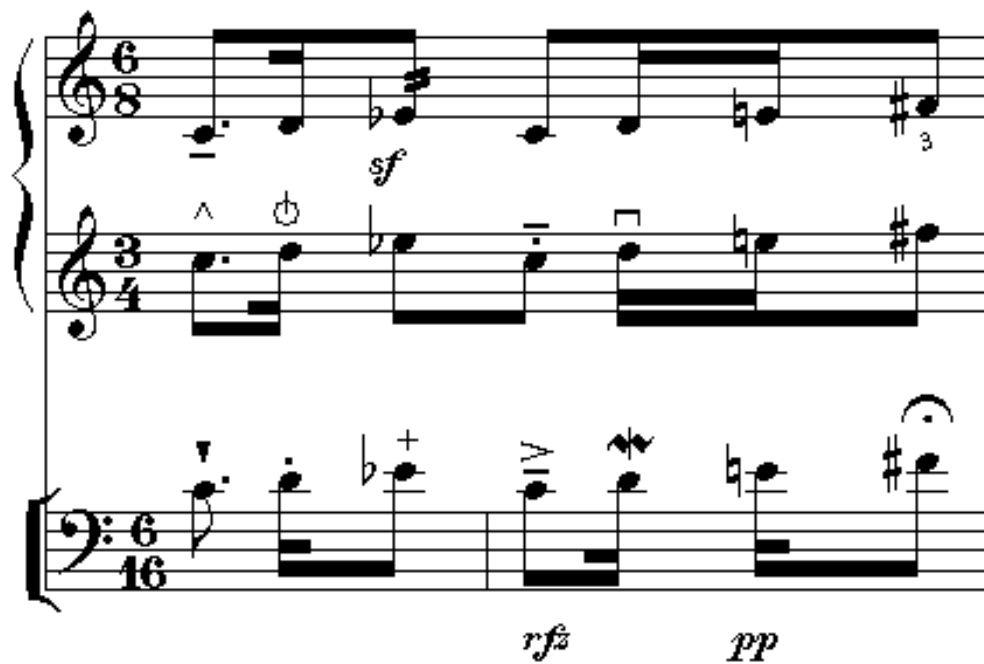
תשרקצפעסנמלכ'יטחזזהדגבא

ΑΒΧΔΕΦΓΗΙΛΜΝΟΠΘΡΣΤΥςΩΞΨΖ

αβχδεφγηιφκλμνοπθρστυωξψζ

Music and numbers on the other hand can be understood by individuals who speak different languages from their contemporaries. A musician, independent of his language is enabled to play in a symphony orchestra with others who speak other languages because he understands the common symbol system of music. The same is true for Mathematicians, chemists and other types of scientific languages.

MUSICAL NOTATION



NUMBER

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

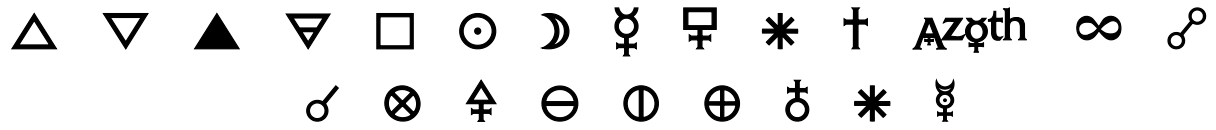
I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X XX XXX XL L
LX LXX LXXX XC C D D DC DCC DCCC CM M

ת ש ר ק צ פ ע ס נ מ ל ב י ט ח ז ו ה ד ג ב א

CHEMESTRY

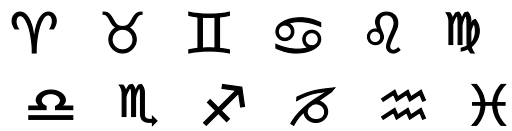
Group → ↓ Period	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1	1 H																	2 He
2	3 Li	4 Be											5 B	6 C	7 N	8 O	9 F	10 Ne
3	11 Na	12 Mg											13 Al	14 Si	15 P	16 S	17 Cl	18 Ar
4	19 K	20 Ca	21 Sc	22 Ti	23 V	24 Cr	25 Mn	26 Fe	27 Co	28 Ni	29 Cu	30 Zn	31 Ga	32 Ge	33 As	34 Se	35 Br	36 Kr
5	37 Rb	38 Sr	39 Y	40 Zr	41 Nb	42 Mo	43 Tc	44 Ru	45 Rh	46 Pd	47 Ag	48 Cd	49 In	50 Sn	51 Sb	52 Te	53 I	54 Xe
6	55 Cs	56 Ba		72 Hf	73 Ta	74 W	75 Re	76 Os	77 Ir	78 Pt	79 Au	80 Hg	81 Tl	82 Pb	83 Bi	84 Po	85 At	86 Rn
7	87 Fr	88 Ra		104 Rf	105 Db	106 Sg	107 Bh	108 Hs	109 Mt	110 Ds	111 Rg	112 Cn	113 Nh	114 Fl	115 Mc	116 Lv	117 Ts	118 Og
Lanthanides			57 La	58 Ce	59 Pr	60 Nd	61 Pm	62 Sm	63 Eu	64 Gd	65 Tb	66 Dy	67 Ho	68 Er	69 Tm	70 Yb	71 Lu	
Actinides			89 Ac	90 Th	91 Pa	92 U	93 Np	94 Pu	95 Am	96 Cm	97 Bk	98 Cf	99 Es	100 Fm	101 Md	102 No	103 Lr	

ALCHEMY



ASTROLOGY

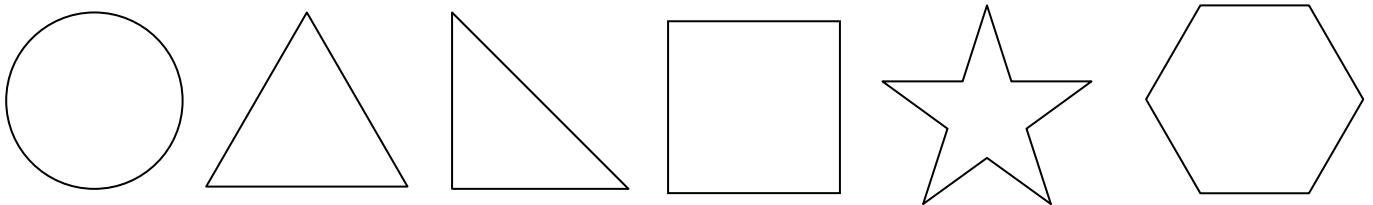
Zodiacal Signs



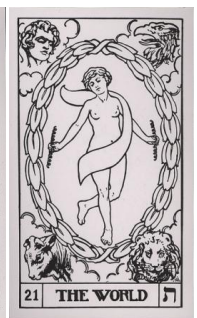
Planets



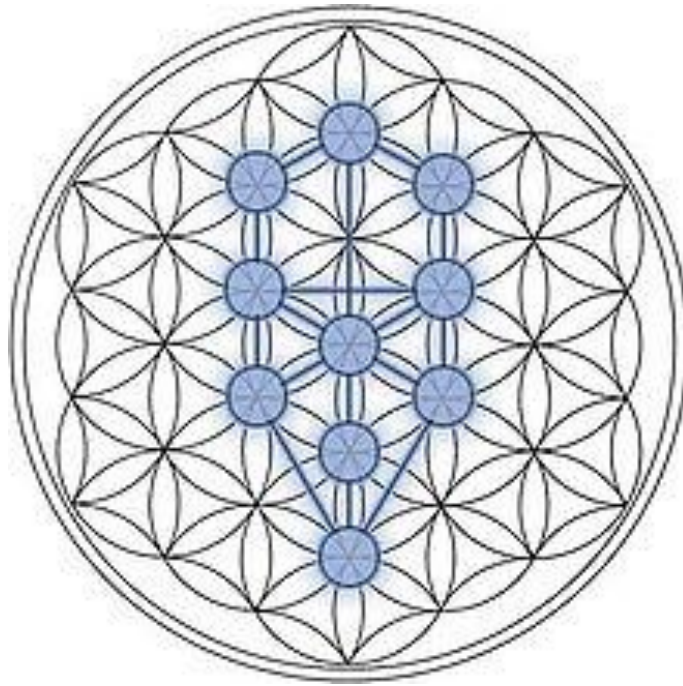
GEOMETRY



THE TAROT TABLEAU



Kabala



As you can see there are many specialized symbol systems. Each of these systems is designed to communicate to those who understand the system. Let it suffice to say that symbols are a means of communicating from one consciousness to another whether it be through grammar, music, arithmetic, or geometry, and a myriad of other systems we are communicating by means of our consciousness. The mode of consciousness that is employed in many of these systems is self-conscious. Two self-conscious individuals communicate to each other via symbol systems of convention.

There are however other types of symbols that communicate from one consciousness to another that are not symbols of convention. No matter where one is, if you see or smell smoke it is a symbol or indication of fire. Clouds indicate rain or wind tears can communicate sadness and smiles joy. These symbols are not symbols of convention but are derived from nature.

There is a third class of symbols that are not necessarily derived by nature or by convention but may have a connection to either, both, or neither. These are symbols that are designed to communicate from one consciousness to another; however the mode of consciousness is not self-conscious but sub-conscious. These types of symbols and symbol systems evoke something from our very core that either instructs, reveals, causes identification with something of a higher order, or purifies those aspects of ourselves that stand in the way of our perfection. It is here that symbols enter into the realm of Masonry and Masonry into the realm of symbolism. It is here that Masonry goes beyond moral rectitude and conduct and begins to identify with the spiritual

and immortal part of the individual Mason and brings out his divine nature. In short some symbols particularly Masonic symbols are a means of communicating with the mind of deity or by whatever name is most congenial to a particular brother.

From a Masonic point of view, a symbol is the outer and visible form of the inner spiritual reality, and when facility in discovering the reality behind any specific form of the symbol has been gained, that very fact will indicate the awakening of the intuition of the individual brother. Does this make a good man better? It does so in a way that is transcendent to the concept of moral rectitude. It bring one into a sphere of identification with the point within the circle that exists within every Mason, that point that transmits the divine impulse that creates identification with that point.

From the Masonic point of view and in the quest for more light we can say that the purpose behind the study of symbols is to awaken the intuition. The intuition is rarely examined in the context of Masonry. Yet the teachings given in our several Masonic lectures are always alluding to something greater than the outward form of the ceremony can convey or confer by itself. Thus when we speak of making good men better we are not just eluding to a moral rectitude and conduct. Moral rectitude of conduct are essential however they must eventually become such an automatic part of the everyday response of a Mason's behavior that there is no question or debate about what our moral response would be. This is initially a practice. Eventually this practice demonstrates in thought word and deed, the expression of the three tenants of a Mason's profession, brotherly love, relief of suffering and the cultivation of truth.

If these statements seem to ring true, then proceed upon your way in the developing your deeper understanding of Masonic symbolism. If these seem like difficult ideas to accept perhaps the reader will treat this as a working hypothesis and perform an experiment to determine their validity and thus like the path of geometry make the necessary proofs. In the exercise of one of the three Principle Tenants of a Mason we must always be ready to expand our compass setting to "encompass" a greater awareness of truth or Masonic light even if the present moment causes challenges to our existent frame of reference.

Now that we have examined a general understanding of the nature and classes of symbolism let us turn our attention to the Masonic Institution.

There are several approaches to define Masonry. Some are relatively new and some are ancient. There is one definition that is particularly potent and generally accepted among all Masons. That definition is: ***Masonry is a peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbol.***

In an analysis of this definition there are three questions that should be asked. What is so peculiar about Masonry? What does it mean that Masonry is veiled in allegory? What does it mean that the allegory is revealed by symbol? Let us address the first question.

What is peculiar about Masonry? Masonry is the only institution that has a place for every national heritage, every racial or ethnic group, every political opinion, and every spiritual and religious orientation. The reason for this is that Masonry is principally concerned with three things,

1. The search and cultivation of truth
2. The relief of suffering in the world,
3. The establishing of the brotherhood of man on the physical plane.

A deviation from any one of these three tenants of Masonry should call into question the legitimacy of the Masonic quest of anyone who would call himself a Mason.

Therefore Masonry is peculiar relative to its relationship to any other institution, religious, political, or otherwise. Masonry holds the key for peace and prosperity in the world for all mankind because it is constantly seeking the wider compass setting of truth, relieving suffering in the world and establishing and practicing brotherhood to all.

The second question in our inquiry is what does it mean that Masonry is veiled in allegory?

The various presentations given in our Masonic ceremonials are expressed by means of an allegorical representation.

There are many allegorical presentations given in our Masonic ceremonials such as steps, signs, grips, words, oaths, penalties, historical figures etc. The key to understanding these allegories is by first understanding that every step, sign, grip, word, or anything else presented to our awareness means something else. It is through allegory or the law of correspondence that Masonry offers its teachings. If any Mason insists on interpreting our Masonic ceremonies at face value then he will never have access to the carefully guarded secrets of Masonry, and yes my brothers they are carefully guarded. This rule holds true for the interpretation of the allegorical presentations as well as the landmarks of Masonry. Although this is another subject unto itself, the Landmarks cannot be agreed upon by many of the Grand Lodges because they are only examined from the outer form and not from the angle of Spirit, Soul and Form aspect.

So how does a Mason gain access to the carefully guarded secrets of the fraternity? This is accomplished by answering the third question and applying a practice relative to the symbolic nature of Masonry. What does it mean that the allegory is revealed by symbol?

Here we arrive at the very heart and essence of Masonic revelation relative to the carefully preserved secrets of the craft. One might ask, how can the secrets of Masonry be carefully preserved when you can buy books at the bookstore or download information on the internet that gives everything away relative to our ceremonials? The answer is quite simple. All of the outward symbols are presented allegorically and thus have a further and deeper meaning than what is presented. Most Masons have not received the carefully guarded secrets because they

never look beyond the allegorical presentation. The study and meditation upon symbols teaches us many things, the first of which goes back to the three tenants mentioned earlier.

Before examining the revelation of the allegorical meaning of Masonry through the medium of symbols, it is necessary that we understand a few of things about symbols and how they affect the sub-conscious mind of the individual.

Symbolism has a direct affect on the subconscious mind. It has this affect for the following reason. **The subconscious mind is amenable to suggestion.** There have been many studies relative to the subconscious mind. There are several Psychological practices that use the technique of influencing the subconscious. Hypnotism, Nero-linguistic programming auto suggestion etc are means by which the subconscious mind may be affected. Dr. Carl Jung built his psychological model by examining the world of universal symbols and how they show up in dreams not only in the west but in every culture around the world. There are many schools of thought that teach that the proper use of suggestion assists us to gain control over one's environment.

The key point relative to using symbol systems is to give a proper suggestion to the sub-consciousness of an individual. When a proper suggestion is given then it affects the individual in a positive manner. The converse of this is also true should an improper symbol be used in order to influence one in a negative manner. There have been several attempts to influence certain cultures and nations by the negative use of a symbol.

The second point to make about symbols is that there are three modes or approaches to the study of symbols. For the sake of visualization let us call them the three doors of interpreting a symbol. These three doors are referred to as a door of brass, a door of gold, and an ivory door. The door of brass represents the form aspect of the symbol and is called Exoteric. The golden door is the Conceptual approach to the study of symbols. It deals specifically with the realm of ideas and the idea that lies behind a symbol. The ivory door is the third approach and is called the esoteric understanding of a symbol. The Esoteric approach brings the Mason into the realm of energies and forces and how these affect the world of ideas and the world of form.

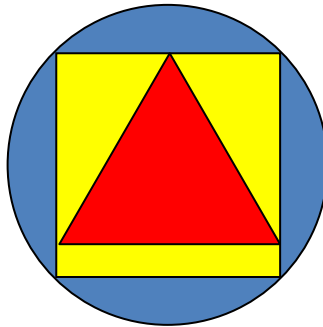
When taking on the study of symbols it is best to keep a journal so those fleeting realizations may be recorded and the student may have ready access to the process at every stage. Do not underestimate the importance of keeping a journal during any of these practices.

Let us begin to study symbols from the exoteric approach.

THE GATE OF BRASS

The exoteric approach deals specifically with the form side of the symbol. This can be called the what you see is what you get mode. This level of interpretation is often the first and last step that a Mason takes in understanding a symbol. This involves the study of its form as a whole, which includes its lines, numerical significance, and its sectional forms such as cubes, triangles, stars and their mutual inter-relation.

Let us take the following symbol and do an exoteric analysis in order to demonstrate the process.



The mode of understanding the symbol from the exoteric point of view is to list the items that appear in the symbol. The following is a list of the apparent forms in this symbol.

A circle

A square

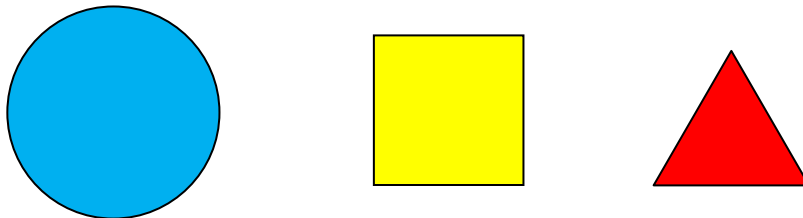
An equilateral triangle

The square is within the circle

The triangle within the square and circle

If there are any colors in the symbol they should be noted as well.

If we were to section off the symbol into its constituent parts we would do the following:



We can also indicate that the circle contains each of the other two forms. To continue this exercise we could identify the circumference of the circle, the dimensions of the square, and the length of the lines of the equilateral triangle. There may be a few more points that could be covered but the basic idea is to identify the form of the symbol so that the student may recall the

form to the mind's eye at will. This exercise also assists the Mason in examining parts and wholes. This explains that there is a whole existent that makes up the entire symbol and at the same time the same symbol is made up of parts that together form a beautiful perfect and complete whole.

This is not a difficult process yet if we take the time to observe a symbol in all of its details we begin to train the mind in the process of observation. This type of observation develops our ability in recognizing symbols all around us and begins the process, as Dr. Carl Jung called it, "living the symbolic life."

As we have now entered into a preliminary understanding of the form side of the symbol let us move on to the next level of interpretation.

THE GOLDEN DOOR

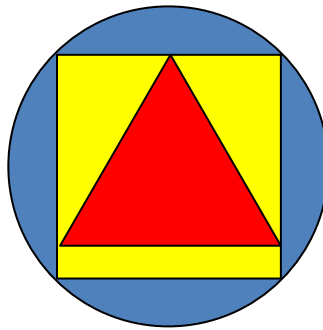
Conceptually this involves examining the symbol for its underlying idea. This idea may be indicated by the name of a symbol if it has one. The underlying idea is that the symbols meaning emerges in the consciousness of the Mason. That idea is enhanced through the medium and process of meditation. Here my brothers we take a major step in entering the realm of the carefully guarded secrets of Masonry

While entering into the idea of the symbol, you should, bear in mind that the idea connotes the higher or abstract intent of the symbol. The meaning of the symbol is that intent expressed in terms of the concrete mind. During this phase of the study of symbols, there may well be some phenomenon that arises in the emotional nature of the brother. Watch your dreams carefully and record them in your journal. There is no one interpretation of a symbol. The individual brother may respond or even react differently to the meaning and idea behind a symbol. Each Mason has different sub-conscious memory patterns and consequently may evoke some aspect of knowledge or wisdom on the one hand or some darker aspect that needs to be overcome and eliminated on the other.

There is an ancient statement given to us by Plutarch. The statement expresses for us in the following words, that "An idea is a Being incorporeal, which has no subsistence of itself, but gives figure and form unto shapeless matter and becomes the cause of the manifestation." Any figure that is registered by the brain and memorized has an innate capacity to build the form and express through that form a concept or idea. That form can be a job where a Mason performs his service or it can be an institution like Masonry itself that expresses the three tenants of a Mason's profession. As you work inwards, you will also become aware of the nature of the motivating idea through the study of its form and its demonstrated activity. As you proceed you will discover the field of ideas analogous in nature in which the idea embodied in the symbol

finds itself. This field of ideas, inter-related and mutually explanatory, is now open to you and you will find yourself step by step in a position to move in this world of concepts with freedom. To work and live in the world of ideas now becomes your objective and main effort as a Mason. You train yourself in the recognition of ideas and concepts as they lie behind every form; you begin to think clearly about them and to see the direction in which they lead you. Thus you increase your ability to read the plans laid out on the T.B. of T.S.A.O.T.U. It is upon the T.B. of the G.A. where the initial recognition of the carefully preserved secrets of Masonry are revealed. These carefully preserved secrets are the secrets relating to initiation and the meaning behind each of the three degrees of the Blue Lodge.

The following is an example of a possible interpretation of the earlier symbol given via the conceptual approach.



Once again we have a circle, square and equilateral triangle. The circle is the one form which all other plane geometrical forms are inscribed. Thus all forms emerge from within the circle. The circle begins with a point and the radiation of the point sends its intention to the boundless expanses of the universe. Thus all points of which there is an infinite number are interdependently connected. The many lines of force that emanate from a point are undetermined until they are bound by a circumference. In order for a circumference to occur the line emerging from the point must become a particular ray of energy or a radius. This allows the limiting creative factors to enter in which circumscribe or limit the extent of the influence of the point.

Every Circle has the same ratio and proportions as every other circle. This gives some understanding to the statement that the S.A.O.T.U. has his point everywhere and circumference nowhere. It is always the same source of origin, the point that can always be traced to as the causal factor. As a consequence the circle represents the impulse and teaching of deity represented by the volume of sacred knowledge from which all knowledge and wisdom emanate.

If we take the divine impulse, the radius, and employ it to inscribe an equilateral triangle we find that the triangle is generated from this divine impulse as it emanates from the center. The equilateral triangle placed upon or within the circle gives rise to the symbol of the compasses for

the equilateral triangle has angles of 60 degrees, the same as the compass setting of the compasses set upon the volume of sacred knowledge. All equilateral triangles have the same relationship and ratios as all other equilateral triangles, being that of three angles of 60 degrees and all lines being equal in length. Just as the circle is the form within which all plane geometrical forms emerge, so the equilateral triangle is the form from which all plane geometrical forms are constructed. The Volume of Sacred Knowledge and the Compasses then form the point of origin of a creative impulse of Deity emerging from the point to the radius. Thus we have the inspired word in the book of Sacred Knowledge and the celestial working tool circumscribing the limits of the creative process.

Finally we have the square. Like the circle and equilateral triangle, all squares share the same ratio and proportions as all other squares. As the compasses bring the divine impulse from the center to the circumference, so the square brings that which is above to that which is below, thus creating the terrestrial working tool.

Through the interpretation of our symbol using the conceptual approach we have three articulated forms, of the H.B. Sq. and CC. Together they form a complete and perfect whole as the furniture of a lodge. They further represent the universality of deity as the circle, as Deity expresses itself in the celestial worlds exemplified by the compasses and the terrestrial world as exemplified by the square. Once again keep in mind that no one has a monopoly on the meaning of a symbol. They reveal themselves to the individual until the existent that the symbol represents is revealed.

THE IVORY DOOR

Esoterically this would cover the effect of the force or energy upon you and of the quality of the vibration it may arouse in you. It may affect your energy centers, or be felt in your emotional nature, or perhaps only in your mind. This study, rightly undertaken, would lead to the unfolding of the intuition, with its consequent manifestation on the physical plane as illumination, understanding and an *authentic* expression of love for one's fellow man. There is a great distinction between the theory of brotherly love and the direct experience and expression of brotherly love. This ability to express brotherly love evolves from the direct perception that all souls are from one soul, and consequently we are all inherently brothers. This process demonstrates the fact of brotherhood in every fiber of our being and does not simply relegate brotherly love to a lecture in the E.A. degree.

At this point it would be useful to give a few words about the intuition, as the term is often used liberally without any thought as to what the intuition is with the exception of some vague and nebulous reference to a psychic nature.

We are told by physicians and scientists that thousands of cells in the human brain are still dormant and, consequently, that the average human being uses only a small part of his equipment. The area of the brain which is found around the pineal gland is that connected with

the intuition. These cells must be roused into activity before there can be any real intuitive perception. When this occurs there will be a spiritual illumination, true psychological understanding of one's fellowmen, and a development of the true esoteric sense, which is the consequence of accessing the carefully guarded secrets of Masonry.

The intuition has no relation to psychism, either higher or lower. The seeing of a vision, the hearing of the Voice of the Silence, a pleased reaction to teaching of any kind, does not infer the functioning of the intuition. It is not only the seeing of symbols, for that is a special sort of perception and the capacity to tune in on the Universal Mind upon that layer of Its activity which produces the pattern-forms on which all etheric bodies are based. It is not intelligent psychology, and a loving desire to help. The intuition emanates from the interplay of a personality, governed by a strong soul orientation, and the group-conscious soul such as is found in a deeply connected lodge of brothers. This interplay gives rise to one of the Landmarks of Masonry, **“The**

Necessity for Masons to work in Group Formation in Lodge.”

Intuition is the synthetic understanding which is the prerogative of the soul and it only becomes possible when the soul, on its own level, is reaching in two directions: towards the Spirit or Monad, and towards the integrated and, illumined personality. It is the first indication of a deeply subjective unification which finds its true consummation in what is represented by the Master Masons Degree.

Intuition, therefore, brings with its appearance three qualities:

- The Illumination of the mind,
- An Understanding of the interdependent nature of reality, and
- An authentic outpouring of Love to all living creatures but more especially one's brothers in Masonry.

If this were not enough relative to the three doors of interpreting a symbol, there are also seven keys or modes of interpretation to each door. No my brothers we are not done yet. These seven interpretations are relative to the great tenant of a Mason's profession, the cultivation of truth.

Many Masons see things from a fixed perspective. If Masons continue seeing things through the same lens they will be unable to see the larger picture and consequently unable to enlarge the setting of the compass

The following is an allegorical presentation in prose form to illustrate the seven keys that turn the locks to the mysteries.

A gate of brass, a golden portal, and then an ivory door; three gates, three locks, seven keys to turn to open up these locks. Three locks, seven keys, seven times to turn; yet even one turn opens wide a door to understanding. Turn the key, and turn again! And though each key seven times must turn, each turn reveals untold paths to greater comprehension. Seven keys to turn, three locks to open the entrance of the Door to the Mysteries. Pass on, O pilgrim on the Way, and find the open door.

The seven keys to the mysteries are the seven modes of interpreting and understanding a symbol. Each perspective offers a larger compass setting that increases the Masons access to a greater truth and consequently light. This enables him to gain access to the carefully guarded secrets of Masonry. These seven modes of interpreting the three doors are examined from the following tabulation summarized as the seven keys to the mysteries.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. <i>Mystical</i> | 5. <i>Geometrical</i> |
| 2. <i>Psychological</i> | 6. <i>Physiological</i> |
| 3. <i>Astrological</i> | 7. <i>Metaphysical</i> |
| 4. <i>Numerical</i> | |

THE MYSTICAL KEY

This key deals with modes of consciousness. The mystical key is the path of interpretation that is preliminary to approaching the mysteries. Such mystical practices involve meditation, contemplation, self examination and the development of brotherly contact with a brother and fellow masons. It teaches us to subdue our passions and to beautify and adorn our minds.

It is the duty of every Mason to aid the development and education of the true science of life, and to open wide the door into the temple of the hidden mysteries. We must earnestly study the rules for training and for work that will make it possible for you to enter the Temple and take your place as a creative worker, an operative builder in the light. Thus will you will aid in the magical work in the building of the Temple of the Lord, that Temple made without hands eternal in the heavens

Does this sound difficult, or too complicated? Does this begin to sound like too much labor? The answer to these questions is yes it is complicated, and yes it is much labor. It is much easier to say, Masonry has no real mysteries or secrets than to take the necessary steps that lead a Mason to the symbolic light in the east. Most Masons to date have not take the time to go into these fine details of study relative to the world of symbolry. Hence it becomes easier to understand that only those who take on these labors of studying the symbols will understand the allegorical meaning of the ceremonials of the craft. Only those who take on these studies can truly understand the subjective meaning of that glorious landmark that the secrets of Masonry are carefully guarded, and none but the worthy can be admitted to them. No title, no worldly wealth

or honors can confer that which is obtained by study, meditation, and a deep penetration into the mysteries of life to which Masonry is a symbolic representative.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL KEY

The psychological key deals with several different approaches listed under the heading *of Man Know Thyself*. Our general understanding of psychology is relegated to the study of human psychology, behavioral patterns and the like. The deeper understanding of psychology deals with the psychology of the integrated personality as it begins to fuse and blend with the energies and forces of the soul or the Self.

This is not a trivial study, however a diligent examination of the seven types of energies and forces that course through our system of worlds and consequently through the microcosmic unit, called a human being, gives a deeper understanding of why one of the landmarks of Masonry states **Seven Masons constitute a Lodge of Masons**.

The study of the nature of energies and forces is one of the great and carefully preserved secretes of Masonry. The revelation of this mystery is open to those who dare to take the journey of knowing the Self.

THE ASTROLOGICAL KEY

This key offers an explanation of the relationship between our earthly system and that of the greater systems of which our world is a part. The interdependent nature of our earth and the planets of our solar system and the celestial bodies which constitute our measurement of time is a great mystery that brings us to an understanding of the universality of Masonry, not just the system of our world but the Macrocosmic expression of the celestial lodge above. In studying this key we learn about the fact that a lodge is a representation of our solar and zodiacal systems within which we live move and have our being.

THE NUMERICAL KEY

This key teaches us that the entire universe and the creative process is ordered by number. We find numbers and figures used as an expression and a record of thought in every archaic Scripture and Cosmogony. They are ever the same, emerging from the first figures. Through the *System of Numbers* we are educated in the theories of the seven states of matter as they exist on the seven ontological planes. Much understanding will be gained in realizing that number gives the clue to the form and the purpose of the life that the form veils.

ARITHMETIC, or the power to add, to subtract, multiply and divide, is related to the creative process and concerns the production of those forms upon the physical plane that will adequately

produce the **IDEA**, that we spoke of earlier, and bring it into manifestation. Of this, the symbolism of arithmetic is the expression. From another angle, we read our destiny in the heavens and write out that destiny in our life upon the earth; we reduce, knowingly or unknowingly, the *idea* of our soul to form, so that each life adds, subtracts and multiplies, and divides until the sum of each soul's experience is complete. This study of number both in symbol and in application offers the Mason an opportunity to examine the details of the creative process and informs him that he is truly an operative builder working in Mental Matter.

THE GEOMETRICAL KEY

The creative process of certain laws of proportions, also called the Pythagorean arithmetic, demonstrates the process of crystallization. This process was called by Plato the "GEOMETRY of the cosmos." The multiplicity of forms that we behold, whether it be a salt crystal or the organism of the human body are all structures of the G.G.O.T.U. What we can see as a crystal, a jewel, or a diamond with their beauty and form and line and color, will appear likewise through the entire universe as a whole. For there is a plan in the heavens that Humanity must eventually conform. As operative Masons, we build with mental matter build into that which is below that nature, beauty and quality of that which is above.

There exist certain formulas upon the T.B. of T.G.G. which express significance, intention and meaning. On the physical plane the Mason uses the five senses in order to arrive at the field of knowledge. On the mental plane psychometry and symbology, including numerology and geometry, are used to arrive at an understanding of the lower mental levels. Then, when the Mason begins to discriminate and to use the mind as the sixth sense he arrives at that subjective quality or life which lies behind the field of knowledge. This constitutes the nature of the soul within the form, and is, potentially and in fact, omniscient and omnipresent. The mind is the crystal reflecting the thought of the soul. Then, through meditation, we contact a part of the Plan laid down upon the T.B. of T.G.A.O.T.U., and are given the opportunity to participate in their emergence into the world of every day.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL KEY

This key teaches us the relationship of forms within the outer and inner worlds. That which is above is as that which is below. A preliminary examination might cause one to think that the topic of conversation deals specifically with things tangible and concrete. The study of the physiological key is the practice of the alchemists and Kabalists. This key offers us a glimpse into "Nature's various windings and into her most concealed recesses. It teaches that all matter is teaming with the life force of creation whether that life force is latent or potent. The symbolic representations of these varying degrees of the condition of matter are demonstrated in the constitutional images of the Tree of Life of the Qabalists and The Constitution of Man of the Hindus, Theosophists and Trans Himalayan teachings. There is no real penetration into this key

without the access to the symbolry of the various ontological planes of existence to which the three degrees of Masonry allude.

THE METAPHYSICAL KEY

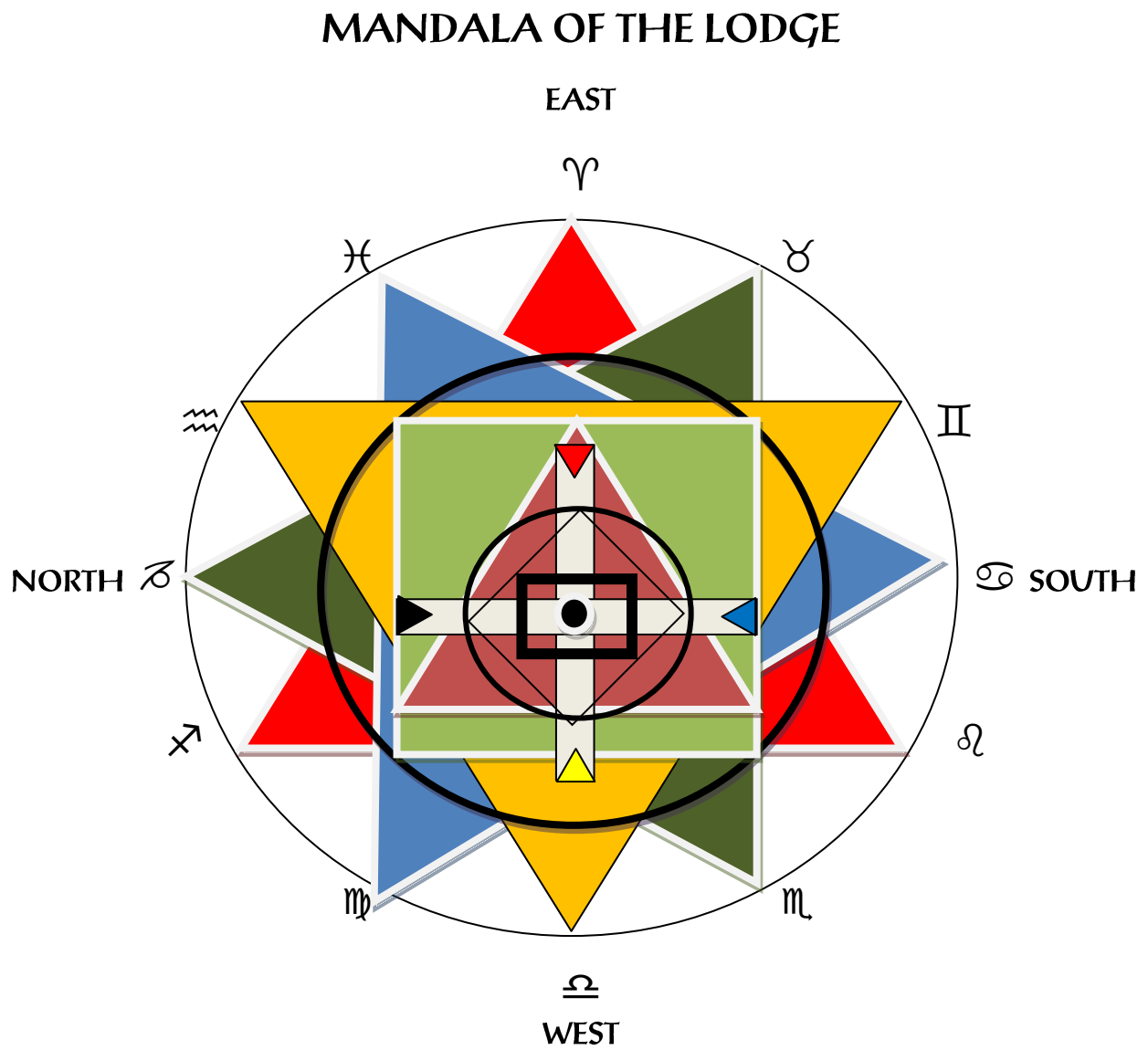
This key takes the Mason from the world of consciousness to the world of being. One may ask the question, what is the nature of being? Once again we can use as a guide post the maps of ontology given by the Kabalists, Hindus, and Theosophists. This key assists the student in understanding the various planes of being such as the Physical, Emotional, Mental, Buddhic and Atmic planes. It teaches us that not only does Masonry make good men better but offers a path to holiness and to identification with our divine nature which in essence is the nature of deity.

Ritual as a Symbol System

We have covered a wide area of symbols, dealing with symbols of convention, nature, as well as universal symbols that work on the subconscious. We have also presented modes of approach to the study and the understanding of symbols. We shall now move into the symbolic world of ritual. We can examine a symbol by focusing our attention on it and endeavor to understand its meaning. When we enter into the symbolic world of ritual we become part of the symbol itself. As we participate in the ritual work we begin to symbolically embody the lives and existences that are presented in the ritual.

Let us start with the environment in which the ritual is to take place, the Masonic Temple. There are many clues given about the organization of the Masonic Temple. We are informed that the Masonic temple is a replica of King Solomon's Temple, that that temple should be oriented due east and west. We are also informed that the Masonic Temple is a representative of the cosmos due to the universal or cosmic dimensions that are given us. We are also informed that the covering of the lodge is the starry decked canopy. With all these clues relative to the earthly as well as the cosmic orientations of a lodge we can begin to see that the lodge is at once microcosmic as a representative of the earth and macrocosmic relative to the larger context of a solar system and zodiacal system. The following image is called the Mandala of the lodge which demonstrates the astronomical context in which our Masonic ritual unfolds.

MANDALA OF THE LODGE



AN EXAMINATION OF THE MANDALA OF THE LODGE

In examining this mandala, we find many of the symbolic representations that are given us or that are inferred throughout our several Masonic ceremonials and lectures. The following is a list of some of the symbols that are exemplified in this mandala.

- The location of the individual brother as the point within the circle
- The location of the altar and the Volume of Sacred Scriptures or Sacred Law
- The Cardinal Cross of Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn and as a consequence the equinoxes and solstices, and the Festivals of the Holy Saints John.
- The location of the three principle officers of a lodge and the place of darkness
- The duties of the three principle officers indicated from the astronomical point of view
- The location of the brethren in the north and south columns when a brother is being brought to light
- The location of the three lesser lights placed in a triangular form about the altar.

The Point Within the Circle

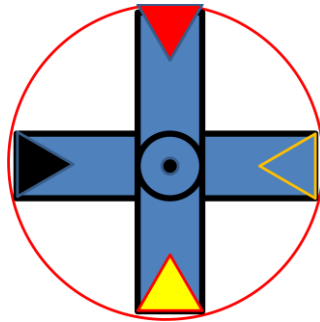
We are informed in our Masonic instruction that there exists within every regular and well governed lodge a particular point within a circle embordered by two parallel perpendicular lines with a volume of Holy Scriptures or Sacred Law at the top. We are further informed that the two parallel lines represent St. John the Baptist and St. John the Beloved or Evangelist.

This particular subject has been written about by many authors. The main point to be illustrated here is that a point within a circle has many symbolic representations more particularly in geometry where the point represents the frame of reference from which an intention is originated and a boundary is circumscribed.

In Masonry we are told that it represents the individual brother and the circle, that boundary beyond which he must never let his prejudices or passions betray him. The teaching goes on to say that if a brother keeps himself within the due boundary of the circle, it is impossible for him to materially err. This is an important moral instruction relative to the allegory presented. But as every Mason knows every instruction given in Masonry is allegorical. The deeper levels of meaning are revealed through the medium of the symbols of the craft.

As we examine the mandala of the lodge and focus our attention in the central part of the mandala, we see a cross. The cross is oriented to the four cardinal points, North East West and South. The vertical part of the cross shows the two parallel lines that emborder the point within the circle. These lines extend east and west and run along the north and south columns. As every Mason is told they are representative of the Holy Saints John. They are in essence the north and south columns. The horizontal part of the cross creates the lines that orient with the north and south and are the perpendicular lines that emborder the point within the circle. These lines when extended form the square in the mandala extend along the east and west lines and move from north to south. Together the perpendicular and parallel lines show us the location of the three principle officers, with the Master in the East, the S.W. in the West, the J.W. in the

South with the place of darkness in the north. The triangles at the end of each portion of the arms of the cross are the elemental designations of the astrological signs of the cardinal cross.



The following image is one that most masons will be familiar with. Consider the parallel lines as a representative of the vertical lines of the cardinal cross.



In examining the two parallel lines extending east and west we find the location of the formation of the brethren when a brother is brought from darkness to light. This configuration exists in each degree as a brother is brought to greater Masonic light. These same two lines extend along the north and south columns thus intersecting the east and the west. The lines that run along the east and west are the perpendicular to the lines that run along the north and south. There is never much conversation about the perpendicular lines.

In our lodges the north and south columns intersect the east and west thus forming the two parallel perpendicular lines forming a cross and a square.

A formula for understanding the symbols of any system, and in this case Masonic symbols, one must begin to examine the symbol for its content and then how the symbol relates to the context in which it is applied. For example a point with the circle has many applications. In the alchemical literature the point within the circle represents gold, in Christianity it represents the Christ and the soul, in astrology the point within the circle represents the sun, in Masonry as

already explained it represents the individual brother. If we examine the various applications of the point within the circle we find that there is a fundamental commonality between the various contexts of expression. The point represents a Logos, or logic center. Thus we read in the Gospel of St. John the Evangelist, "In the beginning was the word or Logos." If we examine a fundamental phenomenon in nature we discover that everything revolves around a center, expressing the will and purpose of the inner originating impulse, the point. Protons and neutrons revolve around a nucleus. A planet revolves around a solar logos or sun. A solar logos revolves around another logos such as a galactic center. A cluster of galaxies take on the nature of protons and neutrons as they revolve around yet a still greater center and so on. So the point within the circle demonstrates this continual array of interdependent lives or existences which can symbolically represent something as small as an atom or as large as a cluster of universes.

The next piece that is revealed by the mandala teaches several things. The parallel perpendicular lines allude to the positions and duties of the three principle officers and how they relate to the movement of the sun through the cycle of a day or of the year. Since the four cardinal signs initiate the four seasons we can see that each of the three principle officers represent three seasonal changes in the year.

We are informed that it is the duty of the J.W. to mark the sun at its meridian height whether it is during the cycle of a day or the cycle of the year. The Festival of St. John the Baptist marks the Sun at the Summer Solstice and more importantly the movement of the sun as it begins its noticeable descent three days after the solstice. Thus the Festival of St. John the Baptist occurs on the 24th of the June, and not on the solstice itself which occurs three days before.

There is no officer or lesser light in the north. From the Masonic perspective the north is considered the place of darkness. The tropic of cancer or the sun at its meridian height ascends to 23 ½ degrees above the equator at the Cancer, or summer Solstice. During this time the sun reaches the edge of the Tropic of Cancer. The City of Jerusalem, which is located at 33 degrees north of the equator, was the fabled location of the Temple of King Solomon. The Sun at its meridian height was still 9 1/2 degrees below the location of the City of Jerusalem. This is the astronomical reason why the sun or moon could cast no light in the northern part of the temple, and why the north is considered the place of darkness.

These tropical pieces of information inform us about the symbol of the point within the circle embordered by two parallel perpendicular lines. It further informs us about their relation to and location of the three principle officers of a Masonic lodge and their reason d'être. We have already seen how this symbol relates to the J.W. The question can now be asked how does this symbol relate to the W.M. and S.W.? The answer lies in the description of the two parallel perpendicular lines. We know that the two parallel lines run along the south and north columns of the temple in a due east and west direction. Not only are the lines parallel to each other and are tangent to the circle containing the point within the circle but they are also perpendicular to something. The south and north parallel lines are perpendicular to the east and west the place of the sunrise and sunset and the location of the W.M. and S.W. respectively. As the J.W. marks the sun at its meridian height, so the W.M. and S.W. symbolize the rising and setting of the sun, during the cycle of the day and the 365 day cycle of the year.

If the parallel line in the south represents Cancer and the summer solstice, and the parallel line in the north represents the Capricorn and the winter solstice, which we have already discussed, then the lines perpendicular to the south and north are the east and west. If we examine the phenomenon of the astrological year we find that the sun rises in the year at the spring equinox. The tropical frame of reference for the spring equinox is the sign of Aries. Likewise the sun sets at the autumnal equinox. The tropical frame of reference for the autumnal equinox is the Sign of Libra. If we were to draw lines connecting the two signs of Aries and Libra we would find them perpendicular to the signs of Cancer and Capricorn, not only forming a right angle but a cross as well. Further if we allocated the line in the south to Cancer and the line in the north to Capricorn, then we would have two parallel lines. If we allocated the line in the east to Aries, and the line in the west to Libra, then the lines in the north and the south would be two parallel perpendicular lines thus fulfilling the description in the Masonic lecture.

THE LIVING SYMBOL OF THE MASONIC RITUAL

Having examined the mandala of the lodge, and presenting a context in which the ceremonials are performed we can now examine the symbol of the ritual itself.

Because of our living on the earth our frame of reference in observing the planets and stars will be conditioned by the diurnal rotation of the earth on its axis and the revolution of the earth around the sun. Our frame of reference is also conditioned by the orientation of the axis of the earth toward the pole star Polaris. Every star and planet from our perspective rises in the east and sets in the west. In reality none of this is true. It only seems to be true relative to the rotation of our planet. It also appears that every star and planet revolves around Polaris, the North Star.

If we return to our symbol of the point within a circle and recall the many applications of its symbolic meaning we can begin to penetrate the meaning of our symbolic lodge and the frame of reference in which we as masons operate. The key factor to keep in mind is that every system has a frame of reference. The entire phenomenon observed appears to be occurring relative to the location of the observer and the frame of reference in which the observer is to be found. Therefore as Masons we work in the "Blue Lodge." The frame of reference of the Blue Lodge is from the Earth. We observe our phenomenon through a vault of blue or the starry decked heavens. There is nothing primitive about Blue Lodge Masonry. There is no other Masonic institution that operates on this earthly plane that makes its observations from a different frame of reference.

Having said all this Masonry regards the source of light as coming from the east. This is of course due to our frame of reference of the sun rising in the east and setting in the west. These are the two prominent operations of the sun during the day, the third being the sun at its zenith or at its meridian height. Thus in our symbolic lodges we find the three principle officers representing these three moments of the sun relative to our tropical or earthly frame of reference. The symbolic indications are profound to the officers in the lodge as each ancient Grand Master of Masonry represents the same solar orb in its different position during the cycle of the day, sunrise, high twelve and sunset, or the cycle of the year, Spring Equinox, Summer Solstice and the Autumnal Equinox. These three quarters of the year are likewise representative

of Aries, Cancer and Libra. The darkness of the midnight of the day and the midnight of the year are not officiated by any officer but are symbolically relegated to the place of darkness.

Having given a preliminary explanation of the three principle officers relative to their function and duties within the microcosmic model of the Blue Lodge we can begin to address the functions and duties of the other officers. Examine the position of the other officers relative to the mandala of the lodge and you will discover that they relate to heavenly bodies as do the three principle officers of the lodge.

The thrust of this section on the discussion of the relationship of symbols to Masonry has moved from an individual symbol, such as a square or compass and their manifold meanings to the living symbol of the Masonic ritual in which all masons are living participants.

I would here like to interject one of the most important reasons why no atheist may become a Mason. The reason given in our E.A. ceremonial is but the first level of interpretation of this landmark. More importantly if we conclude that the Masonic lodge symbolically represents a microcosmic expression of the Macrocosm or a fragment of the divine life from which it has emerged, then only those who are seeking to make contact with the greater life of the Macrocosm may enter. There is no gain for one who has no interest in making contact with the deity who expresses itself through the three degrees of the Blue Lodge or in the Macrocosmic sky.

As we take our attention from the individual symbol to the collective symbol of our living rituals, we must remember that the same rules apply to the interpretation of the living symbols of ritual as does to the singular symbol, three doors and seven modes of interpretation.

From the first level we learn the form side of the ceremony. We learn the lines that are spoken from memory so as to give added power when it is time to deliver them. We also learn the movements of the ceremony so we may move deliberately and effortlessly as we execute our Masonic duties within the context of the ceremonial. There is a particular affect that occurs when we memorize a ritual that symbolically represents an internal spiritual event. Masonic initiation, passing and raising are such ceremonies that represent these inner spiritual events. As we read and memorize the ceremonial we begin to align our consciousness with the consciousness that which the symbolic ceremony represents, generating an inner alignment with that inner reality. The preliminary work in memorizing and practicing the floor work prepares us for the conceptual aspect of understanding the ceremony as it relates to the world of ideas. Finally as we progress in our meditations and become adept at our ceremonial work we may glimpse the life aspect that lies behind the idea and eventually enter into deep communion with the soul, the true Masonic Builder, the revealer of the light which is the quest of all true Masons.

When thus approached every Mason who takes on this journey will understand and testify to the fact that there are indeed deep and carefully guarded secrets to our craft. They will understand the landmark that states that, "the secrets of Masonry are carefully preserved."