

CHAPTER II



Morality, Symbology and Allegory



ANY WORKS HAVE BEEN WRITTEN to answer a very old question: What is Masonry or Freemasonry? We have been enjoined in the Lodge to be prepared to answer this question, should we ever be asked by someone wishing to know more about our Craft. A frequently heard response is that “Masonry takes good men and makes them better,” followed by an uncomfortable pause.

In many works, one may find the time-honored version which states that “Masonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.” Many additional works have been devoted to discussing this. Some writers take issue with the allegory and symbols, preferring the issue of morality as the prime tenet of the Craft. Many tend to somewhat ‘take cover’ concerning just what is the allegory and what do the symbols represent. In the Little Masonic Library [1977], vol. V, page 136, “Why Symbolism?” and page 124, “Do You Study Geometry?” the widely read Masonic author, Carl H. Claudy, discusses some of this in his series, “The Old Master.” In the end, he abandons the symbols and allegory and relates a moral explanation to “the new Master Mason,” covering himself additionally to the affect that “I do not attempt, my brother, to force upon you my understanding, or to quarrel with those Masons who find a different interpretation of the geometry which is Masonry as we understand it . . .” This appropriate response may encourage the Master Mason to seek ‘within.’

In Claudy’s discussion in “Why Symbolism,” he writes quite exoterically with a wonderful array of ‘grains of gold,’ sprinkled liberally for the attentive eye or ear. He writes, “The keenest of minds have striven to make this mystic language plain to reason, without success. . . . Words appeal to the mind; meanings not expressed in words appeal to the spirit.”

And so the dialogue continues in his work, and the works of many other writers, both for a ‘mystery’ and those who feel it is all morality, or a combination of sorts. Henry Wilson Coil, in A Comprehensive View of Freemasonry [1954], devotes the twenty pages of Chapter IX to “What is Freemasonry?”. He adds that some have expressed “Freemasonry is a progressive science, taught by degrees only,” and “Freemasonry is not religion but emphatically religion’s handmaid.” He interestingly states, “The morality of Freemasonry is not veiled at all, but is set forth in quite clear English in the ritual, *although it is illustrated by symbols.*” And finally, at the end of the chapter, he takes an extremely bold stance in giving, “in its broadest sense,” *his* definition of Freemasonry. Many writers have discussed such matters for considerable length without the courage displayed by Bro. Coil. In that his definition is over 180 words, and I do not necessarily concur with it “in its broadest sense,” I will leave the text of it to those readers who may be interested enough to read it for themselves.

As long as it has been alluded to by some that Freemasonry is or is not a religion, let me stick my neck in the proverbial noose and state emphatically that Freemasonry IS a religion! Of this there is no shadow of a doubt, but rather there is a long standing, hair-splitting, misunderstanding of what ‘religion’ is. There is, of course, a “Religion,” of which there are many ‘-isms’ and ‘-ist’ throughout the world. This kind of ‘Religion’ Freemasonry is NOT. But a religion (small ‘r’) is nothing more than, according to Webster’s New World Dictionary:

religion:

1. belief in a divine or superhuman power or powers [our trust being in God] to be obeyed and worshipped [before whom we most reverently bow] as the creator and ruler [Architect] of the universe.

Masons believe; there is, however, no governing body *telling* Masons *how to* 'believe, obey and worship.'

2. expression of this belief in conduct and ritual.

Yes, we do have such a thing as Masonic Conduct *and* most certainly we do have ritual!

3a. any specific system of belief, worship, conduct, etc., often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy.

Masons do have a system of belief, though it is very liberal, and we are specifically enjoined to keep discussion of religion and politics out of the Lodge Room, so as to promote harmony and that Brotherly Love may prevail. We also have a 'code of ethics,' [Masonic Conduct] and a large body of Masonic philosophy in our Ritual.

3b. loosely, any system of beliefs, practices, ethical values, etc., resembling, suggestive of, or likened to such a system.

4. a state of mind, or way of life expressing love for and trust in God, and one's will and effort to act according to the will of God.

There will, of course, still be those who say we are not a religion, but the above is reasonably good evidence that we are, in the Websterian sense (with a small 'r' on religion). Whether we are or not is a moot point to most Masons, for we defend almost anyone's right to think the way that they do, and we are enjoined to not indulge ourselves in piques and grudges. Let the staunch defenders, the '-ists,' of the '-isms' lead the charge (and wars) for Religion, there you will not find Freemasons disputing doctrine or splitting hairs. Our simple belief in a Supreme Being is one of the most basic tenets of the Craft. "Each religion has a different way of describing God and how humans should live. But in every religion the experience of God, the energy of love, is exactly the same. Each religion has its own history of this relationship and way of speaking about it, but there is only one divine source. . . . we stand for the synthesis of all religions. We believe each has its truth that must be incorporated with all the others. It is possible to do this without losing the sovereignty or basic truth of one's own traditional way."¹

In the main, one could not help but see that there is a "system of morality" at work in the tenets of the Craft. Of this most any Mason would agree. What then of the Symbols and Allegory?

In many portions of the Ritual we hear such phrases as "Masonically, this is to teach you that," or "but we as Free and Accepted Masons are taught to use them for a more noble and glorious purpose." Then, too, are there a vast array of 'items' portrayed in the Craft which any thinking person would accept as being a symbol, such as the:

Square	Staff	Northeast Corner
Plumb	Ashlar	Ark
Level	Three Great Lights	Beehive
Compasses	Pillars	Scythe
Altar	Blazing Star	24-inch Gauge
Apron	Letter G	Common Gavel

. . . and a host of other symbols. Many would view them, and any attendant allegory, as symbols for which a lesson of morality could apply. In the exoteric sense this is correct. There are, however, additional possibilities to the prevailing view, as expressed or alluded to by many other writers, both within the Craft and other sources.

¹ Redfield, James, The Secret of Shambhala, Warner Books, New York, 1999. page 49.

CHAPTER II



SECTION I

The Prevailing View



THE EXTANT LITERATURE of Freemasonry and related matters is extraordinarily voluminous. It would seem that there is nothing like a good mystery to spark the writer's instinct to research or comment on that which is encompassed in the myth, legend and history of our Craft. The Mason who does not avail himself of this rich body of literature, at least to some degree, is really missing some of the great writings of the past 500 years, and related matters, for any view of Freemasonry will encompass many other disciplines, '-ologies' and '-isms.'

In the early writings the origin of Freemasonry was credited with the most august beginnings that flights of fancy, legend and oral tradition could muster from the fertile imagination of man. Many papers are still written in this vein, adding to the overall comprehension of the prevailing view, but one must ever contend with the Guardians of the Craft, those ever watchful researchers who call us to task should we 'materially err' in observations and conclusions. In this regard they have issued stern and loving warnings and guidelines for the light in which writings should be set down or received, being ever 'Masonic,' for the most part, in their *allowance* ('tolerance' not being a Truly Masonic approach) for *each* Brother to discover and determine for themselves what, if anything, they would read or 'seek' and how they would perceive it.

In more recent times the prevailing view has been well tempered, among hundreds of very able writers, by such writers and papers as those published by, for example, Brothers J. M. Hamill, L. M. Sherwood, R. Hepburn and Harry Carr, all of whom may be reviewed in the "Ars Quatuor Coronatorum," Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge . . . "*the Premier Lodge of Masonic Research.*"

Worshipful Bro. Hamill, ACQ (vol. 99, 1986), wrote the worthy paper, "Masonic History and Historians." He is somewhat rigid in his approach to the history of Freemasonry, with rather good intentions considering the whole-cloth fabrication of much that had transpired under the pens of the 18th century writers and copied into our present times. In brief he discusses, among other matters, "The Authentic School" of writings and "The Non-Authentic Schools" (note the plural form in the latter 'schools'). Of course, the mediator, the keystone, of these two schools turns out to be none other than the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, whose founders coined the phrase 'authentic or scientific school.' As a caveat to adherents of "The Non-Authentic School" Bro. Hamill gives the four writing categories of *esoteric*, *mystical*, *symbolist* and *romantic*, warning that they have in common "an apparent inability to distinguish between historical fact, folklore and legend . . . They also have very unorthodox ideas on the nature and purpose of Freemasonry . . ." He is, of course, concerned with those writers who would ascribe the origins of our Craft to mystery schools or occult sciences or would force external doctrine or unsubstantiated speculations upon the inner workings of the Craft.

Bro. Sherwood, AQC (vol. 85, 1972), sums up the essence of his approach in the title of his paper, "Symbolatry, the Excessive Veneration of Symbols." One must consider when reading any paper that despite the good intentions of their writers, they (*and many other writers*) trip lightly on their own pens when they make such strange statements as Bro. Sherwood did in saying, "*To my mind*, the symbolism quoted above (from Bro. Mackey) is merely an unnecessary departure from the simple *fact* of operative use that led the apron to be accepted as the badge of a Mason. It exemplifies well a case of symbolism being given to something that had no symbolic significance when introduced." One can not argue with the *fact* that this "simple fact" is "*to the mind*" of Bro. Sherwood, thankfully, for he has essentially said that the only reason we wear aprons, as Masons, is because of the operative usage once ascribed to them, having *no symbolic significance when introduced*, but he completely skirts the *fact* that Masonic Aprons now *do* have symbolic significance. His paper is worth the reading, however, to those who would or *do indeed* cross the line into *excessive veneration* when on the subject of symbolism.

Bro. Sherwood further finds "the beautiful words and phrases" of Bro. W. L. Wilmshurst (in his well known book *The Meaning of Masonry*) to be "without significance," finding also his 'jargon' "somewhat abstruse." He culminates his assessment of Wilmshurst and several other "well-meaning Freemasons," with a quote from Bro. Rylands, Master of Coronati Lodge in 1953:

'Beware of those who found study circles to do study into the deeper meanings . . . and who . . . ask us to accept without question mystic and hidden meanings of Masonic Symbolism that amount to rubbish and nonsense.'

Fortunately, Bro. Rylands inserted the words *without question*, but I cannot be certain that the spirit of Bro. Sherwood's article is mindful of the damage which could be inflicted with whole-cloth comments which tend to demonstrate that he may not have a firm grasp on the language of symbol (which, in the above example, he therefore feels to be *abstruse*).

Bro. R. Hepburn, AQC (vol. 87, 1974), wrote an interesting paper, "Masonic Education, Part II," in which he too addresses the subject of Masonic Symbolism, which to his mind, "has been a happy hunting ground for mystics, imaginative writers and cranks of all kinds. In fact more nonsense has been written about symbolism than on any other branch of Freemasonry." He then quotes several remarks of Bro. Harry Carr, who feels that "expert guidance is needed" to protect the 'untrained reader' from 'wild theories, statements and conclusions.'

Worshipful Brother Harry Carr, AQC (vol. 83, 1970), credited by Bro. Hepburn as the writer of the Notes and Queries on pages 372 to 374, is one of *the* Deans of Masonic research and writing in recent times, being a past Junior Grand Deacon of the Grand Lodge of England and Past Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076. He is a 'must read' for any Brother seeking into a contemporary, clear and concise history of the Craft. To enter this wonderful field of study, the Brother is referred to a highly condensed (22 pages) and *highly informative* lecture of his, "Six Hundred Years of Craft Ritual," wisely reprinted by the Grand Lodge of Missouri in 1977.

In response to a question arising from a reader of one of Bro. Rylands' papers in AQC vol. 8, W.: Bro. Carr takes the bull by the horns, beginning, "Allowing that I am a complete novice on the subject of Symbolism . . . I am far less well-equipped to answer your questions than you seem to believe. Yet the points you have raised are extremely interesting and I must try to answer them, if only as an exercise in self discipline." Many Masons would run and hide from questions regarding Symbolism, being 'complete novices on the subject.' Bro. Carr, true to his calling and high international reputation, gives a very credible answer and position on the subject. The questioner noted that "it is frustrating . . . to be told that an interpretation which may be under discussion, can't possibly be accepted because it was never intended." (relating back to Bro. Rylands).

The question arose from an 'untrained reader,' and is very well answered by Bro. Carr, 'a complete novice on the subject of Symbolism,' as follows:

"My instinctive love of simplicity urges me to agree that the interpretation of a symbol of late introduction that was originally 'never intended' should be shunned, but I realize that this could be wrong and probably is wrong. We have to interpret the whole of our ritual as it stands today; we cannot separate the 17th century words and practices from those of late 18th or 19th century, when they stand in our ritual side by side. . . . You will realize that I have been compelled to abandon by original views of simplicity . . . but now, I must say that there can be no objection to an interpretation 'that was never intended,' so long as its use brings enlightenment and understanding . . . in satisfying us in our search."

Bro. Carr makes specific note of his dislike for ‘extremes of interpretation’ and his conviction of the ‘real damage’ done by inveterate symbolists who need ‘the dimensions of the pyramids, the mysteries of the heavenly bodies, the Tarot Cards, the Zodiac and other equally complex paths towards truth.’ In this he maintains his desire for simplicity and remaining within the ritual, rather than starting from the ‘outside,’ “fully determined to force them into a Masonic context.”

The ‘other’ four-letter word . . . ‘Fact’

Contemporary Masonic historians *have* made outstanding contributions to the general history of the Craft. New and significant findings in our ‘information age’ are still coming to light. Still, too, more ‘unauthentic’ commentaries are being written regarding the symbols and allegories of the Craft, indicating that an acceptable official consensus has still not come forth from the Grand Jurisdictions in this matter.

Considering the vast amount of commentary and discussion along such lines, the above discussion does give a prevailing view among relatively contemporary research writers, though admittedly, or not necessarily, are these writers symbolologists. Perhaps some of the research of the ‘authentic school’ could be directed towards more meaningful, insightful work on the symbols and allegories of the Craft. Implied, perhaps, in the prevailing view is an ongoing perception that history must be, with surgical precision, totally untainted by any vestige of myth, fallacy, legend or similar ‘stigma.’ The science of history, as it may in one regard be termed, tends to imply the need for incontrovertible data, such as names, dates, places, numbers or statistics of all kinds. There are many little snares in this ‘science’ for the historian, however admirable his intentions or qualifications may be. The simple ‘fact’ or act of compiling and writing a history immediately implies that the subject under consideration has already taken place in some past period of time. In one regard, even a live broadcast is reporting ‘history in the making,’ with the added distinction that the moment the reporter has uttered a word or phrase, he or she has added something to the fabric of local, regional, and world history.

The stuff of which history is made is etched in the earth or has been recorded in one or more of the vast media which has been available to man over many centuries. We, who would wish to analyze and record such ‘facts’ or events in our minds or some physical media are either witnesses to the actual ‘fact’ or event, or we must in some way rely upon the those who were, and such record or memory and expertise they have or had of the ‘fact’ or event. Behind all of this data are such disturbing things, for the historian, as intent, motive, background, cause, societal customs, traditions or mores or other things which may taint the process with subjectivity. Having presented his ‘facts,’ even the historian must sometimes, of necessity, step off of the scientifically provable path into the mire and weeds of commentary, hypothesis, speculation, observation, supposition, exegesis, probability and qualification. Perhaps the historians of the world would breath a collective sigh of relief if everything that was scientifically tainted or untrue, or of the ‘unauthentic [*inauthentic*] school,’ would suddenly and magically disappear from the face of the earth. Then, too, there would also be no *winding staircase* leading to the place where Hiram was *murdered*, nor any *virgin to weep* for him over his *urn*, in the Temple *where everything was fitted with such nicety that neither sound of ax nor hammer was heard* - all of which are complete Masonic myth, having no accurate historical basis in fact as having been or occurred in King Solomon’s Temple (for whom historians are still ‘in search of’).

Perhaps the rituals of Freemasonry could, in this vein, be considered *excretorial works*. Whether the ritual is moral, symbolical or allegorical, as many have asserted, the ritual itself is presented by the lecturer and to the recipient of its wisdom exoterically. Those who would seek its further light must wend their way though the excretion or shell of the ‘outer’ meaning to determine its ‘inner,’ or true(r), meaning. The Pythagoreans held this view also, as may be seen in their “Golden Verses” (see Chapter 5, Section II or Appendix IV), wherein the ‘Purification’ phase of the search for light - what Freemasons would call becoming ‘duly and truly prepared’ - is called by them “ΚΑΘΑΡΣΙΣ,” or catharsis, which, in the Aristotelian sense, applied originally to the purification or relieving of emotions from the effects of tragic drama (such as the murder of Hiram).

Is our ritual ‘simple’ enough to be taken literally, without further light? Did Freemasonry develop in a vacuum and continue to this day with its blinders on, unaware of any parallels to the ritual it borrowed and amended from sources unknown? It certainly has kept a lot of people busy speculating and writing. Who shall come along and print the official, *authentic* meaning of our ‘system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.’ Or is it as was recorded in the Summer 1997 edition of *Gnosis Magazine*, ‘Masonic Civilization’ by Richard Smoley), “. . . that Masonry has tried to avoid slavery to creeds and formulations, but that the ultimate

meaning of its rituals lies in the rites themselves. . . their import is not some kind of implicit verbal message, but rather the effect they have on the being of the candidate. Carried out *properly*, the rites should leave their own distinct mark on the individual on both conscious and unconscious levels. . . .” There is good reason to view ritual in this ‘light,’ and to consider in greater depth its call for secrecy, so that the candidate may experience it firsthand, with no foreknowledge of its content or import . . . and not imparted to them by ‘empty suits.’

Brother Carr likes his ‘simplicity,’ and in this he is far from alone, except that he is highly informed in matters of the history of the Craft. He states, “for myself, I prefer interpretation at its simplest level, and whenever possible, *in the actual words of the ritual*, e.g. ‘The Square teaches us to regulate our lives and actions . . .’ (by the Square of Virtue, &c.). Sorry, but I find, and have found this level of ‘simplicity’ to be somewhat dulling to the sense of the ritual. We are given the Working Tools to *use*, not to leave simply laying in the tool box or on the shelf to rust or rot. Surely the contemplative Mason will quickly discover there is more to the ritual than the exoteric words and ‘explanations’ given. Simplicity is not always taking the exoteric instruction at face value, for if such was the case our *world view* would be one of infinitude, not of eternity; one of diversity, not of Unity. The Work is not done by either Mason or ‘non-Mason’ alike until each and every Soul on the face of the earth has discovered the Light for which we, as Masons, seek. To think that we - Masons - are the custodians of the Light, or that we have ‘found it’ and will therefore get ‘there’ (wherever ‘there’ may be) before ‘non-Masons’ is the same pipe-dream held by every “ism” and “scism” that has perpetuated the divisiveness of man since Cain slew Abel. Simplicity is not adhering to the outer form of ‘things,’ when even as Masons we have been given proper instruction for our ‘labors’ concerning an “undiscovered country &c” [via Shakespeare]. The outer form of things is represented in our Lodge rooms by the placement of the Moon and the Pillars in the West, but as we all know our journey as Masons is towards the ‘East,’ in search of Light, not the reflection and illusion of the Moon and the duality of the Pillars in the West.

Now I may be getting abstruse for some who would like the ‘simple’ explanation; ‘King Solomon’s Pass’ to that ‘undiscovered country.’ But let us not confuse simplicity and abstruseness with being ‘duly and truly prepared.’ To some, simplicity is ‘Don’t bother me with the details, pass the mashed potatoes.’ We all have our threshold of ‘simplicity,’ and so it has been given and promised for many generations and centuries that there Truly is a Unity, that we should have no other ‘gods’ before us. What could be more simple than Unity? It is as simple as the Point of a sharp instrument or a (closed) compass(es).

How simple the world would be if everything was what it seemed to be. Or is it perhaps that things are really simpler than we could possibly imagine, if we could just let go of the illusion long enough to see things more simply? But no! That would be too easy, and perhaps along the way we would have to unburden ourselves of too many treasured beliefs and things that we enjoy, and which others *expect* of and from us. No, you must be mistaken: life is not simple, . . . is it?



Masonry is what it seems to be: a system of belief among men of common Masonic belief. But, now then, what is the *common* Masonic belief. Now there we go trying to make things ‘unsimple.’ Surely the Founding Fathers and Revisioners of Masonry had something in mind with all of that ritual and those symbols they set forth and to which we have fallen heir. Why did they go to such great care to assert that Geometry was the basis of it? What is all of this about Boaz and Jachin? And that funny little circle with the dot in the center of it with a line on each side and an open Bible on top of it? Oh yeah, that’s right; it’s simple. Must be like the thing that’s right-in-front-of-you-that-you-can’t-see. . . . simple . . .

There are many very ancient teachings that point the way toward what we are looking right at and cannot see. One of the very early ones is "For those who have eyes, let them see; For those who have ears, let them hear." And, of course, a big ‘Masonic’ teaching: "Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

So much for introductory mind warp. Let's get simple.

Simple is this. In today's, and yesterday's world, it would appear that some people are ‘too busy’ to seek or knock. This is a simple fact of life. They have grown up with a belief system that has little to do with how to seek after the inner kingdom, that house not made with hands and etc. One book attributes the Dali Lama as seeing

western people as being concerned with “commerce and gold,” but there are people who ARE searching, for something . . . Are *you* searching? Have you knocked? Not the three distinct knocks that you were *caused* to give at the inner door of Masonry, but have you Knocked in accordance with the allusion given in the Entered Apprentice’s Lecture of Reasons (also referred to as the Whys and Wherefores)?:

1. The first Knock is something to the effect of that knock which is given with the Mind, perhaps out of curiosity or an intellectual interest regarding the inner world. At this stage one is somewhat burdened with all of the accumulated opinions and beliefs of their lifetime in terms of the outer world and reflection. Have you noticed that the Inner Door of the Lodge is in the Northwest Corner? More on this later. Did you get an answer the first time, on the first knock? If not, did you give up? Did you Really want to Know or were you just curious or perhaps a bit impatient?
2. One of the old sayings is that ‘the longest journey is from the Head to the Heart. If your belief and desire were sincere, did you knock a second time, maybe months or years later, because you *felt* in your *heart* that this is what you sincerely wanted to Know and to Do, perhaps because of some major event in your life? Did you get an answer on the second knock? If not, did you give up? In whom did you place your Trust; was it well founded? Did you knock and Trust that one day the door would open for you? Maybe in a minute, or a day; a month or a year, a decade or a century. Did you Trust and keep the Faith?
3. If you kept and observed the Faith, did you find something unusual about the Third Knock? Those who have experienced the third knock will know what simple is. I know, this sounds abstruse to some. . . . but try knocking . . . there really IS a ‘door’ (see Chapter V, Section III on this subject). Each may experience it in their own way and time.

There was a time when you had to ask to become a Mason. The reason for the ‘old’ way was *very* well founded, and is as operative today as then. Just as with knocking, no one can do it for you; no one can *cause* you to give three distinct knocks, at least not the ones that are recorded in the Bible (Matthew 7:7). If you want to knock, you may. If you want to ask to become a Mason, you may. If not the one or either, that too is your choice. The ancient law of such an endeavor having to be ‘of our own free will and accord’ is very much applicable today as it was in ancient times.

What has ‘duly and truly prepared’ to do with any of this. The ancient law (paraphrased) records: "When the Initiate is ready, the Master will come." If you hold up this ancient law to a mirror, so-to-speak, you can see another Simple teaching: "When the Initiate is *not* ready, the Master will *not* come." (or what happens when or if the Master *does* come and the Initiate is *not* ready? . . . or if the Master is always present but the Initiate is not aware of this?) Does your Lodge require Proficiency in the preceding Degree or is the Brother passed or raised because the Degree Team is assembled and the Trestle Board has been published or some such other reason for rushing the Brother through the Degrees? Is there a deeper meaning of Proficiency?

Let’s take a closer look at this ancient law.

In Tibet, this law is given as "When the Chela is ready the Guru will come." In English this works out to "When the Student is ready the Teacher or Master will come." Many people over the centuries have taken this ‘law’ to mean that they must search the world over to find their Teacher, their Guru. Many have journeyed to India, China, Tibet, and hundreds of other places like Jason in search of the Golden Fleece (which is, by the way, part of the same ‘law’ in different words). Little did or do they realize that they are, in fact the student, but *they are in some ways also the master*. They are their own teacher *in a certain way* because that for which they search is within them. Once someone Knocks within: Once with the head, once with the heart, once with the soul, so to speak, they will come to know things they have seen all of their life but in a different way. But take heart, when the student is ready, the ‘master’ *will* come.

Those who would knock should be aware that it does not imply a contract or compact that life will be filled with comfort, ease, security or wealth. We have come to ‘want’ such things in our lives, but they are not necessarily the stuff of which things are made, the ‘needs,’ if a soul is seeking advancement in the ‘degrees’ of life. On the other hand, some people think that such advancement may only be made by living a life of poverty, suffering and deprivation, but this is not necessarily the case either. When we knock of our own free will and

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accord and place our trust in the Grand Architect, 'our Faith is well-founded,' and our life shifts into a different mode according to that which is for our highest good, so long as we continue to allow this to occur.

The 'comfort-and-security' factor comes into focus rather quickly if you consider the fate of the three ruffians and Hiram Abiff. Each Mason is 'slain' and 'raised.' Perhaps a deeper contemplation of this may be appropriate for a further 'knowing' of what this means. Obviously it could and does mean many things at many different levels, or veils. Some may have 'thought' about it, but consider that there are 'four veils' mentioned in some of our degrees, and the numbers seven and nine also play a very important part in many of our degrees. The implication is clear that this search, for the 'lost word' or Mastership, is not something that is accomplished in three evenings of degrees, or a week, or month or year, but is the Work of a lifetime . . . and perhaps more.

SECTION II

The Language of Symbol and Allegory

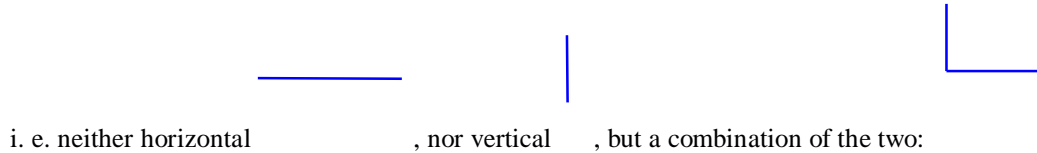


HERE IS an approach to Symbol which circumvents some of the controversy among Masonic Historians, Researchers and Scholars. By no means does the Fraternity have the final say on this subject, whether some feel that some writers may go to extremes or ‘materially err’ with original intent or otherwise. There is a much larger mirror than the Craft’s by which symbols may be reflected to those who would study or contemplate them. There is, of course the ‘pioneering’ work of such noted writers as Carl Jung in Man and His Symbols. In Greece, 150 A.D., the four-volume dream-interpretation work of Artemidorus was criticized for suggesting that a dream could mean just about anything. While I am not a degreed Symbologist I have studied for over 40 years, and written and lectured on the subject for over 20 years, at one time teaching a few 10-week courses on the subject. Still I would not consider myself the last authority on the subject by a long shot. Three of my non-Masonic papers (1982 . . . I was raised in 1987) on this subject bear such catchy little titles as “The Closet of Your Mind,” “Roots: An Inner Perspective” and “The Empirical Wizard.” The latter of these addresses those who find themselves in need of absolute proof before they will believe anything. In another paper, “Matters of the Heart,” (1981) I ask such strange questions, for those of such orientation, as:

“. . . Yes, we have Names for Things. Every Thing that is separate from US has a Name, but there is a common ‘force’ that Unites each Thing with every other Thing. What is this common force, this common designer, author and Architect of every THING? Where does this author live? What is ‘his’ Zip Code, social security number, height, weight and age? What is this designer’s Name (not the name WE have given, but what does the Designer call that Self that is It?).”

Regarding the Language of Symbol and Allegory there are some base assumptions that are useful toward a greater understanding of them:

- assume that nothing (no thing) is quite what you have grown to or been taught to accept it is. Start from scratch and contemplate the ‘things’ all about you, asking “What is it; what does it do?” and “What does it call itself?” To begin with, no ‘thing’ calls itself by any name. We are the ones who have given names to things. Each thing has a ‘purpose’ or a ‘function’ in being, but is this purpose a need, as we often suppose, or a *want*, which is more usually the case? What, for example is a chair? Think about it . . . In many places, past and present, people did (or do) not have or use chairs, but we now tend to think of them as a ‘need.’ A chair is nothing more than a ‘thing’ which allows us to remain in ‘space’ in such a position that we are neither horizontal nor vertical, but a combination of the two:



Consider how you would feel if you walked into a business conference and there was no place for to sit among your peers; that the leader of the conference asked you to sit on the floor while your peers sat in chairs all around you. How would you feel? Now change the role. Everyone in the room is now standing and the leader has asked only you to sit in the one chair in the room with all of your peers or ‘bosses’ standing around you. How would you now feel? In the above cases you would normally feel uncomfortable not being in the same relative position as the others in the room.

Taking this in a different direction, using the same setting of the business conference, we may now introduce some other aspects of the chair symbol:

Everyone in the room is now seated in a standard conference chair at the conference table:

- a. You are not permitted to sit at the table with the others.
- b. You are seated at the table with them in a baby’s high chair.
- c. You are seated at the far end of the room in an electric chair.
- d. You are seated at the end on the table on a King’s Throne.
- e. You are without a chair, under the table.
- f. You are without a chair, sitting on the center of the table.

We tend to accept what we have come to know as the ‘usual’ usage of chairs in various situations, somewhat oblivious that in the various circumstances the chair is also a Symbol in these various circumstances. It is only possible, sometimes, to step back from that to which we have become accustomed, or to see it in a more absurd context, that we may come to recognize the symbolic nature of the ‘things’ in our life. When we come to an awareness of the symbolic context of ‘things’ and how we and ‘others’ use or view these ‘things,’ we are permitted a much broader view of life and the living of it. At first we may find ourselves becoming more ‘tolerant’ of the way we and ‘others’ use their ‘things.’ This is NOT the true Masonic approach, for ‘tolerance’ tends to imply that our way may be ‘right’ and the ‘other’ way may not be as right as our way and is in need of our ‘tolerance.’ Stated differently, Masons are not “Free and Tolerated” . . . acceptance is a much kinder concept.

The Mason is enjoined to ‘improve himself in Masonry.’ Implied in this, also, is to set the example for ‘others.’ Masons should know well the Language of Symbol and Allegory, so that they may know when and/or how to set the example or give wise counsel to ‘others.’ This becomes especially challenging when it may be considered that ‘toleration’ should yield to ‘allowing.’ Masons, on many different aspects of their tenets, are imbued with the Brotherhood of Man and of allowing or acceptance ‘others’ to act of their ‘own free will and accord.’ It is here that the Mason needs to set his individual feelings on many matters aside and ‘allow’ ‘others’ to live their life the best way they know how. Such was the case during the Civil War, when many of the Grand Lodges stood down from taking sides under certain circumstance in the interest of serving a greater need, that of Brotherly love.

It is an extremely fine Art to know when to speak and when not to; when to act and when not to; to know the Language of Symbol so well as to be able to discern the true context of each moment so as to be able to Know the appropriate way to live each moment. If ever there was a prayer we could live with, it would be somewhere along the line of ‘living each moment appropriately according to the Design of the Great Architect.’ How could we possibly accomplish this without seeing behind the veil(s) of that which we find within each moment we live. This awareness comes slowly with seeing (the all seeing eye) every ‘thing’ in the Light, instead of the illusion of what we have become accustomed to seeing. It is a gentle and loving endeavor, this seeking for Light, More Light and Further Light, for many have thought they have ‘found it,’ without seeking More and Further. The rewards are

many and few. Many, in that they are boundless, eternal and immortal; few in that they are not of this earth, for us to claim as our own, except that we learn to Unite that which is 'on earth, as it is in heaven.'

This Language and these Symbols arise from a realm we should seek to understand. If this seems abstruse to you, consider focusing on a long list of 'things.' Be patient, for it is worth the endeavor. And as you focus on each 'thing' become aware of the 'electro-magnetic energy' associated with it, that 'feeling' you get concerning each different 'thing.' If you think this is just 'smoke and mirrors,' concerning electro-magnetic energy, try focusing within on each of the following for about ten seconds and *experience* the 'feeling' for yourself - try to not wander:

- mother
- sand dune
- grass
- eagle
- Russia
- iceberg
- lemon
- computer
- snowflake
- maple leaf
- terlwider
- clock
- skydiving
- cadaver
- rosebud
- hurricane
- Hawaii
- bed
- Mason
- Jerusalem
- Christmas

If you just read through the list without focusing on the feeling associated with each 'thing' it is possible that you may have had a 'picture' of the 'thing' as you read it. If you focus, for example, on 'skydiving' for more than just a moment, you will find several feelings emerging as the scenes concerning skydiving shift from the initial awareness to More and Further awareness of the 'thing.' In the case of the lemon, for example, you will also detect the perception of the aroma of the 'thing.' In the case of the 'terlwider,' pay particular attention to the 'electromagnetic' feeling which arises as you try to identify this nonexistent 'thing.'

One of the 'catches' in this exercise is that you are perceiving these things as *you* would personally have 'knowledge of them.' Try doing several of them, divesting yourself of any preconceptions you may have about them, and see them as though you were watching yourself thinking about them . . . as an observer. Try to see them, too, through the eyes of someone else; a stranger. See them in various aspects or places or seasons or times of the day. In short, begin to see them and all 'things' as the Symbols they are. Then slowly work not on their *differences* but on their similarities. Hint: What does a tree call 'itself'?

When you think you are beginning to get somewhere with feeling these things, and are getting some 'answers,' next try intuiting the *questions*. Many of us may find ourselves not having answers to things only because we don't know or don't *ask* the question. For example, what time is it when you remove the hands from a clock? Why is it that we divide Time and Space into increments of 12? What is Time? What determines the distinctive shape of the snowflake and why are no two alike; how are they similar? What is the basis of a computer which permits it to work? How are we like a computer? What causes the wind that creates the breeze or the hurricane (hint . . . Light)?

To some the above will be a classic example of taking Masonry too far. To others they may see a correlation to the Seven Liberal Arts we are enjoined to study in the Middle Chamber Lecture. How far is too far when building a Spiritual Edifice? Once again, this is for each to decide in their own way, and 'space' and 'time.'

Our Ancient Brethren, as the expression goes, were very *aware* of the language of Symbol and Allegory. There are thousands of examples which may be cited from the ancients, and equally so in our modern times of the nature of this 'language.' Ritual or liturgy, plays a very critical role in the initiatory 'process,' for those who chose this path at either an exoteric or esoteric level. The Brother who perfunctorily imparts or receives the Degrees of the Craft, or the parishioner who recites the liturgy with no more intent than the 'vain repetitions' we are warned against in the Bible, nonetheless receives the teachings of the lesson(s) so imparted, but at a fraction of the potential realization of such lesson(s).

At the reception of an Entered Apprentices, concerning the 'point,' the part may be performed by the Senior Deacon in a slipshod manner, with little or no understanding of the lesson, or may, with great impact upon the

Candidate, impress upon the mind and *heart* of the Candidate a most valuable lesson to assist him to open his *heart* to the teachings of old. In the Royal Arch, there is a time when the candidate is to carry a *keystone* which is tested and rejected, but noted for its 'singular beauty.' In most Chapters, as practiced today, this *keystone* measures about four to eight inches . . . perhaps ten to twelve, and weigh from one to maybe 5 pounds. In older times, they understood the use of Symbol with greater clarity and would use a larger stone of greater weight and beauty, say perhaps twenty to forty pounds and correspondingly larger and thicker . . . an actual *keystone* instead of a small model of one. Needless to say this would more greatly impress the lesson of this degree upon the mind and *heart* of the candidate, as you could well imagine. You would not readily forget carrying a 20 to 40 pound *keystone* around a Chapter room for the length of time required to have it inspected three times! And you, too, would truly be impressed by its singular beauty if it was in fact beautifully wrought!

The same may also be noted for the encounters of the Brother in the Third Degree with the Ruffians. Great care should be given to the manner in which this part is delivered, for if properly done, it engraves a very sacred message on the *heart* of the Brother.

I have said that the secrets of Masonry could be shouted from the highest hill or lowest valley and that none but those who were duly and truly prepared would understand them. But now, this will be said in a different vein. There are other secrets in Free Masonry, and one of these is that if a candidate were to have ANY foreknowledge of what he were about to encounter during a degree, it would greatly lessen the impact of the teaching or lesson upon his mind and *heart*. When you are reading a good book or viewing a good movie, the last thing you want is for some 'butt-in-ski' to prematurely reveal the plot, or ending. It tends to ruin the flow of the book or movie for you. The Sacred Teachings have always been viewed with the greatest respect and attended by the utmost secrecy for this and even more important reasons, and should be contemplated by each Brother as to why this should be so, and what is the import of each letter, character, word, phrase and movement in the Degrees of *Free* Masonry, and such other initiatory systems as he should be privileged to study or *experience*.

The words, sequence and flow of the Degrees is a subject most worthy for the contemplation of each Brother. There are, in fact, great teachings (not just, or simply, 'moral' teachings, unless the word 'moral' is a euphemism for something far greater) in the Craft and Holy Royal Arch Degree. Several other Degrees also have great teachings, and many others are superfluous. Perhaps someday the Degree system will be integrated to correctly portray the complete initiatory process under one jurisdiction, but until then, *Free* Masonry has within its 'repertoire' of Ritual a most profound body of teachings. This includes of course, some of the stones which have been thrown in the rubbish heap over the years which may some day be rediscovered and employed in the building of the Temple, some of which have been discussed in this book. It may be noted in this regard, it is not likely that any true initiatory process could be affected with the mass conferral of degrees in weekend conventions or at two-week intervals, nor could it have the full affect upon a candidate witnessing an exemplar in his stead.

SECTION III

The Perennial Philosophy and Allegory & Symbolism



HAVE YOU EVER HAD A DREAM and awoken, thinking to yourself or saying to another, “I wonder what it means?” It is perhaps more justifiable for us to attribute a symbolic meaning to dream material owing to the strange things which may occur in a dream, as compared to our waking experiences. But this discussion is not so much about dreams or ‘dream interpretation’ as it is about symbols, for we also do find symbols in our ‘waking’ life. Consider a brief listing of some of the symbols with which you should be familiar:

- Animals:
‘Sly as a _____’ ‘A _____ in _____’s clothing’
‘Hungry as a _____’ ‘Eats like a _____’
‘Blind as a _____’ ‘The pride of a _____’
- Colors: Associate Colors with the following listing:
Envy Cowardice
Passion Purity
Spring Death
Rage Halloween

Any such listing of symbols would be extremely long, for we encounter them daily, giving them little thought as such. So, too, do symbols change somewhat with the times. It would not be common for people in 1900 to dream about speeding down the road in their car, any more than it would be common for us today to dream of going to work on a horse. Nor would any discussion of symbols do justice to the subject or to anyone who would want to understand them more fully if long listings of suggested meanings were given to be memorized or referred to. Each of us sees things a little bit differently, and the meaning of a symbol to one person could be different for another.

That is, until we come to what may be referred to as Archetypal Symbols, which tend to hold a common meaning for nearly everyone in deeper states of their 'consciousness.'

WHO CARES !! ??

Most people could care less about symbols, except for perhaps label conscious consumers. For most people, the symbols they encounter and use are for their daily living enjoyment, to provide directions, to warn of danger or, in general, to *communicate* to us. Who cares? If you have ever seen an advertisement, you have seen a whole industry that cares! Merchants care, restaurateurs care, movie makers care, fashion designers care; huge segments of the daily living experience are devoted almost exclusively to selling an image, a symbol, to someone else. And guess what! . . . if you have ever used any of their services or products, there is a very good possibility that YOU CARED enough for the symbol they represented to you to use their service or product. It's just that we don't stop to think beyond the surface layer of the symbol before us. Does this make us superficial? There are many who would say that it does. There are many who would not judge, but who would observe the living dance of life's symbols.

*Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a Dream.*

Those who would wish to contemplate these simple words could discover many 'things.' Also ranking pretty high along these lines is the passage from Shakespeare's *MacBeth*, Act V, Scene IV:

*To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!*

*Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.*

Are we *fools or idiots*? Does Life signify *nothing*? There is much to be learned from studying the 'Fool.' There are more 'definitions' to the Fool than may be suspected. There is also more to no-thing, as perhaps compared to some-thing, than meets the eye. It is largely a question of how committed we may be to such 'things' as are recorded in Matthew 7:7 & 8:

7. *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and
it shall be opened unto you:*
8. *For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth;
and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

Please note that verse 8 does not end with 'it shall NOT be opened.' There is a distinct promise in verse 8, and for those who 'knocketh' it SHALL be opened.

Above are three keys to the understanding of symbols, which could perhaps be mundanely summarized:

- Accept or believe that there ARE symbols.
- Accept or believe that there is more to Symbols than what appears at the surface.

We tend to sometimes think that people who act 'child-ish' are 'fools,' but there is also the possibility of their being 'child-like':

"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:3

" . . . to the dogs he will throw bones. To the slaves he will give only the elementary lessons, to the children he will give the complete instruction." Gospel of Philip (II,3) from the Gnostic Codices of Egypt discovered at Nag Hammadi in 1945.

- Ask, Seek and Knock *within* if you would *truly* know more about them.

What are the elements of a 'Perennial World Philosophy,' and what has any of it to do with Freemasonry?

I used to fondly refer to this 'Philosophy' as the 'persistent rumor.' It seemed that no matter what particular reading I was doing or what 'great thought' came to me, there were other cultures, civilizations, religions, time and places where something closely related to it had been preached, practiced, believed or otherwise had existed.

The persistent elements tend to be of several types, among which are beliefs, symbols and legends. Of these categories the following are among some examples which come to mind:

- a Creation story, myth or legend.
- the Deluge or Flood.
- the story of the Death and Resurrection of a Heroic or Religious personage.
- the Pillars.
- the Door or Gate..
- the Wheel or Circle and its Division into various cycles.
- the Trinity and Quaternary.
- the legend of the Fall of man, the fall from Grace; of Light and Dark, Duality, Yin and Yang, the 'separation of the sexes,' Good and Evil, or any other of a host of similar stories.
- the Hierarchy of man: Priests, Kings, Warriors/Soldiers and Laborers, in India . . . the 'Caste' system.

This book is not intended to provide any more than a view of any of the above. Thousands of books have already been written concerning these subjects and continue to be the theme for countless works in our present times.

Regarding Freemasonry, the current 'Authentic School' of research tends to disallow any material which cannot be documented by modern science. Anderson's early account of the origins of Freemasonry have largely been discounted along with all the writings which were based upon this and similar accounts. Anderson, and many other writers, of course, have credited the origins of Masonry as having risen from the time of Adam, Noah, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the ancient Mystery Schools and many other such sources. Perhaps no one has pushed this envelope back quite so far, however, as James Churchward, in an interesting series of books concerning the 'Lost Continent of Mu.' Mr. Churchward would have the origins of the symbols of our Craft placed at over 70,000 years ago. In chapter VIII of his book, The Lost Continent of Mu, he writes:

"In this chapter I am showing many of the ancient Sacred Symbols, giving their *origin* and *original* meanings. These are of particular interest to Freemasons as they not only reveal the origin of Freemasonry but also its *great antiquity*.

Hitherto the origin of this brotherhood has never been known; it has been traced back in Egypt to a time about 5000 B.C. But the question as to where the Egyptians got it has never been answered. This is a page in the history of religion that has never been read. This chapter will turn the leaf.

It has been generally thought that Freemasonry originated in Egypt, and that the symbols used in their ceremonies are of Egyptian origin. This is an error; we must go back tens of thousands of years before the foot of man trod the soil of Egypt to come at the origin of what today [ca 1931] is called Freemasonry.

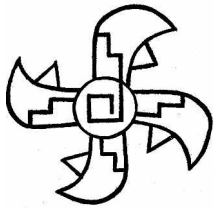
The Sacred Writings of the Motherland which were carried by the Naacals (Holy Brothers) to Mu's colonies throughout the world 70,000 years or more ago, if we can depend on the accuracy of the movements of celestial bodies, is the oldest written information about the origin of Freemasonry. The extreme age of this brotherhood is not only attested to by the Sacred Writings but by various Oriental writings, inscriptions and prehistoric temples, and convincingly confirmed by Niven's Mexican Stone Tablets which are, as shown by some of them, *over* 12,000 years old.

From the foregoing mass of records, it is shown without the possibility of controversy that *our present-day Freemasonry is the fragments of man's first religious teachings . . . man's first expression of his worship and adoration of the Heavenly Father.*"

Freemasonry and a View of the Perennial World Philosophy

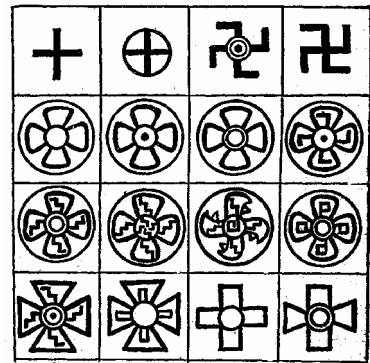
It may be noted that this Adamic-origin theme was not uncommon in the mid 1700's and early 1800's. Once again is the question of the 'intent' of the Fraternity in formulating its various rituals and symbols. The interesting part about Mr. Churchward is his claim to have ". . . discovered in India many years ago" the Naacal Tablets. They were discovered at ". . . Certain Monasteries in India and Tibet whose names are withheld by request." There are definitely 'persistent rumors' of such old things being in these Monasteries, and there is a marked reluctance of the custodians of such things to not want the locations of such items to be known to the outside world. It is however interesting to note that the Tablets do depict, ca 50,000 years ago, a prototype of the quaternary as may still be found in the Arms of the Antient Grand Lodge. This is not to imply that there is any 'direct' evolution of Freemasonry from these times, but the symbols used within the Craft may be found in nearly every culture, clime and time. We would expect no less of the symbols of a Fraternity of Universal Brotherhood than to have a connection at some level with this 'Perennial World Philosophy.' Below are a few examples of the glyphs of the alleged Naacal Tablets, which the reader may compare, for example, to those discussed in Chapter 6, Section 1, "The Builder's Art" or Section 4, "Thor's Hammer."

Mexican Tablet No. 1231



There are thousands of related symbols used throughout the world, but these few are shown because of their reported antiquity.

How and why the Craft came by its rituals and symbols is very well covered in numerous other works, up to the ever present point of there being no further preceding manuscripts, normally given at the point of the famous Regius or Haliwell Poem, ca 1390. At some point the Fraternity, its Masonic Researchers and Custodians may find that there may be something to this 'persistent rumor' of a 'Perennial World Philosophy,' and to seriously inquire into the meaning and importance of it. Surely this 'oldest Fraternity in the World' may learn a lot from its own symbols, which may in turn be imparted to the Craft.



Throughout this book the reader will find some clues as to from whence this Perennial World Philosophy came and whence it 'is going.' There are much deeper discussions that could be undertaken, but not in a book of this nature and scope.