

# Templum Sion on the Master Mason's Degree

June 2005



## Information Package for New Members

Prepared by the Education Committee of Templum Lodge  
for the general benefit of its members. ©



**Masonry offers to those capable to appreciate it a working philosophy and a practical rule of life. It discloses to us the scheme of the universe. It indicates our place, our purpose, and our destiny in that universe.**

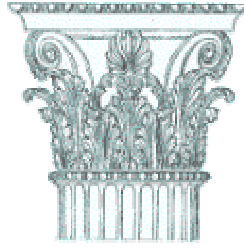
**Let us be careful not to cheapen the Order by failing to realize its meaning and by admitting to understand its import.**

**Look to find in it a living philosophy, a vital guide upon these matters, which of all others is the most sacred and the most urgent to our ultimate well-being.**

**Realize that its secrets and mysteries, which are many and invaluable, are not upon the surface; that they are not those of the tongue, but of the heart.**

**For whoever is carefully and deliberately "squaring his stone" is fitting himself for his place in the "intended structure."**

**Anonymous**



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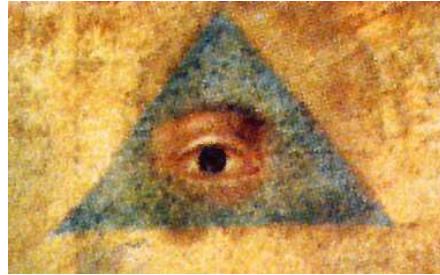
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## Congratulations Brother

The members of Templum Sion Lodge acknowledge your raising to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. It is indeed a sublime degree, one you may study for years without reaching satisfactory conclusions. No doubt you realize this yourself in having already read and now participated in the Masonic Mysteries, you appreciate a hint as to its actual meaning. What is more important is *reflecting on the experience* you have had.

Almost any interpretation of the Third Degree is only a portion of truth and a man must be prepared to reflect and study thoroughly in the future. In the First and Second Degrees you found yourself immersed in signs, symbols and metaphorical emblems of architecture; in the Third Degree you found yourself confronted with a different order of symbolism, one reflective of the language of the soul- its life, tragedy and triumph. To recognize this fact is the first step to its metaphorical interpretation.

The second step is to realize that the ritual of the Third Degree may have many meanings; for it is not intended that this Degree be one that you complete, like a paper, that you examine briefly, finish, close up and put away but rather it is an 'opening of a way', a path, a departure to some newer form of thinking or awakened consciousness. Like a great book, drama, picture or symphony that one may continually look back upon, revisit to find new meaning as an inexhaustible font of truth. We bid you well on your journey!

## Duties, Rights & Privileges of a Master Mason in Templum Sion Lodge

### The Right of Visitation

Visitation of other Lodges is one of the greatest privileges of being a Master Mason. Before you can sit in another Lodge, you must prove yourself to be a Mason in good standing. If you can so prove, and if no member of the Lodge you are visiting objects to you sitting in the Lodge, you may do so. In order to attend another Lodge, you should learn the memory work and modes of recognition in each Degree (if you have not already done so), and carry your paid-up dues card with you at all times. You can gain admission to another Lodge in one of two ways - examination or avouchment by a Brother who has sat in Lodge with you previously. An examination usually consists of showing your dues card, followed by examination by a special committee appointed by the Master of the Lodge. After successfully passing the examination, the committee will vouch for you and you may be admitted to the Lodge.

### The Responsibility to Recommend Petitioners

Before endorsing the petition of anyone for initiation into our Mysteries, you should take the time to discuss Masonry with the applicant. You should know *why* he wishes to become a Freemason, what he expects and what may be expected of him (keeping in mind that Templum Sion and the candidate should make a good "fit".) The Investigating Committee should explain much of this to him, but you should be satisfied with his understanding and know that he is of good moral character, intelligent, willing to adopt to the laws and philosophy of Freemasonry. The signing of the petition should be a source of great pleasure for you. You should also remember that signing the petition of a man who wishes to become a Freemason is a significant responsibility. By doing so, you are committing to assist him to learn and grow as a Mason. Nor does your responsibility end when he has been Raised. From the moment you sponsor his petition, you are bound to him by a strong tie.

### The Responsibility to Investigate Petitioners

This responsibility belongs to every member of the Lodge, and should not be taken lightly. Serving on an Investigating Committee should be regarded as a mark of special trust by the Master of your Lodge. It is a solemn responsibility. Only those who can be counted on to make a complete and impartial inquiry into the petitioner's character and determine his worthiness to become a Mason, should they be selected. The members of the Investigating Committee are known only to the petitioner and to the Worshipful Master who appointed them.

### The Privilege to Ballot

Only Members in good standing have a right to vote. No member present can be excused from balloting on any petitioner before the Lodge. No member will be permitted to retire from the Lodge to avoid casting his ballot. The white balls indicate an affirmative, or favorable ballot, and the black cube indicates a negative, or unfavorable, ballot. If you have no reason to believe otherwise, then, you should accept the word of the Investigating Committee and cast a favorable ballot on a petition for membership. If you have an objection to an applicant, the time to raise that objection is *before the ballot is taken*. You have the right to speak to the Master privately and express your objection. This is one of the reasons we wait a full month after a petition has been presented before voting on it. However, if you know of some legitimate reason to indicate why the petitioner is unworthy, for strictly Masonic - *not personal* - reasons, a black cube may be cast to protect the Lodge from an undesirable member. As you approach the ballot box, examine your motives and be sure that the ballot you are about to cast will do justice to the candidate and Freemasonry. The Right to Secrecy of the Ballot is guaranteed by Masonic law, and custom allows each member to have perfect freedom in balloting on petitioners. No brother should disclose how he voted and no brother should inquire into how another brother voted on a particular candidate.

### **The Responsibility to Investigate Visitors**

This responsibility belongs to the Lodge itself and is delegated by the Worshipful Master to a committee of Brethren who are to satisfy themselves that the visitor is a Master Mason in good standing in a regular and recognized Lodge. The Worshipful Master may call upon any member of the Lodge to serve on the examining committee. It should ever be remembered that the purpose of examination is to prove that a visitor *is* a Mason, not to prove that he is not a Mason. Kindness and courtesy should be shown to all visitors at all times.

### **Templum Sion Financial Responsibilities**

Your financial responsibilities are twofold. The first is in the area of mandatory support - the payment of annual dues. The second is in the area of voluntary support contributions to certain charities, distressed worthy Brothers, and other Masonic organizations, as you desire. By paying dues, each Brother carries his share of the expenses to run his the Lodge. Regarding voluntary financial support, he must determine the extent of his participation, measuring the need against his ability. Any member failing to pay his dues for a period of more than twelve months is subject to suspension. There is no reason a Brother should be suspended for nonpayment of dues. Not being able to pay dues can be handled easily and without embarrassment. No Lodge desires to suspend a Brother who is unable to continue payment of dues. A distressed Brother should inform the Worshipful Master or the Secretary of his situation. One of these Officers will take care of the situation so *no record is shown on the books and no debt is accumulated*. This is not Masonic Charity, but, rather, Brotherly Love. In most cases, the other Brethren in the Lodge will then know nothing.

### **The Right of Masonic Funeral Service**

The Masonic Funeral Service is conducted only at the request of a Brother or some member of a Mason's immediate family. The choice belongs to the family, not to the Lodge. This service can be held in a church, the Lodge room, funeral parlor or grave site. It is a beautiful and solemn ceremony and, like Masonry herself, does not conflict with a man's personal religious beliefs.

### **Templum Sion Lodge Attendance**

Templum Sion does not have a mandatory attendance requirement in its Bylaws as ancient Lodges did; nor is there a penalty for not attending, as there once was. However, Templum Sion as an operating principle has the right to investigate a Brothers non-attendance if he misses 50% of the meetings in one term (this equates to missing 6 meetings in two years) for no good reason. Every Master Mason has an obligation to be loyal to the Lodge which gave him Masonic Light and all the benefits which come with his membership. This should be your inducement to attend Lodge as often as possible and to join in the fellowship that is an important part of Freemasonry.

### **The Right to Relief**

Masonic Relief may be applied for by any Master Mason - either to his own Lodge, or to an individual Master Mason. In every case, the individual asked has the right to determine the worthiness of the request and whether such aid can be granted without material injury to his family. Relief is a voluntary function of both the Lodge and the individual. If the Lodge's financial condition will not allow it to help, he can apply to the Grand Lodge for help. In order to be eligible for Masonic Relief, the Brother must not have been suspended in the past five years, and there can be no charges pending against him at the time of application. The widow and/or orphan of a Master Mason, who was a member of the Lodge at the time of his death, are entitled to consideration if they apply for assistance. The same conditions as to worthiness and the ability and willingness of the Lodge apply in these cases.

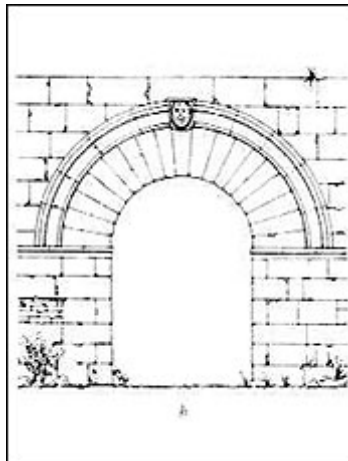
## Templum Sion MM Graduation Requirements- Operating Principle

As a normal operating requirement of Templum Sion standards before you may receive your Master Mason's Certificate & Apron you will be required to prove Masonic Mastership by completing all of the following:

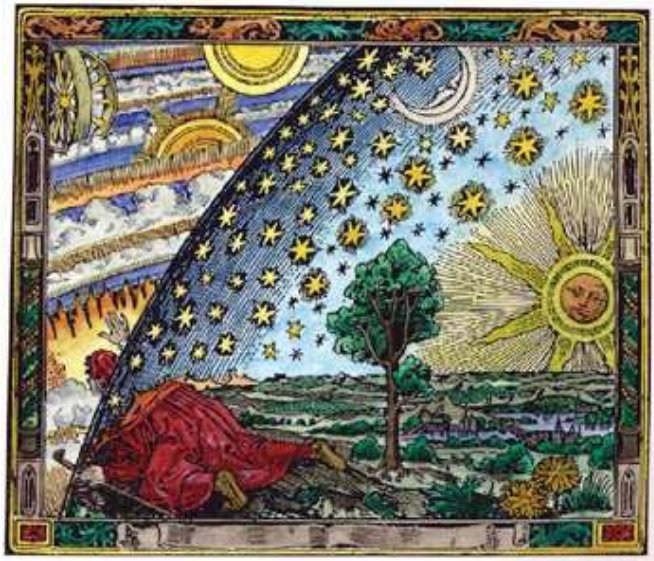
- 1) Recite the Master Masons obligation by memory in Lodge;
- 2) Answer required questions that will be asked of you in Lodge;
- 3) Lastly and more importantly you will be required to prove the degree of your Mastership by providing the brethren of your Lodge with an example, illustration of a work of your "building" orientation in some way by paper, model, presentation, or illustration. This dissertation will provide the brethren with "proof" of your Mastership.

This project or dissertation may have something to do with your regular occupation (a project, a demonstration) the contribution you made in a person, contribution to family, the community work you may do, some aspect or illustration that proves to us that you are a builder in mind, in spirit or in body. It may be anything of your choosing that provides the Brethren with an idea of the positive impact you have made in others, to your family, friends, community or society in general. You may have built a home, built a company, designed a product, or impacted someone's life.

Criteria for consideration to your presentation includes –length (no shorter than 5 min and no longer than 15 minutes); thought given to the project; degree of impact you made on others; detail of presentation- problem statement, what you did to overcome that problem or issue, tell us what worked or the impact of your work; the work itself- aesthetics, quality, creativity, considerations given. Contact your sponsor or the Master of the Lodge if you have any questions.



## Symbolism & Philosophy- the deeper and esoteric roots



*The Flammarion*- 13<sup>th</sup> century German woodcut of Ezekiel glimpsing beyond the earthly realm to the mysteries of the heavens.

## Symbols and Allegories of the Third Degree

### What does the Raising Signify?

Most people do not understand what being "Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason" means. This Degree is the sublime climax of Symbolic Freemasonry. If you learn only that the living, dying and raising of a Master is a drama, designed to teach the virtues of fidelity, faith and fortitude, you have received only partial light and have seen nothing but a moral lesson. This Degree seeks to answer the age-old question put forth by Job - "If a man die, shall he live again?".

The Degree delves into the deepest recesses of man's nature. While it leads the initiate into the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple, it probes into the Holy of Holies in his heart. As a whole, the Degree is symbolic of that old age and by the wisdom of which we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent and properly directed life, and die in the sure knowledge of a glorious immortality. It teaches no creed, no dogma, no doctrine, no religion; only, that there is immortality.

### The Working Tools of a Master Mason

The Working Tools of a Master Mason are "all the instruments of Masonry." In the York Rite, the Trowel is especially assigned to this Degree. The Master Mason uses the Trowel to cement ties between Masons, and to spread Brotherly Love. It may be remembered that this Degree is specifically related to the soul and, as such, the Trowel being the symbol of love is specifically related to the soul's relation with Spirit. Although all the tools are available to the Master Mason, it is the Trowel with which he must now work. It should be remembered that tools have always aligned us with the creative and builder spirit within us.



## The Sprig of Accacia

Hebrew people used to plant a sprig of acacia at the head of a grave for two purposes - to mark the location of the grave, and to show their belief in immortality. Because of its evergreen nature, they believed it to be an emblem of both immortality and innocence. The true acacia is a thorny plant, which abounds in the Middle East. Both Jews and Egyptians believed that because of its hardness, its evergreen nature and its durability, it signified immortality. It is believed that the acacia was used to construct most of the furniture and the tabernacle in the Temple. Acacia has red and white flowers. It is a tradition in the Near East that the Crown of Thorns was acacia. In Egypt, it symbolized rebirth and was an emblem of Neith.

## The All-Seeing Eye

*The All Seeing Eye* shows that we live and move and have our being in God; that we are constantly in His Presence, wherever or whatever we are doing.



The All-Seeing Eye -- a single human eye surrounded by radiating beams of light -- is found in many eras and cultures. It is generally a symbol of the watchful and protective power of the Supreme Being, especially when that entity is considered in a solar or heavenly context. It appears on the Great Seal of the United States.

In regions where the evil eye belief occurs, the All-Seeing Eye is one of many forms of reflective eye-charm used as apotropaic talismans against the this danger. A similar talismanic function was assigned to the protective Wadjet Eye or "Eye of Horus" of Ancient Egypt and the Third Eye of Buddha or Eye of Shiva in India. Even the Mexican "ojo de venado" charm, an ancient shamanic amulet made from a psychedelic legume seed is given an eye-related name: ojo de venado means "Deer Eye."

## The Master Masons Tracing Board



### An Explanation of the Third Degree Tracing Board by G. R. OSWELL <http://www.linshaw.ca/omtp/vol2no12.html> (2005)

That dramatic representation known to us as the Third Degree deals, in allegory and symbolism, with the subject of death and the Life Eternal which lies beyond the grave. That Life Eternal and all it implies, is of greater import than death for, in this degree is shown in the closing sentence of the prayer with which the ceremony opens, wherein the hope is expressed that the Candidate " may rise from the tomb of transgression to shine as the stars for ever and ever." Brother Cartwright has pointed out (\*\*E. H. Cartwright: A Commentary on the Freemasonic Ritual, 183.) this sentence has often been objected to by various critics as containing a nonsensical simile, but such critics have not known the V.S.L. as well, perhaps, as they might. The phrase "to shine as the stars for ever and ever" is derived from the Book of Daniel, XII, 3, and a marginal note refers to I Corinthians, XV, 41 and 42, where speaks as only that great Initiate, St. Paul, could speak, of the glory of that life which is to come. In one sense of our Ritual death is the veil the eye of human reason cannot penetrate, unless assisted by that Light which is from above, which Light is, of course, the V.S.L., but to him who is a Master Mason in the true meaning of the term, "the veil is partly drawn aside, disclosing a glimpse of Life Hereafter and Eternal." (\*Revd. Canon W. W. Covey-Crump: " The Symbolic Significance of the Middle Chamber) It is not given to man to comprehend wholly the mystery of life after death and that partial glimpse obtainable by him who has thoroughly assimilated the teachings of the three Degrees is not shown on this particular board but is symbolised on our modern Tracing Board by the small representation of a figure slightly drawing aside the veil which separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple. We

may read in another place when at a certain hour that veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. (St. Mark, XV.)

It is only by the study of the revelation contained in the V.S.L. that the natural horror of death is partly explored, enabling darkness to become visible, permitting the truly prepared candidate a vision of the glory of that future life which is here portrayed by the fully illuminated Sanctum Sanctorum. It is, in the words of one of our past Honorary Members, the late Revd. Canon W. W. Covey-Crump, "A vision across the open grave." (British Masonic Miscellany, X, 6a.). The Sanctum Sanctorum must not be confused with the Middle Chamber mentioned in the Second Degree, which is a symbol of ideas quite distinct from that which is implied by the Holy of Holies. The Middle Chamber is a representation of certain conceptions of our present life. The other denotes the condition beyond the worldly life.

At the head or west end of the Tracing Board is a sprig of acacia, another symbol of resurrection and life eternal. It is placed at the head and not elsewhere because the seat of all intelligence or consciousness lies in the brain, and the brain is situated in the cranium or skull. It is for this reason that this particular "emblem of mortality" is given prominence in the Third Degree. It may, perhaps, help us to understand better what is implied by making use of the skull as a symbol, very prominent not only in this Degree, but on our Tracing Board, to recall that the life, teaching, and Passion of a great Initiate reached its culminating point at Golgotha which, we are told, means the place of a skull. (\*St. John, XIX.). The sublime Degree follows very closely, in alternate symbolism, the life and doctrines of that outstanding figurehead of Christianity. Such an interpretation of the Third Degree has been dealt with at length by a well known Masonic student and writer in a most interesting work, published some years ago, which made a deep impression on the Craft as a whole, and has already run into several editions. (\*\*W. L. Wilmshurst: The Meaning of Masonry). But the acacia is also a symbol of innocence, and in this respect we may well remember those five Craftsmen who marked a certain piece of ground with a sprig of acacia ere they hastened back to Jerusalem.

The fact they were Craftsmen, i.e., Initiates who fully understood the mystery of Regeneration and the conditions of the life entailed thereby, and that they placed the sprig of acacia in an exact position to mark their discovery, is an important point of symbolism of the great allegory which constitutes this Degree which is frequently overlooked, and merits more than a cursory consideration by those who would endeavour to make a real daily advance in Masonic knowledge.

The above is but a brief and incomplete sketch of all that is inferred by the central feature of our Third Degree Tracing Board. That it forms part of a subject very difficult of comprehension is not to be denied. In words which ought to be familiar to all of us, yet which comparatively few have heard or are even aware of, for we are too busy making Masons to spare time for speculating on our Royal Art in Lodge: "To a perfect knowledge of this Degree few will attain, but it is an infallible truth that he who gains by merit those marks of pre-eminence and distinction which the Degree affords, receives a reward which amply compensates for all his attention and assiduity." (\*Third Lecture: Introductory Address.)

It is quite possible that those words were written by Philip Broadfoot himself, as a letter of his suggests(\*\*see Appendix). It is a letter written when he was residing in King's Lynn and was a member of Philanthropic Lodge. I possess a copy of it and the original is still in existence, being in the possession of the descendants of the late Brother Henry Muggeridge, who was one of the Prceptors of the famous Stability Lodge of Instruction, founded in 1817.

Around the foot of what constitutes the main feature of our Tracing Board are grouped three identical Hebrew letters in the form of an inverted triangle. This letter, the He, the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, appears on other Tracing Boards as the figure 5. What these three 5s symbolise is a matter of controversy. W. Bro. Covey-Crump was of the opinion that taken

individually they stand for the signs of the Degree, the five P . . . . ts of F..... p and one of the secrets now associated with the Royal Arch. (\*\*British Masonic Miscellany, X, 74).

A most ingenious theory put forward by a Brother some time ago is that on an old Tracing Board there were three symbols somewhat like the letter V, from which he deduced they referred to the position of the feet when making a certain mode of progression peculiar to this Degree at an important part of the Ceremony. Later artists mistaking these symbols for the Roman numeral V, changed them to the more familiar figure 5, and the designers of modern Tracing Boards continue to perpetuate this error. The general opinion, however, among students to-day, is they allude to the three classes or Lodges of Fellow Crafts who were ordered to carry out a particular quest, of which only one class proved successful.

On the left, or south side, of the Tracing Board appears, what is to-day, the familiar badge of a P.M. It should be noted that it is the badge, but not the symbol of a P.M., for this is an instance where there is great difference between a badge and what it symbolises. By whose authority it became the badge of a P.M. is one of those Masonic questions to which no answer may ever be forthcoming. The symbol itself appears in various early Masonic publications, but nowhere is it described as the badge or emblem of a P.M. In the first edition of the Book of Constitutions, published in 1721, it figures on the frontispiece as "That amazing Proposition which is the foundation of all Masonry." At a meeting of Grand Lodge in 1814 it was decided that a square and quadrant should be the emblem of a P.M., but in the year 1815 the Book of Constitutions describes the jewel of a Past Master as a "Square, and pendant within it the diagram of the Euclidian Proposition," and such, less or more, is the description in the Book of Constitutions to-day. There is no record in the Minutes of Grand Lodge who authorised the alteration, and, curiously enough, the alteration as never been questioned and the Craft, under the jurisdiction of the United Grand Lodge of England, has tacitly accepted this symbol as the emblem of a P.M. ever since. (\*Revd. Canon W. W. Covey-Crump: The Pythagorean Proposition). But the question still arises: What does it symbolise in speculative Freemasonry? And again there is a divergence of opinion. We may, of course, put on one side its operative use. That is as well-known outside the Craft as within it. If I may refer once again to the late Bro. Revd. Canon Covey-Crump, who undoubtedly ranked among the great Masonic scholars and whose opinions on Masonic interpretations are worthy of every consideration, he says that it is evidently the symbol of another symbol and that other symbol is those "certain Hebrew characters" to which the attention of our ancient Brethren was drawn when they went to receive their wages in the Middle Chamber of the Temple. Those Hebrew characters, as we may see if we look carefully on the Second Degree Tracing Board where they appear just above the door of the Middle Chamber were the Yod, He, Van, He of the Hebrew alphabet, and constitute the name of God in Hebrew, about which so much has been written. It is said that this was the word spoken by the High Priest once a year when he entered the Holy of Holies to make Propitiation for the sins of the people. The letters are all consonants and the true vowel paintings which would make the name pronounceable have been lost. There is a tradition which states that the true pronunciation was known to the High Priest only and it was handed down orally from High Priest to High Priest until it finally became lost. When we consider what in Freemasonry that name can convey to us when analysed, especially by certain methods employed by Cabbalists, it would seem that the 47th Problem of Euclid symbolises all that is meant by a full knowledge of the mysteries of the Craft and that is the key by which to obtain the genuine secrets of a Master Mason. It can only be in this sense, that by some Unknown authority, it has become the badge or emblem of a P.M., who, theoretically, has thoroughly mastered all that Freemasonry has to teach and applies that teaching to his daily life. The use of geometrical designs to illustrate abstract ideas is, of course, very old; as old, indeed, as symbolism itself.

As a moment or two ago I mentioned the Cabbalists, just a word concerning them is, perhaps, necessary, as the term may be unknown to most of you. Cabbala is a late Hebrew word meaning "received lore" and is the name given about the XVth century to a system of Jewish theosophy and mysticism, which had its origin about the first century, B.C., in Alexandria, that great centre of

lean-Ling in the old world, and contains a mixture of Jewish, Greek, Egyptian and Babylonian elements. It flourished among the Jews in Spain from the ninth to the fifteenth century. Owing to a great persecution towards the latter part of that century there was quite an exodus of Jews from that country. They spread over the rest of Europe, including England, and their doctrines exercised more than a little fascination among the learned Christians from that time onwards. How, when and even why Cabbalism entered Freemasonry and influenced the development of its symbolism is another of those Masonic problems which has never been solved. Many theories have been advanced, but it is readily recognized by those who have made research in that direction none is wholly acceptable. To speak of Cabbalism and to illustrate how it permeates almost all the degrees of Freemasonry would require several lectures, and it is, therefore, quite impossible for me to speak more fully on this aspect of our Ritual. There is a fairly large literature on the subject which can be commended to those who would care to study it more fully, while every student will find it not only interesting but will help him to understand many points of our Ceremonies.

Underneath the badge of a P.M. are six lines in a well-known Masonic cypher, the invention of which is traditionally attributed to Albertus Magnus, Bishop of Cologne, one of the great German builders of the XIIIth Century, who is said to be among the first to teach the principles of that most noble of all orders of architecture, the Gothic, to his fellow craftsmen. It was originally my intention to illustrate on a blackboard how to obtain the key to this cypher, but I am afraid the time factor will not permit, as it would make this Lecture unduly prolonged. I will, therefore, content myself with observing that it is used in a variety of ways and in the method employed by Brother Harris, like Hebrew, it reads from right to left.

The first line consists of the initials of the pass-word leading to this degree. It is followed by the letters HAB, the usual contraction of the name of the leading figure in the allegory which comprises the Third Degree.

Beneath this is the date of the great tragedy, A.L. 3000. AL. are the initials of the Latin words Anne Lucis, which mean Year of Light, the light, in this instance, being the Light of Creation. An interesting theory concerning this date is put forward by Brother the Revd F. de P. Castells. " In the Middle Ages there was prevalent an opinion that the world was destined to last six thousand years, after which there would be a millenium of universal peace and happiness. And so the year A.L. 3000 was, in a way, the central point in human history, which the death of the brightest character recorded in the annals of Freemasonry at that point had the effect of dividing the six thousand years into two equal parts." (\*Rev. F. de P. Castells: *Arithmetic of Freemasonry*).

Then follow the letters MB MB. These are the contracted forms of the secret words of the Degree. There is no doubt that the first was the Master Mason's Word of the Moderns, and the other that of the Ancients. Brother the Revd. Dr. Rosenbaum, a well-known authority on Hebrew proper names informs us that . . . . is Hebrew whilst the other . . . . is Aramaic, and they may be said to convey the meaning attributed to them in the Ritual.

I am indebted to Brother Robin, of Ceres Lodge, Swaffham, who is a very keen student of the Cabbala for the information that when dealt with by the numerical code known as Gematria, both words reduce to seven, which is, of course, the number of perfection. I do not think this is fortuitous or even a coincidence, but that the compilers of each Ritual deliberately choose a word to designate Master Masons which would reduce to this number and that like many Hebrew proper names found in the V.S.L. they were made up. Brother Robin has also been to considerable trouble to demonstrate to me how the words of the First and Second Degrees, B. and J., both reduce to eight which according to the Cabbala symbolises not only Regeneration but equilibrium or stability.

It is more than probable that in common with so many Lodges our pronunciation of the first word is entirely wrong. The word, it would seem, is a quadrisyllable and not a trisyllable. One writer, at

least, has pointed out that to make it a trisyllable is as bad as calling Salome Salom, and the father of David, Jess. (\*E. H. Cartwright: A Commentary on the Freemasonic Ritual). In the XVIIIth Century an exposure was published which ran into several editions, bearing the word as its title. There is every reason to believe that this exposure, in common with others published round about the same period was made use of by the Brethren of those days as an aid to learn their work, and seeing the word in print the habit arose of pronouncing it as an English word of three syllables and this error has been committed by a large number of Lodges ever since. When spoken as a quadrisyllable the correct pronunciation is with the second syllable accented, thus it is pronounced in this manner in most Lodges in the North and West of England as well as in the Lodges of Ireland, Scotland and the Dominions. (\*\*E. H. Cartwright: A Commentary on the Freemasonic Ritual).

The last two lines may be taken together. They consist of six single letters, the first three being CCC and the others FFZ. They refer to a portion of the seventh section of the First Lecture :-

"How long should an E.A. serve his master  
"Seven years."

"How should he serve him  
"With Freedom, Fervency and Zeal."

"Excellent qualities, what are their emblems ?  
"Chalk, Charcoal and Clay."

The Lecture then continues with a disquisition upon the moral qualities symbolised by these three substances.

On the right or North side of the Tracing Board is a symbol familiar to as many outside the Craft as within it, the five-pointed star known as the Pentagram or Pentalpha. This symbol is not mentioned in the Ritual nor in the Third Degree Lecture and it would appear that Brother Jeremy Cross (1783-1867) was the first to consider it as an emblem of the Third Degree and put it in his "Hieroglyphical Chart" first published in 1859. It is definitely not the Bright Morning Star alluded to in the Ceremony, although it often is mistakenly referred to as such by Masters of this and some other Lodges. It is generally considered as the symbol of a Master Mason and the F P of F When a man stands upright with his arms horizontal and legs outstretched he illustrates this.

If, however, we interpret this symbol according to Cabbalism, which as I have already said permeates Freemasonry, we will find that it contains within itself, very concisely, almost the whole of the Masonic philosophy, Let us take the Pentagram in its simplest form with one point in the ascendant. (When placed the other way with two points uppermost it is considered the symbol of evil). "The single point at the head represents the Great Spirit, God. A line drawn from there to the left-hand angle at the base represents the descent of the spirit into matter in its lowest form, whence it ascends to the right angle, typifying matter in its highest form, i.e., the brain of man. From here a line is drawn across the figure to the left angle representing man's progress in intellect and material civilisation, which if not directed in the right way constitutes a danger point from which he is liable to fall into moral corruption, signified by the descent of the line to the right angle at the base. But the soul of man being derived from God cannot remain at this point, but must struggle upward, as is symbolised by the line reaching again to the apex, God, from whence it issued." (\*Encyclopedia of Occultism: Art. Magical Diagrams.)

If the drawing of this line has been followed closely it will have been seen that a Pentagram has been drawn within a Pentagram and it is this latter form of the symbol that Brother Harris has delineated on his Tracing Board, enclosed within the circle of Eternity.

Below the Pentagram, continuing downwards and across the foot of the Tracing Board are some lines of Hebrew. It is a matter of conjecture whether Brother Harris was as good at his Hebrew as he was with his painting, as some of the words are doubtful, but the following may safely be taken as a good translation: "The house of the holiness in Jerusalem. It was built by the hands of Solomon, King (of) Israel, Hiram, King (of) Tzor (=Tyre) and Hiram Abif (?), and the work was completed in the year 3000."

At the foot of the Tracing Board are the weapons made use of by the three ruffians mentioned in the ritual, and the events concerning their use are familiar to you all. There are to be seen also the W.T.'s of the Degree lying on a true Tracing Board. The one depicted here symbolises our individual selves in this life and the lines, drawn upon it, the plan of our own lives, which ought to be carried out according to the Masonic line and rule, while the W.T.'s remind us to perform our allotted task as Master Masons, while it is yet day.

### The Legend of Hiram Abiff

It is now thought that the legend of Hiram Abiff was a 18<sup>th</sup> century invention (Bro. Matthew Scanlan MA Medieval History) incorporated into the many changes made in 1720 by Desguilier and Dr. Anderson when much of the Ancient Freemasons Work was edited, misunderstood or otherwise changed. Prior to 1720 there is no mention of Hiram Abiff in Masonic ritual and the candidate was the central character of the falling and rising god-man. Hiram Abiff, the skilled artificer, was the Son of a Widow of the Tribe of Naphtali. The earlier accounts of Hiram are recorded in the 1st Book of Kings, 7:13 & 14. His coming to work on the great Temple at Jerusalem is mentioned in a letter written to King Solomon by Hiram, the King of Tyre, and recorded in II Chronicles, 2:13 & 14. The word Abiff is believed to mean "his father", and the name is often translated as "Hiram, my father". He was regarded as the father of the workmen on the Temple. One of the lessons of the legend of Hiram Abiff is that of fidelity to your one's highest ideals. Hiram Abiff is, in essence, identical with many of the Mystery School heroes. The drama of the Egyptian god Osiris began with his tragic death, the search for his body by Isis, its discovery, and its restoration. The Greek god Dionysus was attacked by the Titans. In the course of the fight he went through many transformations but was finally overcome. The Titans dismembered him, but in due time the goddess Rhea came to his aid and he rose glorious and entire. This formula is ancient. It is the concept of the sacred king, who in many instances is lame (which signifies his dedication), and is destined for sacrifice, that the earth might become regenerated and uplifted by divine power.

Regarding Hiram as the "Son of the Widow," there are a few things to mention. The Egyptian god Horus, as the child of Isis and Osiris, was also the son of a widow. Hermes Trismegistus called the stone "orphan." There seems to be a Manichaeian origin to the terms "son of the widow" and "children of the widow". The Manichaeans were called "children of the widow". Etymologically, the word *individual* is related to the word *widow*. *Vidua*, Latin for widow, derives from the verb *videre*, meaning "to part."

Using the Qabalistic discipline of *gematria*, the Hebrew spelling of Hiram Abiff equals the number 273. So does the Hebrew word for "Hidden Light". And the phrase found in Psalms 118:22 "the stone refused by the builders" is also added adds up to 273. Sometimes, *Gematria* crosses languages, too. For example, the Greek word *athanasia*, which means "immortality," also equals 273. From the standpoint of *gematria*, the message could not be clearer.

## **The Lion of the Tribe of Judah**

The lion has always been the symbol of might and royalty. It was the sign of the Tribe of Judah, because this was the royal tribe of the Hebrew Nation. All Kings of Judah were, therefore, called the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah." This was also one of the titles of King Solomon. This was the literal meaning. In the Middle Ages, the lion was a symbol of resurrection. There were common tales that the lion cub when born lay dead for three days until breathed upon by its father. This breath brought the cub back to life. Representations of roaring lions symbolized the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. The lion, being such a majestic animal, has long been considered the "king" of beasts; associated with the sun because of its mane. Its likeness is commonly found on the thrones and palaces of rulers. The Mithraic god *Aion* had a human body with a lion's head. Because of its association with the sun and its correspondence to the zodiacal sign of Leo, the Lion is also considered a symbol of alchemical Fire.

## **The Three Ruffians**

There are many symbolic explanations for the appearance of these three ruffians in our ritualistic work. Their attempt to obtain the secrets not rightfully theirs, and the dire consequences of their actions, are symbolic of many things. Trying to obtain knowledge of Divine Truth by some means other than a reward for faithfulness, makes the culprit both a thief and a murderer. Each of us is reminded that rewards must be earned, rather than obtained by violence or devious means. The Ruffians are also symbolic of the enemies we have within us: our own ignorance, passions and attitudes, which we have "come here to control and subdue".

## **The Lost Word**

In the search for "That Which Was Lost," we are not actually searching for a particular word. Our search is a symbol for our "feeling of loss" or "exile" from the Source of Life. What we are searching for is Divine Truth, which should be the ultimate goal of all men and Masons.

The Book of Genesis gives us a clue to the power of speech. In it, we learn that the first Act of Creation occurred when "God said." The utterance of the Word is also closely connected with the idea of Light, and therefore knowledge. Having the power of speech is perhaps the noblest attribute of man, because he can communicate his thoughts to his fellows. Thus, The Word has been carried down over through the ages as synonymous with every manifestation of Divine Power and Truth. We must always search diligently for truth, and never permit prejudice, passions, or conflicts of interest, to hinder us in our search. We must keep our minds open to receiving truth from any source. Thus, Masons are devoted to freedom of thought, speech and action. In your Craft Lodges, we have but a substitute for the True Word. Each person must ultimately seek out and find the True Word for himself, through his own individual efforts.

Some Masons feel that the names of the Ruffians give us a blatant hint at the Lost Word. Indeed, there is an allusion to the sacred syllable of the Vedic texts found in these names. But again, that word is itself is a symbol of the at underlying Reality that upholds and sustains the world. Some Masons feel that the Lost Word is spoken of in the scriptures variously as "the sound of rushing waters" and "I heard behind me a Voice like a great trumpet," or "a great roar like a lion" and such.

## **The Three Grand Masters**

The three Grand Masters mentioned often in our rituals concerning the building of the Temple are: Solomon, King of Israel; Ahiram, King of Tyre (Tyre meaning stone or rock) ; and Hiram Abiff. In early times, some religions regarded Deity in three aspects. The secrets known only to these



three Grand Masters typify Divine Truth, which was known only to Deity, and was not to be communicated to man until he had completed his own spiritual temple. Once these secrets were attained, a man could reap the rewards of a well-spent life, and travel to the unknown country toward which all of us are traveling. By knowing the meaning of these names and references to their offices, you will better understand what the ritual means.

## **The Master Mason's Charge**

© Professor Emeritus, Bro. John Grange

A paper presented at the second meeting of the Cornerstone Society, Freemasons' Hall, London, Saturday, 12 May, 2001.

The progression through the three degrees of Craft masonry has much in common with the spiritual pathway of the ancient Greeks. The third century philosopher Origen, a pupil of St. Clement of Alexandria and one well versed in both Platonic and Christian thinking, described the 'three ways' of the spiritual life – Ethics, Physics and Theoria. The terms ethics and physics are derived from the names of two of the works of Aristotle. Ethics had the same import as it has today, but Physics then referred to the study of the entire natural world and thus had a much broader import than it has now. Aristotle followed up his work Physics with another dealing with the underlying basis of the reality of time, space, form and so on - the hidden mysteries of nature and science - and he termed this work Metaphysics, which simply means the one coming after physics. Theoria, from which we derive the word theory, means a sighting and was the word applied by Origen to the vision of God. Thus, the Greeks of that day would prepare themselves by the pursuit of the ethical or moral life, then open themselves to intellectual truth and finally, by contemplation, enter into the presence of God Himself. Hence the exhortation in the third degree reminds us of the moral teaching of the first degree and the intellectual principles revealed in the second. As the exhortation states, "...still guiding your progress by the principles of moral truth, you were led in the second degree to contemplate the intellectual faculty and to trace it from its development, through the paths of heavenly science, even to the throne of God Himself." But now, in the third degree, his mind 'modelled by virtue and science' - by ethics and physics, including metaphysics - the aspirant is entreated to enter on the third of Origen's three ways, the Theoria. He receives this entreaty in the Charge of that degree that immediately follows the physical raising and is surely one of the most profound parts of our entire masonic system. The opening sentence in the Charge introduces us to the expression 'darkness visible'. At first view, the idea of darkness being visible is quite perplexing and paradoxical. What, therefore, is meant by it? In the first degree, the greatest desire of the heart of the initiate is Light – and the Light revealed to him is that of the Volume of the Sacred Law (usually the Holy Bible in English freemasonry, but for a Muslim it would be the Koran, the Hindus the Gita, etc...) and the ethical and moral code exemplified by the symbolism of the square and compasses. The enlightenment experienced in the first degree corresponds with what St. Gregory of Nyssa termed 'photismos' and refers to that awakening of faith which calls upon the aspirant to begin a spiritual journey. It is not ultimate enlightenment: for that to occur he must first make that journey through the paths of heavenly science, as he is instructed to do in the second degree. However, in the third degree, we meet this new and, at first view, rather awesome concept - 'darkness visible'. Spiritual darkness was no stranger to the Christian mystics, including a sixth-century Syrian monk who was well versed in Platonic philosophy and who took as his pseudonym the name of St. Paul's friend Dionysius the Aeropagite. Dionysius stressed the utter transcendence of God, beyond all attributes and description. He wrote of the God who 'surpasses all condition, movement, life, imagination, conjecture, name, discourse, thought, conception, being, rest, dwelling, limit, infinity, everything that exists', and added that we must go beyond name and form, beyond being and concept, into the divine darkness that we can only know by unknowing. Is this the key to wisdom? When the Oracle at Delphi declared Socrates the wisest of all men, Socrates replied that he only differed from other men in being fully aware of what he did not know! Jesus had no time for the fundamentalist know-it-alls: Alas for you lawyers! You have taken away the key of wisdom; you did not go in yourselves, and those who were on their way in, you stopped.' (Luke 11:52).

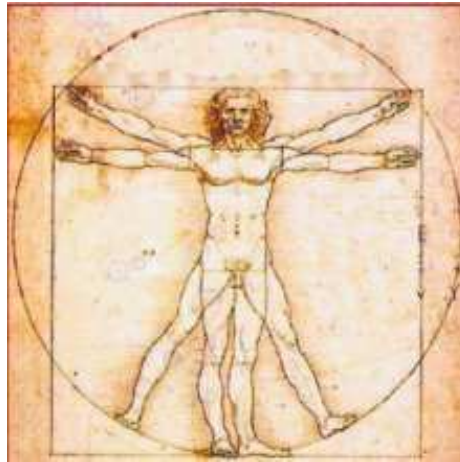
(The German Bible has the word *Schriftsgelehrter* for lawyer – literally, a student of the letter of the text.) Dionysius stressed that, paradoxically, we come to know God by going beyond human rationality and receiving the light of 'divine darkness'. As Father Bede Griffiths, a Roman Catholic monk who did so much to build bridges between Christianity and Hinduism, expressed, One has gone beyond (human rationality) and has experienced God in the darkness, as the light beyond the darkness and as the light in the darkness. .. Darkness is one of the aspects of the mystical experience as one goes beyond the created world and encounters the divine Reality.

We encounter this concept of utter and absolute transcendence in other great faiths, notably in Buddhism. Buddhists, contrary to popular Western opinion, are not atheists. It is merely that, like Dionysius, they go beyond name and form, beyond being and concept, and thus, in their desire to transcend reason, appear to speak of the divine and the path to enlightenment in negative or apparently nihilistic terms. This is reflected well in a Zen story or Koan - Joshu asked the teacher Nansen, 'What is the true Way?' Nansen answered, 'Everyday way is the true way' Joshu asked, 'Can I study it?' Nansen answered, 'The more you study, the further from the Way' Joshu asked, 'If I don't study it, how can I know it?' Nansen answered, 'The Way does not belong to things seen: nor to things unseen. It does not belong to things known: nor to things unknown. Do not seek it, study it, or name it. To find yourself on it, open yourself as wide as the sky.

It is also reflected in the opening verse of the Tao Te Ching by Lao-Tzu – 'The Way that can be described is not the Eternal Way'. Of particular relevance to the Charge, Lao-Tzu also writes, Mystery and reality emerge from the same source. This source is called darkness. Darkness born of darkness, the beginning of all understanding. Although the Charge speaks of 'that mysterious veil which the eye of human reason cannot penetrate', it adds, encouragingly, '... unless assisted by that Light which is from above.' But what is this Light from above? Masons differ in their interpretation of this statement. Some hold that it is the light of personal mystical experience, others that it is God's revealed will and word enshrined in the Volume of the Sacred Law and, indeed, the Worshipful Master may even point to the Volume of the Sacred Law at this point in the Charge. Yet others would regard it as an Inner Light – in Christian terms, the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. It is, perhaps, that light referred to by Mansukh Patel, an inspiring activist for global peace: There is a light that we all have within us ... I believe that this light is the real you. It is your greatest treasure. It is the clarity of this light that makes a great person great. The Charge also refers to the 'glimmering ray. Some Masters giving the Charge imply, by their gestures, that the glimmering ray of the solitary candle is the Light from above. I would suggest that the material light of this candle merely represents the light of human reason. One might even say at this point 'Yet, even by the glimmering ray of reason.' By the glimmering ray of our modern post-Enlightenment science-based rationality, we might be tempted to conclude that our lives are indeed transitory and will end in the cold bosom of the grave. But we are taught in the Charge that emblems of mortality and contemplation on our inevitable destiny should lead our reflections on to the knowledge of yourself. Thus we are encouraged to ask if our 'inevitable destiny' is really the oblivion of the grave that we perceive by the glimmering light of human reason? I would suggest that the implication here is that our inevitable destiny is the exact opposite! By contemplation of the transitory nature of our bodily existence - Memento Mori - we are led to seek and discover our true selves as eternal and spiritual beings made in the image and likeness of our Creator. Let us return to the philosopher Origen who emphasised that we dwell in God, and he in us, and who termed this indwelling 'en theos', from which we derive the word enthusiasm. He stressed that the spiritual life begins when we recognise that we are created in the image of God and that God is present to us in that image. He stated that the enlightened person 'understands that the real world is within.' Many mystics and religious leaders, including Pope John Paul II in his recent encyclical *Fides et Ratio*, have subsequently emphasised the importance of self-knowledge as the gateway to divine enlightenment. Indeed, the Pope reminds his readers of the inscription 'Know Thyself' carved on the temple at Delphi. The importance of self knowledge as the key to enlightenment is also stressed by the greatest of the English mystics, Julian of Norwich - This passing life that we lead here, in our sensuality, is not aware of what our true self is, except in faith. When we come to know and see clearly what our self is, then shall we, truly and clearly, see and know our Lord God in fullness of joy. But can freemasonry, without trespassing on the sacred ground of religion, aid us in our quest for self-enlightenment? To quote another well known and respected Julian, W. Bro. Julian Rees, Classical mysticism

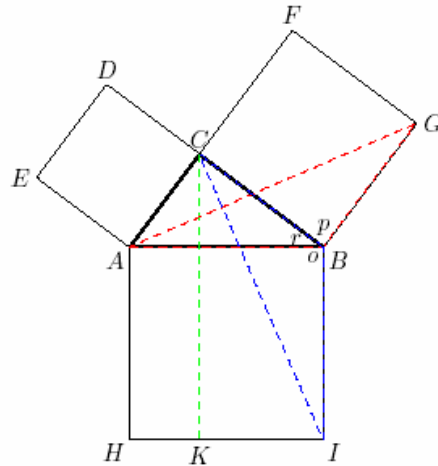
distinguished between the once-born and twice-born; once born into the material world we only know ourselves as a material being in a material world, but if we have the good fortune to be twice-born we will know our own nature beyond the material, we will be spiritually awakened, we will know, esteem and love ourselves, not in any narcissistic or egotistical way, but know ourselves as part of the whole, thereby enabling us to love others, and to love God, in ourselves. I do not believe it is fanciful to say that freemasonry can enable us in that endeavour, indeed I believe that freemasonry is uniquely placed to deliver on such a promise. I would add to this that the more of us who are led by the Craft to a spiritual awakening, the more the light will shine throughout Freemasonry, to its great enrichment and re-enchantment. As Kahlil Gibran has written in *The Garden of the Prophet*: So shall the snow of your heart melt when the spring is come, and thus shall your secret run in streams to seek the river of life in the valley. And the river shall enfold your secret and carry it to the great sea.

We may therefore conclude that our allotted task in this life is that of knowing ourselves, of acknowledging and facing both the bright and the shadow sides of our inner being, the darkness and the light. The path to self knowledge is through the first Grand Principle on which our Order is founded; namely, Love. The explanation of the first degree tracing board reminds us that the mason who is possessed of Love, in its most ample sense may justly be deemed to have attained the summit of his profession. This great truth is beautifully expressed by St. Isaac the Syrian who wrote, When we reach love, we have reached God; our road is ended and we have crossed to the island which is beyond the world. It is also lucidly expounded on in the *Volume of the Sacred Law*, in the first letter of St. John: God is Love; he who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him. This is for us the perfection of love, to have confidence on the day of judgement, and this we can have, because even in this world we are as He is.



Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man

## The 47th Proposition of Pythagoras



**Our Ancient Friend and Brother, the Great Pythagoras** by Bro. Thomas D. Worrel,  
<http://www.sricf-ca.org/paper1.htm>

*"Let no one ignorant of Geometry enter here"*

In our Masonic adventure we encounter this great historical figure or his work more than once. The first meeting occurs in the Third Degree in the company of the Hieroglyphical Emblems. We are not told much, being only presented with one paragraph of information which, you might say, contains a few odd statements. We hear that Pythagoras invented the formula that is known as the Forty-Seventh Proposition of Euclid (better known to us as the Pythagorean Theorem). That he traveled all over the known world: Africa, Asia and Europe (it is more likely that he kept to the Mediterranean rim). That he was Initiated into several orders of priesthood. From this point the paragraph begins to take on a strange twist. We are next told that he was raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason (since Pythagoras lived in the 6th century B.C. we can really count ourselves as being the world's oldest Fraternity). And finally we are informed that when he first realized the relationship that the Theorem defines he exclaimed EUREKA! I guess that is just a piece of wisdom trivia that has been handed down for 25 centuries. And because of his great excitement he sacrificed a hecatomb - which is a great public sacrifice of probably 100 oxen. This is even stranger knowing that Pythagoras was a vegetarian and is one of the earliest Western philosophers to teach the doctrine of the transmigration of souls - that souls are immortal and are continually reborn into new bodily forms.

We may be inclined to take lightly this part of the Lecture due to its quasi-historical nature and oddities but garner some feeling of respect and acknowledgement for an ancient philosopher and mathematician. But upon closer examination of this paragraph we find that such a casual attitude might be a mistake. I think we can be generous and give the author some credit and assume that there is something more within what he said (I think the paragraph was taken wholly from Thomas Smith Webb). One of the first things that come to our attention is the fact that Pythagoras is one of the only if not the only "outsider" mentioned in all the Blue Lodge Degrees. This fact alone gives us pause to wonder why he has been spotlighted by our Masonic ancestors. So who was this man given such high esteem in our Fraternity?

## Pythagoras

Pythagoras was probably born about 570 B.C. on the island of Samos. He was an Ionian Greek. He immigrated to Crotona in southern Italy where he founded a philosophical and religious society. At one point it was persecuted and many of its leaders were killed. Pythagoras resettled but eventually it happened again and the fraternity was scattered. It seemingly died out in the fourth century B.C. Pythagoras himself died around 500 B.C. We do know a little about Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans but the earliest is from Plato. His school grew into a sort of brotherhood and fraternity with vows of secrecy. Therefore, little was written down. The emblem of the society was a pentagram. At each point of the star was a Greek letter which all together spelled "health" ( - Upsilon, gamma, iota, theta, alpha). And we know that Apollo was of major importance to their society. We know that:

"In earlier Greek theology, the Logos was personified in the shining figure of Apollo, the god of light, music, geometry, and harmony, whose nature most closely reflects the highest realizations of the Greek Spirit. As the god of harmony, he is said to have invented all music. Apollo was the god of reason (logos), yet he was also a god of prophecy. He is a personification of the celestial harmony, ...He was the leader of the nine Muses, the goddesses of inspiration and the arts,..." (David Fideler, Jesus Christ. Sun of God, page 63)

Although Pythagoreanism is of vast extent and far beyond the scope of this paper, so for brevity we can list its main doctrines as: "the immortality of the soul, philosophy as an assimilation to the divine, and the mathematical basis of the cosmos." (Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Vol. 7, page 39) The particular interest of this paper is the Hieroglyphical Emblem: the Forty- Seventh Problem of Euclid.

### The Forty-Seventh Proposition of Euclid

The Pythagorean theorem states that for any right triangle the sum of the squares of its two legs equals the square of its hypotenuse ( $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ ). Or we could frame it as the sum of the square of the horizontal and the square of the perpendicular equals the square of the hypotenuse. We know this formulation was known before Pythagoras - there is evidence in ancient Egyptian work, ancient China (the Chou Pei manuscript), and the megalith builders. Regardless, it is attributed to Pythagoras and two hundred years later Euclid compiled his "Elements of Mathematics" where this particular proposition is found in Book One.

(47th) In every right angle triangle the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.

(48th) If the square described on one of the sides of a triangle is equal to the square described on the other sides, then the angle contained by these two sides is a right angle.

This theorem has been called the root of all geometry and the cornerstone of mathematics. The practical applications alone are worthy of the high esteem that Masonry affords it. And this is the interpretation of the lecture that is most considered when masons speak of it But the meaning of this hieroglyphical emblem does not stop there.

The emblem we are usually presented is the 3,4,5 right triangle in this fashion: The vertical line is of 3 units, the horizontal is of 4 units, and the hypotenuse is of 5 units. Not only is our attention called to this geometrical figure in the Master Mason degree, it is also prominent in the Scottish Rite in the 20th Degree - Master of the Symbolic Lodge and in the 25th Degree - Knight of the

Brazen Serpent. Rex Hutchens, commenting upon the 20th Degree in his book on the Scottish Rite explains that:

Nine is a perfect number, being the triple of three. There are nine candles in three groups of three each on the East, West, and South of the Altar. They form a graphic representation of the 47th Problem It makes no difference in the equation if the other two angles are 45 degrees each or 30 degrees and 60 degrees or 5 degrees and 85 degrees. Because of the mystic meaning associated with numbers by the ancients, they considered the most beautiful triangle of all, the right angled triangle with sides of 3,4 and 5 units of measure. (Rex Hutchens, The Bridge to light, p.171)

In the 25th Degree commentary Hutchens describes the setting of this degree:

The ceremony takes place in four apartments. They are all remarkable in their simplicity. The first is called the House of the Earth. ...The second apartment is called the House of the Planets. The third apartment is ... styled the House of the Sun and Moon.... The principal chamber is called the House of the Light. Nine lights (candles) are arranged on the altar in groups of three, forming a representation of the Pythagorean Theorem,... (The Bridge to Light, p.215)

The evidence that the particular triangle alluded to in the Monitor is the 3,4,5 right triangle can be derived from the odd comments about Pythagoras' exclamation "Eureka" in the Grecian language. Here is where we can begin to apply the investigative tools of what is called gematria. As you know the ancient letters were also numbers. The correlation of numbers with letters gave ample opportunity to nest hidden meaning within words, phrases, and names. For example, if we take the word "Eureka" in Greek and consider the letters as numbers instead of letters, add them up to get a total value we get 534 - the units of this special triangle.

Maybe we can even find hints of this geometry in earlier degrees. A very interesting technique of symbolism can be seen when two different types of symbolism are fused together or alluded to by one another such as a legend that contains mathematical symbolism. For example, many of the blacksmiths of the gods were crippled or lame. In many cases the Sacred King was lame. The destiny of the Sacred King was to lose his life as a sacrifice; an act which will regenerate the world. Usually the lameness and sacrifice was deliberately caused. Vergil wrote a poem wherein the Queen who is resolved to die offering herself as a victim in the fire, he writes: "beside the altars, with one foot unshod, she calls as one about to die upon the gods and upon the doom-witnessing stars." There is an association between lameness and having one foot unshod. And in the idea of sacrifice and redemption. There is a Byzantine painting known as "Our Lady of Perpetual Help". This painting is of the Madonna holding her divine child. On each side of them there is an angel who holds some of the images associated with the Crucifixion. The divine child is looking at one angel and one of his shoes is falling off. We can even find this idea in the slanting foot-rest of the Russian Cross in the Eastern Churches.

We can develop this further. In geometry, there are three types of triangles: equilateral, isosceles and scalene. The equilateral triangle has 3 equal sides; the isosceles has 2 equal sides, and the scalene triangle has no equal sides. Scalene means "uneven"; it also means "limping". Of all the infinite scalene triangles, the one thought of by the ancients as special - the king of them all, was the 3,4,5 unit triangle. This one had the special properties and it grew to have mystical properties as well. In so considering the symbolism of the Egyptian structure one author states:

And so beneath the ideal pyramid, with its four great equilaterals pointing heavenward as they converge above the center of the basal square... there would be sacrificed, hidden in the foundations so to speak, a limping but necessary scalene, supplying the all-important

right angle for the base and for the central elevation. (Denning & Philips, The Magical Philosophy, Vol. 2 p.58)

As we consider geometry as symbolism as well as Truth, we have to think of it as the ancients did. Pythagoras said "All is Number" and in The Republic, Plato wrote: "The knowledge at which geometry aims is the knowledge of the Eternal." The Eternal was to Plato the archetypal Forms, or the timeless truths of existence. In other words, the foundation of the universe. That aspect of the universe which always was and ever will be.

### **The Mystical Symbolism of the Pythagorean Triangle**

According to Plutarch (46 - 120 C.E.), the Egyptians attributed the sides of the triangle in this fashion. The vertical line was of 3 units and attributed to Osiris. The horizontal line was of 4 units and attributed to Isis. And the hypotenuse was, of course, 5 units and attributed to Horus, the son of Osiris and Isis. It is noteworthy that Plutarch studied in the Academy at Athens and was a priest at Apollo's temple at Delphi for 20 years. In the myth of Osiris and Isis, Osiris is killed which makes Horus the Son of a Widow and links him with Hiram.

The units of the triangle's side are significant. The three units of the Osiris vertical has been attributed to the three Alchemical principles of Salt, Sulphur and Mercury (direct correspondence with the Hindu concept of the Gunas: Tamas, Rajas and Sattva.). All things are manifestations of these three principles according to Alchemical doctrine. The four units of the horizontal line of Isis relate to the so-called four elements: earth, air, water, and fire. These are of course the four Ancients. (Hindu classification: prithivi, vayu, apas, tejas). The ascending Horus line with its five units represents the five kingdoms: mineral, plant, animal, human, and the Fifth Kingdom. This is the Path of Return. The ascending line finally connects back up with the Osirian line. The Fifth Kingdom symbolizes the Adept as one who has consciously reunited with the Source of all Being.

The angles that this special triangle expresses are significant as well. Here we must dive deeper into the realm of gematria. Remember that the assumption is that words with the same numerical value are in some meaningful way connected. The set angles of the 3,4,5 triangle (in whole numbers) are 90 degrees, 37 degrees, and 53 degrees. If we can understand that this geometrical figure is not only of the greatest practical value but also of the greatest mystical significance we must assume that every aspect of it sheds further Light upon our Quest. We can look upon this emblem as representing the ongoing incarnation of Spirit and the ensuing ascent of consciousness by building higher and more complex forms in which to express Itself.

Looking at where the vertical meets the horizontal (the conjunction of the Osiris and Isis) we have the 90 degree angle - the angle of a square. By Hebrew gematria we know right away that 90 is the value of the Hebrew word for Water - Mem (mem-yod-mem). of course this reference is to Water as symbolical as in the alchemical statement: "Our Sun and our Moon are conjoined in our Water." The union of the Father and Mother produces the child Horus.

The angle at the conjunction of Isis and Horus, the beginning of the ascension of the hypotenuse, is 37 degrees. We know from our Qabala that 37 is the number of Adam's second son - Abel (Hebrew spelling: heh-beth- lamed). Abel is considered a prototype of Christ. The number 37 is also associated with Yechidah - the Inmost Self (yod-cheth-yod-daleth-heh), and the word for Ark used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in reference to both Moses and Noah - he thibe. (eta theta, iota, beta, eta). The ark was the instrument used to ensure the continuing life.

The angle at the conjunction of Horus and Osiris at the head of the corner is 53 degrees. This is the symbolical union of the Father with the Son. The Hebrew words whose value is 53 includes Garden - as in the Garden of Eden (gan: gimel-nun) and Stone (ehben: aleph-beth-nun). In the Greek we find the word Acacia, the sprig of immortality (alpha-kappa- alpha-kappa-iota-alpha). A

further look at Ehben - stone- reveals another hidden point of light. If we look at the letters or letter it, Ab or father (aleph-beth or 3) and Ben or son (beth-nun or 52) can be joined in the letters aleph-ben-nun (53) or ehben which is stone. In other words, the father and son are conjoined in the Stone.

One further elaboration of these ideas - and we could continue this for some time - is the connection of Horns with Hiram Abiff (and Christ, Krishna, and Brother C.R. for that matter). The numeral value in Hebrew for Hiram Abiff is 273. The same value is found in the Hebrew words Aur Genoz meaning: the Hidden Light. We also find the familiar phrase in Psalm 118:22 "the stone which the builders refused". In Hebrew it is pronounced ehben masu ha-bonim and the value of this phrase - "the stone which the builders refused" is 273 just like Hiram Abiff and the Hidden Light. And if we listen to the syllables of this phrase out of Psalms we can find further light on the significance of the substitute for the Lost Word. If we just take the phrase "refused by the builders" (masu-ha- bonim) it equals the value 220. This is another very important number for the gematria is related to the Hebrew word for "lamb" (kaph-resh), the Latin Christus Deus et Homo or Christ, God and Man; and Novus Ordo Seclorum - A New World Order.

With all this behind us I think that we can conclude that the value of the Pythagorean triangle to Masonry is beyond compare. It leads us into the inner recesses by its very nature. It links us with the inner teachings of the Ancient Mystery Schools even taking us back to the construction of the Pyramids with their triangular faces, four-fold base, and five corners and faces; back to the megalithic builders, also shedding light upon the cryptic words of the alchemists, aligns us with our Hindu brethren, binds us with the three pillars of the Qabalistic Tree of Life - Mercy, Severity, and Mildness and relating to our own pillars of Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty and the Three Grand Masters of the Temple.

I am indebted to the following works for their ideas on this subject:

*The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order* by Paul Poster Case  
*A Bridge to Light* by Rex Hutchens  
*Jesus Christ: Sun of God* by David Piderer  
*Hermetic Masonry* by Frank C. Higgins  
*Geometry for the Practical Man* by J.E. Thompson  
*The Magic of Mathematics* by Theoni Pappas  
*Stellar Theology and Masonic Astronomy* by Robert Hewitt Brown  
*Restorations of Masonic Geometry and Symbolry* by H.P.H. Bromwell  
*The Magical Philosophy Vol I - V* by Melita Denning & Osborne Phillips



## Suggested Reading

*The Golden Builders -Alchemists, Rosicrucian's and the First Freemasons* by Tobias Churton

*Jesus and the Lost Goddess- the Secret Teachings of the original Christians* by Timothy Freke & Peter Gandy

*The Jesus Mysteries-was the original Jesus a pagan god?* by Timothy Freke & Peter Gandy stocked in the Masonic Resource Centre. Freemasons may read directly how their ritual relates to the dying and resurrecting god-man. The ancient mysteries and comparative religions are explored. A must read.

*The Pagan Christ- rediscovering the lost light* by Tom Harpur

*Shamanic Wisdom in the Pyramid Texts- the mystical tradition in ancient Egypt* by Jeremy Naydler

*Temple of the Cosmos- the ancient Egyptian experience of the sacred* by Jeremy Naydler

## Master Masons Glossary

**Approbation** approval, commendation or praise; a formal or official act of approval

**Brute creation** animals at their birth; anything non-human in its infancy *Cleaves* comes apart from; separates into distinct parts; divides; to part or split especially along a natural line or division

**Dotage** a decline of mental faculties associated with old age; a state or period of senile decay marked by decline of mental poise and alertness

**Emulation** ambitious rivalry; ambition or desire to equal or excel others in achievement

**Fiat** an authoritative decree, sanction or order; a command or act of will that creates something without, or as if without, further effort; an arbitrary decree or order

**Hecatomb** 100 oxen or cattle (in ancient Greece a public sacrifice of 100 oxen to the gods in thanks for some great discovery, event or victory)

**Imbrue** stain; soak; drench

**Injunction** a warning, order, direction or instruction

**Seraph** an order of angels; one of the 6-winged angels standing in the presence of God

**Speculative** theoretical rather than practical; involving, or based on, intellectual questioning and curiosity; marked by meditating or pondering on a subject

**Sublime** lofty, grand or exalted in thought; expression or manner; of outstanding spiritual, intellectual or moral worth; tending to inspire awe

**Zeal** enthusiasm; diligence; eagerness and great interest in pursuit of something

**Ballot** a secret vote by balls and cubes or in writing

**Clandestine** not recognized by the Grand Lodge of Manitoba

**Constituent** a Lodge chartered by, or under dispensation from, a Grand Lodge

**Lodge Dimit** a document, bearing the seal of a Lodge and attested to by the Secretary, terminating membership

**In Good Standing** when dues are current

**Masonic Clothing** white aprons

**Masonic organizations** any group, chapter, order, club, association or organization Organizations requiring Masonic affiliation as a prerequisite to membership, except Masonic Lodges

**Masonic Regalia** aprons, jewels, implements and hats appropriate to one's station or office

**Masonic Youth** Order of Demolay (young men), Orders of Job's Daughters (young women)

**Notice** a call issued by the Secretary, by order of the Lodge or Master, or by other competent authority to attend or perform as specified

**Summons** an imperative order issued by the Master of a Lodge, and attested to by the Secretary, or by other competent authority, to appear as specified; a trial summons is one issued for the purpose of answering Masonic charges