Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia

Grand Lodge of Spain

PROVINCIAL

GRAND LODGE OF VALENCIA

2.1- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART ONE

Provincial Education Programme
Fellow Craft Degree

Provincial Education Programme

THE MEANING OF THE SQUARE OR THE FOUTH PART OF THE CIRCLE

We are more fortunate in Freemasonry because we possess a body of ritualistic work which defines many of our symbols in at least one way. This allows us to look at our symbols in two distinct ways, the first being in the way our teachings say and secondly at the common meaning given to the same symbol by the man in the street. The similarity is usually very close but the range of meanings in the outside world is frequently much broader.

• When a new mason asks the question about symbols, "what is that?", or "what does that mean?", do we tend to back off?
• Do we have the feeling that these are 'old' symbols that really have no meaning in our modern world?

If this is the case, then we are in very serious trouble within our Lodges because the Charge at our installations very clearly states that "...it inculcates principles of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." We are also told in the same breath that to penetrate through the veil of the allegories and symbols is to understand the mysteries.

While there is a far deeper meaning in the overall pattern of the craft, it is of great value to find some meanings of the individual symbols and to attempt to recall that meaning on each occasion that we see them. This creates the 'repetition' form of learning that begins to modify our life style to become that "better man" we all strive for. But one of the problems with the human mind is that it tends to ignore items which it registers frequently.

So it is, with the jewels worn by the officers of our Lodges.

How many of you have looked at your officers jewels - really looked. Firstly they are quite detailed, secondly they frequently have things on them that you were totally unaware of. There are different companies producing jewels and each may embellish the jewels differently, but you can be sure that there is meaning behind practically every identifiable whirl and loop.

What one symbol is most typical of Freemasonry as a whole?

Mason and non-Mason alike, nine times out of ten, will answer, “The Square!” Many learned writers on Freemasonry have nominated the square as the most important and vital, most typical and common symbol of the ancient Craft.

Masonically the word “square” has the same three meanings given by the world:

(1) The conception of right-angled-ness -our ritual tells us that the square is an angle of ninety degrees, or the fourth part of a circle;

(2) The builder’s tool, one of our working tools, the Master’s own immovable jewel;

(3) That quality of character which has made “a square man” synonymous not only with a member of our Fraternity, but with uprightness, honesty and dependability.

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The first of the three meanings must have been the mathematical conception and we should reflect upon the wisdom and reasoning powers of men who lived five thousand years ago, that they knew the principles of geometry by which a square can be constructed.

The square is the symbol of regulated life and actions. It is the masonic rule for correcting and harmonizing conduct on principles or morality and virtue, and as a symbol, it is dedicated to the Master. We also identify ourselves with this symbol, because we are taught that squares, levels and perpendiculars are the proper signs to know a mason.

We are surrounded by squares in our Lodge and the Immediate Past Master and the Past Masters wear it most obviously. It stands, as one of the Great Lights, in the center of all our activities. It is repeated in our F.C. salute, our feet positions, our way of moving around the Lodge and our legs when at the altar in our Fellow Craft obligation.

History tells us that the square, which is an upright with a right top arm, is the Greek letter gamma. In the construction trade, the square is used for "trueing" stones and "proving" them correct. We can see how easily, the association with truth and virtue could arise. There was the historical belief that the shape of the ancient world was an oblong square, and this is represented in our "squared Lodge."

There have been references to the square's meaning as a symbol long before the start of Masonry, as we know it. The Egyptians, Confucius and Aristotle refer to 'square actions' and associate this with honest dealings, high morality and virtue. The symbol is not original, it is certainly far from new, but it seems to have a remarkable consistency of meaning.

If we move on to the Immediate Past Master's jewel for a moment it is normally identical to the Master's in shape except that pendant from it is the 47th problem of Euclid. It is important to remember that Euclid only proved the Pythagorean theorem of about 300 years earlier. When you consider what the theorem shows it is a multitude of further squares. Squares on sides, mathematically 'squared' numbers and a central closed square, about which all the 'proof' stands. As an emphasis of the square symbol we could see nothing which could do it better. We should know that the properties of this triangular arrangement were first thought to be magical in the relationship they demonstrated. We should always marvel that such a simple figure could have had such impact on our world and still has today.

THE HIDDEN MYSTERIES OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

At some stage during Freemasonry's Second Degree, the candidate is advised that there is now permitted, something like, the extension of their researches into the hidden mysteries of nature and science. Such is an excellent permission and one that each and every Freemason should pursue with awe and passion.

"...science is a discipline seeking to describe the universe in terms of prediction and control."

It could be suggested that nature and science may be understood in terms of “nature” being the subject of our study and “science” being the methodology employed to undertake it. Nature can be understood as being the material universe, from the sum of solar systems and perhaps larger, to the smallest measurable particles, or perhaps smaller. Based on mathematical models, science is a discipline seeking to describe the universe in terms of prediction and control. Perhaps the logic of this is that, “a” is followed by “b” where “a” is both necessary and sufficient for “b” (cause and effect, or perhaps better - contiguity). Research into “hidden mysteries” would provide understanding of the, as yet, unseen powers or the, as yet, unmeasured forces that enable the regularities observed in nature.

"...requires the candidate to affirm a belief... that the earth orbits the sun."

The rise of the English Royal Society and that of speculative Freemasonry are contemporaneous. It would be churlish to deny contiguity; the apotheosis of which being, the life and work of Dr. John Theosophilus Desaguliers, Grand Master, Newtonian scholar, chief experimenter of the Royal Society and involved in major capital projects based around steam engines for both pumping water from mines and for providing public water supplies. Also, between 1710 – 1723, and perhaps beyond, a chief mover and shaker in formative English Freemasonry. One of the questions asked of candidates passing from the First to the Second degree pertains to the meridian sun’s perpetual countenance of Freemasonry. The response to this question requires the candidate to affirm a belief in that strange Copernican claim that the earth orbits the sun.

But who can date this ritual? In 1600, Giordano Bruno was murdered by the Church for maintaining that the earth orbited the sun. Perhaps it was owing to Freemasonry’s increasingly scientific understanding of nature that, to avoid the censure of ecclesiastical authority, a culture of secrecy became further entrenched. However, what could not be kept secret, or contained, was the military and commercial potential being unleashed by scientific descriptions of the universe, and the creation of relationships between groups that would otherwise have been distant. Scientists sought finance and influence; wealthy people needed the emerging technology to increase their wealth – a new order in recognition!

The gradual transmutation from alchemy to chemistry; astrology to astronomy and from Providential power to natural forces was something that perhaps had to become an entity woven into something like, a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. That is to say, theological and supernatural accounts of natural phenomena were being replaced by explanations that did not extend beyond space and time.

"...the wealthy and the aristocratic being speculative scientists meeting with operative Royal Society scientists?"

Perhaps the Newtonians sought to replace the Church’s theological understanding of nature and replace it with The Royal Society’s scientific understanding. Perhaps they believed the scientific study of nature was a superior route to the throne of God. Non-scientists were, by definition ineligible, for admission into the Royal Society. Therefore, is it not possible that between the second and third decades of the 18th Century an attempt was made to facilitate a working relationship between people of science and technology with aristocrats, landed gentry and those from the purple of commerce? And, that attempt was Speculative Freemasonry with the wealthy and the aristocratic being speculative scientists meeting with operative Royal Society scientists?

However, in the lives of people and institutions, the social and political role of the Church was not, in the short or medium term, to be replaced by mathematical formulae. The description of nature in terms of prediction and control is one thing, but the political and economic challenge of realising internal peace and prosperity through control, conformity and compliance is something else. Perhaps during some time in the third decade of the 18th Century, the scientists had lost interest in Freemasonry and it then developed into a nexus to promote internal peace and prosperity. And, had no need to challenge religious and theological conformance, compliance and control.

Until the time of the Copernican Revolution, most people believed that the sun orbited the earth. Of course, they did, that was how it looked! However, the challenge is now to look at the sun and "see" the earth orbiting it. Presumably, this will require a longer-term reconditioning of our perception.

"What would a providential universe look like; how would an evolutionary universe look?"

Similarly, perhaps we could consider two universes; one designed by God and one that evolved as described by Darwin. The question might be asked, would they look different? What would a providential universe look like; how would an evolutionary universe look? In which direction were the influential scientific leaders of Freemasonry circa 1710-1730 pointing? "Providence" is a power – a personalisation of the mechanics that maintain matter in motion. Nature is understood to achieve the same but in terms of a non-personalised energy; at best pantheism but in reality, non-theism. Perhaps the pantheism and the Arianism of the early decades of the 18thC are but veils covering non-theism and allegorically alluded to in vague notions of great architects and supreme beings.

How would a world created by Providence look different from a world seen through Quantum eyes? Particles can be understood as being both mass and energy in motion and waves being but energy. However, it may well be the case that particles and waves are different manifestations of the same entity. Perhaps the role of the observer is a significant issue for understanding nature; now, and in the future. Will we ever progress beyond symbols, and what might that look like?

The Freemasonry of that time was a giant step for modernity as achieved through the alchemic wedding of the Royal Society minds made for the universe and the souls of the aristocracy seeking to gain increasing wealth from an application of the description of nature in terms of prediction and control - technology.

Therefore, for some short time, Freemasonry can be understood as beating a path to the frontiers of scientific knowledge and its commercial application. This was perhaps reinforced by Freemasonry beating a path to the frontiers of the art of civil governance. However, we remain variously charged and obligated to understand natural phenomena in scientific due form. Before that though, as Freemasons, surely, we are people perceiving nature in awe and wonder: the night sky, an eruption of Etna, the wings of a butterfly. As Freemasons, signed up to heliocentric theory, we have learnt to understand what the case is rather than appearances. We seek explanations that are other than explaining the unexplained by postulating the inexplicable.

"...as the geocentric and heliocentric theories must look different, so should the lives of Freemasons."

Therefore, there is a choice is to be made. Freemasons may choose to describe nature in terms of Providence where there is a power that existed before space and time, which currently exists

outside of space, has the controlling hand over space through time and will exist when time is no more. Or, there is an understanding of nature within space and time that does not seek to extend beyond that paradigm. Whichever choice is made, as the geocentric and heliocentric theories must look different, so should the lives of Freemasons. Many purports a belief in entities beyond space and time but live for the moment, the here and now. And, seem to be devoid of an appreciation of nature in terms of awe and passion.

It is time for Freemasons to face up to the challenge of nature and science and its application to human freedom that can be understood as enhancing wealth subject to equitable distribution and a sustainable management of the environment. We have to be perceived as being Freemasons, the appearances and the reality being unified. We are what we do, and we cannot produce square work by cutting corners.

THE PASS GRIP AND PASS WORD LEADING FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND DEGREE

The passport leading from the First to the Second Degree is full of significance. It consists of a P.G. and P.W. and is here entrusted to the candidate as a reward for his labours in the First Degree, and also for having successfully passed the knowledge test to which he has been subjected. The explanation of the symbolic P.W. is full of meaning; it is a word which in English signifies "sprouting forth," and is a title accorded to the candidate himself. It implies that "new life" has germinated within him; that he is already a changed man; and is, as it were, beginning to show signs of growing spiritual. To a trained observer this spiritual change is easily perceptible: "How do you know a Brother by day?", asks a cryptic question in the Lectures, and the equally subtle reply is: "By seeing him and observing the sign." But the "sign" alluded to here is not the formal gesture of salute with which we are familiar; it is the "outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace," one of the "true and proper signs by which to know a Freemason," and it is a paradox that only those can see it in others who display it in themselves. Unwittingly, our visage progressively models itself upon our states of consciousness, and each man bears upon his face the description of his body and soul. There is another cryptic question in the same Section of the Lectures which asks: "How do you know a Brother by night?", and the answer is: "By receiving the T. and hearing the W." (First Lecture; Seventh Section.) This answer will be intelligible to all who know how real is that "mystic tie" which, in spiritually advanced Brethren, binds them together in conscious contact and communion. The form of the T. or greeting cannot be written about, except to say that it refers to the "Mount of Initiation" and the rank to be achieved by the candidate. In this sense, the figuration of the P.G. is indicative of having ascended the first hill and then descended into the valley before climbing the next rise.

The association of the P.W. with "an ear of corn near a fall of water" is of great significance. Corn is the recognized symbol of regenerated life and has been used in the Mystery systems from remote antiquity. In the Egyptian rituals the candidate, holding "an ear of corn fertilized by the sacred water of the Nile, declared "I am a germ of eternity," while at his death grains of corn were buried with him as emblems of immortality. The advanced initiation rites, or the Greater Mysteries, at Eleusis were sacred to Ceres and "an ear of corn" was presented to the candidate. In entrusting the candidate with the P.W. which is emblematically "depicted in our Lodges" by "an ear of corn near a fall of water" we are perpetuating a sacred practice of extreme age. Why, it may be asked, was corn used in preference to any other plant as the symbol of soul growth? The actual source of corn has always puzzled botanists; it is never found, like other cereals, in the wild state. It is traditionally taught that

this golden, graceful, prolific, and needful plant was never a growth of this earth, but was a gift of the Gods, who in the dawn of time transported it to our world from another planet with the double purpose of providing the staple food of humanity and giving man an emblem of his own soul. So, too, with the human soul; like the corn it is not indigenous to this time world but is a native of eternity, whence it has become transported and sown as bare grain in the patch of earth which constitutes the individual human body. There, like the seed of corn, it is subjected to the painful process of disintegration, dying and rising again, but multiplied exceedingly as the result of the trying experience. The scriptures bear witness to the ancient doctrine: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126, verse 6). When, then, in founding a Masonic Lodge, the Consecrating Officer scatters corn to the four quarters, he is performing a profoundly sacramental act for the instruction of the Founders. He is emulating in miniature the cosmic activity of the Great Sower of the Universe who continually goes forth sowing souls in space, like grain, which fall into natural bodies that they may grow and finally be raised therefrom into spiritual bodies. This will likewise explain why in the Craft to-day, as in the Ancient Mysteries, there is presented to the candidate at this stage of his progress the "time immemorial" emblem. The candidate can now, so to speak, think of himself as a growing ear of wheat destined to ripen in due time into abundant corn that will sustain him, and haply, serve as the "bread of life" to others.

THE WORKING TOOLS OF A FELLOW CRAFT FREEMASON

THE SQUARE

The Square is the symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. The direction of the two sides of the Square form an angle of 90°, or a right angle, so-called because this is the angle which stones must have if they are to be used to build a stable and upright wall. It symbolizes accuracy, not even varying by a single degree. When we part upon the Square, we go in different directions, but in full knowledge that our courses in life will be going according to the angle of the Square (which means in the right direction), until we meet again.

THE LEVEL

The Level is a symbol of equality. We do not mean equality in wealth, social distinction, civic office, or service to mankind; but, rather, we refer to the internal, and not the external, qualifications. Each person is endowed with a worth and dignity which is spiritual and should not be subject to man-made distinctions. Freemasonry recognizes that one man may have greater potential in life, service, or reward, then another; but we also believe that any man can aspire to any height, no matter how great. Thus, the Level dignifies labor and the man who performs it. It also acknowledges that all men are equal without regard to station. The Level also symbolizes the passage of time.

THE PLUMB RULE

The Plumb Rule is a symbol of uprightness of conduct. In Freemasonry, it is associated with the plumb line which the Lord promised Amos he would set in the midst of His people, Israel, symbolizing God's standard of divine righteousness. The plumb line in the midst of a people should mean that they will be judged by their own sense of right and wrong, and not by the standards of others. By understanding the Plumb, a Mason is to judge his Brothers by their own standards and not those of someone else. When the plumb line is thought of in this way, it becomes a symbol of an

upright life and of the conscience by which each person must live. This idea is closely tied to the concept of Justice. For, in truth, Justice is giving another man his due.

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2.2- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART TWO

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GEOMETRY

In the modern instructions, geometry is said to be the basis on which the superstructure of Freemasonry is erected; and in the Old Constitutions of the Medieval Freemasons of England the most prominent place of all the sciences is given to geometry, which is made synonymous with Freemasonry. Thus, in the Regius Manuscript, which dates not later than the latter part of the fourteenth century. The Constitutions of Freemasonry are called "the Constitutions of the art of geometry according to Euclid," the words geometry and Masonry being used indifferently throughout the document; and in.

In the Harleian Manuscript, No. 2054, it is said, "thus the craft Geometry was governed there, and that worthy Master (Euclid) gave it the name of Geometry, and it is called Mosonne in this land long after." In another part of the same manuscript, it is thus defined: "The fifth science is called Geometry, and it teaches a man to mete and measure of the earth and other things, which science is Masonry."

The Egyptians were undoubtedly among the first who cultivated geometry as a science. "It was not less useful and necessary to them," as Goguet observes (Origine des Lois, Origin of the Laws, I, iv, 4), "in the affairs of life, than agreeable to their speculatively philosophical genius." From Egypt, which was the parent both of the sciences and the mysteries of the Pagan world, it passed over into other countries; and geometry and Operative Masonry have ever been found together, the latter carrying into execution those designs which were first traced according to the principles of the former.

Speculative Freemasonry is, in like manner, intimately connected with geometry. In deference to our operative ancestors, and, in fact, as a necessary result of our close connection with them, Speculative Freemasonry derives its most important symbols from this parent science. Hence it is not strange that Euclid, the most famous of geometricians, should be spoken of in all the Old Records as a founder of Freemasonry in Egypt, and that a special legend should have been invented in honor of his memory.

EUCLID

Euclid is often referred to as "the father of geometry."

There is little that is actually known about the life of Euclid. He is believed to have been born sometime around the mid-4th century B.C.E. The only reference that is available on this comes from peers that reference him or those who were around him. This is considered odd by most historians since people who lived in time periods before, after and at the same time as Euclid have plenty of reference material written about them. This lack of information about Euclid has led some to speculate that he was actually a group of mathematicians living at that time and that the collection of theories that were provided by him, were actually provided by the group.

The only historical references to Euclid as an individual were not written until 4th and 5th centuries A.D. Even Archimedes referred to him as "ὁ στοιχειώτης" (the author of Elements).

Further confusion occurs do to the fact that there was a second Euclid at the time known as Euclid of Megara who was a follower of Socrates and was present at Socrates death. The Euclid of Geometry fame was known as Euclid of Alexandria. At least one

Regardless of whether Euclid was an actual person or a group of mathematicians, Elements which was written and attributed to Euclid, is one of the most important books on mathematics, specifically Geometry. Elements was used for nearly 23 centuries to teach Geometry. It wasn't until the 19th century that, what is referred to as, non-Euclidean geometry started to emerge.

For Freemasonry Geometry is a critical part of our symbolism. Euclid himself was written into the history of Freemasonry in the 14th Century Regius Poem which starts off talking about how Euclid trained that good families in Egypt in Geometry calling it masonry. In the poem, parents are worried that their children will not be able to find work and that they will not be able to support their children. They then ask scholars to teach their children. In the poem Euclid emerges as the greatest of the pupils and then teaches others in the ways of Geometry.

Euclid is believed to have passed away in the mid-3rd century B.C.E.

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

The first Temple of the Jews was called hecal Jehovah or beth Jehovah, the Palace or the House of Jehovah, to indicate its splendor and magnificence, and that it was intended to be the perpetual dwelling-place of the Lord. It was King David who first proposed to substitute for the Nomadic Tabernacle a permanent place of worship for his people; but although he had made the necessary arrangements, and even collected many of the materials, he was not permitted to commence the undertaking, and the execution of the task was left to his son and successor, Solomon.

Accordingly, that monarch laid the foundations of the edifice in the fourth year of his reign, 1012 B.C., and, with the assistance of his friend and ally, Hiram, King of Tyre, completed it in about seven years and a half, dedicating it to the service of the Most High in 1004 B.C. This was the year of the world 3000, according to the Hebrew chronology; and although there has been much difference among chronologists in relation to the precise date, this is the one that has been generally accepted, and it is therefore adopted by Freemasons in their calculations of different epochs.

The Temple stood on Mount Moriah, one of the eminences of the ridge which was known as Mount Zion, and which was originally the property of Ornan the Jebusite, who used it as a threshing-floor, and from whom it was purchased by David for the purpose of erecting an altar on it. The Temple retained its original splendor for only thirty-three years. In the year of the world 3033, Shishak, King of Egypt, having made war upon Rehoboam, King of Judah, took Jerusalem, and carried away the choicest treasures.

From that time to the period of its final destruction the history of the Temple is but a history of alternate spoliations and repairs, of profanations to idolatry and subsequent restorations to the purity of worship. One hundred and thirteen years after the conquest of Shishak, Joash, King of Judah, collected silver for the repairs of the Temple, and restored it to its former condition in the year of the world 3148. In the year 3264, Ahaz, King of Judah, robbed the Temple of its riches, and gave them to Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, who had united with him in a war against the Kings of

Israel and Damascus. Ahaz also profaned the Temple by the worship of idols. In 3276, Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz, repaired the portions of the Temple which his father had destroyed, and restored the pure worship. But fifteen years after he was compelled to give the treasures of the Temple as a ransom to Sennacherib, King of Assyria, who had invaded the land of Judah. But Hezekiah is supposed, after his enemy had retired, to have restored the Temple.

Manasseh, the son and successor of Hezekiah, fell away to the worship of Sahianism, and desecrated the Temple in 3306 by setting up altars to the host of heaven. Manasseh was then conquered by the King of Babylon, who in 3328 carried him beyond the Euphrates. But subsequently repenting of his sins he was released from captivity, and having returned to Jerusalem he destroyed the idols, and restored the Altar of Burnt-Offerings. In 3380, Josiah, who was then King of Judah, devoted his efforts to the repairs of the Temple, portions of which had been demolished or neglected by his predecessors, and replaced the Ark in the Sanctuary. In 3398, in the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar, then King of Chaldea, carried a part of the sacred vessels to Babylon. Seven years afterward, during the reign of Jeehoniah, he took away another lot; and finally, in 3416, in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, he took the city of Jerusalem, and entirely destroyed the Temple, and carried many of the inhabitant's captives to Babylon.

The Temple was originally built on a very hard rock, encompassed with frightful precipices. The foundations were laid very deep, with immense labor and expense. It was surrounded with a wall of great height, exceeding in the lowest part four hundred and fifty feet, constructed entirely of white marble.

The body of the Temple was in size much less than many a modern parish church, for its length was but ninety feet, or, including the porch, one hundred and five, and its width but thirty. It was its outer court, its numerous terraces, and the magnificence of its external and internal decorations, together with its elevated position above the surrounding dwellings which produced that splendor of appearance that attracted the admiration of all who beheld it, and gives a color of probability to the legend that tells us how the Queen of Sheba, when it first broke upon her view, exclaimed in admiration, "A most excellent Master must have done this!"

The Temple itself which consisted of the porch, the Sanctuary, and the Holy of Holies, was but a small part of the edifice on Count Moriah. It was surrounded with spacious courts, and the whole Structure occupied at least half a mile circumference. Upon passing through the outer wall, you came to the first Court, called the Court of the Gentiles, because the Gentiles were admitted into it, but were prohibited from passing farther. It was surrounded by a range of porticoes or cloisters, above which were galleries or apartments, supported by pillars of white marble. Passing through the Court of the Gentiles, you entered the Court of the Children of Israel, which was separated by a low stone wall, and an ascent of fifteen steps, into two divisions, the outer one being occupied by the women, and the inner by the men Here the Jews were in the habit of resorting daily for the purposes of prayer.

Within the Court of the Israelites and separated from it by a wall one cubit in height, was the Court of the Priests. In the-center of this Court was the Altar of Burnt-Offerings, to which the people brought their oblations and sacrifices, but none but the Priests were permitted to enter it. From this court, twelve steps ascended to the Temple, strictly so called, which as we have already said, was divided into three parts, the Porch, the Sanctuary, and the Holy of Holies. The Porch of the Temple was twenty cubits in length, and the same in breadth. At its entrance was a gate made entirely of

Corinthian brass, the most precious metal known to the ancients. Besides this gate there were the two pillars Jachin and Boaz, which had been constructed by Hiram Abif, the architect whom the King of Tyre had sent to Solomon.

From the porch you entered the Sanctuary by a portal, which, instead of folding doors, was furnished with a magnificent veil of many colors, which mystically represented the universe. The breadth of the sanctuary was twenty cubits, and its length forty, or just twice that of the porch and Holy of Holies. It occupied, therefore, one-half of the body of the Temple. In the Sanctuary were placed the various utensils necessary for the daily worship of the Temple, such as the Altar of Incense, on which incense was daily burnt by the officiating Priest; the ten Golden Candlesticks; and the ten Tables on which the offerings were laid previous to the sacrifice. The Holy of Holies, or innermost chamber, was separated from the Sanctuary by doors of olive, richly sculptured and inlaid with gold, and covered with veils of blue, purple, scarlet, and the finest linen. The size of the Holy of Holies was the same as that of the porch, namely, twenty cubits square. It contained the Ark of the Covenant, which had been transferred into it from the Tabernacle, with its overshadowing Cherubim and its Mercy-Seat. Into the most sacred place, the High Priest alone could enter, and that only once a year, on the Day of Atonement.

The Temple, thus constructed, must have been one of the most magnificent Structures of the ancient world. For its erection, David had collected more than four thousand millions of dollars, by Doctor Mackey's computation, and one hundred and eighty-four thousand, six hundred men were engaged on the building for more than seven years; and on its completion it was dedicated by Solomon with solemn prayer and seven days of feasting; during which a peace-offering of twenty thousand oxen and six times that number of sheep was made, to consume which the holy fire came down from heaven.

In Freemasonry, the Temple of Solomon has played a most important part. Time was when every Masonic writer subscribed with unhesitating faith to the theory that freemasonry was there first organized; that there Solomon, Hiram of Tyre, and Hiram Abif presided as Grand Masters over the Lodges which they had established; that there the Symbolic Degrees were instituted and systems of initiation were invented; and that from that period to the present Freemasonry has passed down the stream of Time in unbroken succession and unaltered form. But the modern method of reading Masonic history has swept away this edifice of imagination with as unsparing a hand, and as effectual a power, as those with which the Babylonian King demolished the structure upon which they are founded. No writer who values his reputation as a critical historian would now attempt to defend this theory. Yet it has done its work.

During the long period in which the hypothesis was accepted as a fact, its influence was being exerted in molding the Masonic organizations into a form closely connected with all the events and characteristics of the Solomonic Temple. So that now almost all the Symbolism of Freemasonry rests upon or is derived from the House of the Lord at Jerusalem. So closely are the two connected, that to attempt to separate the one from the other would be fatal to the further existence of Freemasonry. Each Lodge is and must be a symbol of the Jewish Temple, each Master in the chair representing the Jewish King, and every Freemason a personation of the Jewish Workman.

Thus, must it ever be while Freemasonry endures. We must receive the myths and legends that Connect it with the Temple, not indeed as historic facts, but as allegories; not as events that have

really transpired, but as symbols; and must accept these allegories and these symbols for what their inventors really meant that they should be-the foundation of a Science of morality.

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Grand Lodge of Spain

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GRAND LODGE OF VALENCIA

2.3- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART THREE

Provincial Education Programme
Fellow Craft Degree

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THE TWO PILLARS

Few references in Freemasonry are less understood than the two brazen pillars in the porch of King Solomon's Temple. Probably a greater mass of misinformation exists regarding these than any other symbol in the Craft.

Early ritualists confused the mythical pillars of stone, spoken of in almost all the old Charges, or Manuscript Constitutions of the Craft, with the Brazen pillars of the porch - the result is that modern Freemasons have composite pillars, fusing of the ancient and the mythical pillars on which were supposed to be engraved the arts and sciences of the time before the flood, and those which Hiram Abif erected - undoubtedly with Egyptian influences and memories of Egyptian Temples to guide him - before the great house of the Lord which Solomon built.

The fascinating, if wholly legendary, history of the Craft, repeated with variations in the majority of the old manuscript rolls, beginning with the Regius of 1390, is older than any Freemasonry we know in practice. The story varies from manuscript to manuscript, but in its essentials is much the same - it was evidently a tradition as strong in its day as is our legend of Hiram. To quote but a few lines bearing on the pillars, consider these words from the York Manuscript No. 1, written about A.D. 1600:

"Before Noah flood there was a man called Lamech as is written in the Scriptures in ye Chatr of Genesis And this Lamech had two wives ye one named Adah by whome he had two sons ye one named Jabell ye other named Jubell And his other wife was called Zillah by whome he had one son named Tubelcaine & one Daughter named Naamah & these four children founded ye beginnings of all ye Sciences in ye world viz Jabell ye oldest Sone found out ye Science of Geomatre he was a keepr of flocks and sheep Lands in the Fields as it is noted in ye Chaptr before sd And his bother Jubell found ye Science of Musicke Song of the Tongue harpe & organ And ye third brother Tuball Caine found ye Science called Smith Craft of Gold Silvr Iron Coppr & Steele & ye daughter found ye ara of Weaving And these persons knowing right well yt God would take vengencance for sinne either by fire or water wherefore they writt their severall Sciences yt they had found in two pillars of stone yt might be found aftr Noah his Flood And ye one stonbe would not burn wth fire & ye othr called Lternes because it would not dround wth wtr etc."

The word here spelled "Lternes" is rendered on other old Constitutions as "laterns," usually translated "brick." But marble does not resist fire; brick - especially early unscientifically vitrified brick - does not resist water. If the word be considered a perversion of "latten," which means brass or bronze, then the ancient legendary pillars are made of metal and marble, a more sensible idea, since metal would resist fire, and the marble, water. In Tyre was the great Temple to Herakles with two pillars, one of gold, the other of smaragdus (polished green marble). Other Tyrian Temples to Melkarth had two metal pillars or two monoliths. Modern Masonry has hollow pillars to serve as safe repositories for the "archives of Masonry" and to preserve them from flood and fire, in spite of the fact that sacred history says nothing of Masonry, or the reason for the pillars being hollow. It is reasonable to suppose that the ancient Masonic tradition of Lamech's children and their pillars was confused, as knowledge of the Bible became more common after the invention of printing, with other "brazen pillars" of an ancient day, and finally with those of Solomon's Temple. How high were the pillars? A question which has agitated American Freemasonry - largely without reason - for many years! A majority of American rituals state that they were thirty-five cubits in heights. A minority hold to eighteen. One compromises on thirty. A few do not give the height at all.

Mackey (Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry) says:

"Immediately within the porch of the Temple, and on each side of the door, were placed two hollow brazen pillars. The height of each was twenty-seven feet, and the diameter about six feet, and the thickness of the brass three inches. Above the pillar and covering its upper part to the depth of nine inches, was an oval body or chapiter seven feet and a half in height. Springing out of from the pillar at the junction of the chapiter with it, was a row of lotus petals, which first spreading around the chapiter, afterwards gently curved downward toward the pillar, something like the acanthus leaves on the capital of a Corinthian column. About two fifths of the distance from the bottom of the chapiter, or just below its most bulging part, a tissue of network was carved, which extended over its whole upper surface. To the bottom of this network was suspended a series of fringes, and on these again were carved two rows of pomegranates, one hundred being in each row."

This description, it seemed to Dr. Mackey, is the only one that can be reconciled with the various passages which relate to these pillars in the Books of Kings, Chronicles, and Josephus, to give a correct conception of the architecture of these symbols. In 1904 Brother John W. Barry, of Iowa, later to become Grand Master, rendered an exhaustive report to his Grand Lodge on the height of the pillars, proving anew the belief, practically accepted by Biblical students, the that "thirty-five" dimension is that of both pillars together, the actual height of each being eighteen cubits. The confusion arises in the two accounts in Chronicles and Kings. Various explanations have been advanced as to the discrepancy between thirty-five as the height of each. The missing cubit is explained on the theory that while actually each pillar from root to summit was eighteen cubits, only seventeen and one-half showed. The rest being hidden in chapiter and base.

This explanation apparently began with the Genevan Bible (Breeches Bible) in which is a marginal note stating of the pillars "everyone was eighteen cubits long, but halfe cubite could not be feene, for it was hid in the roundeneffe of the chapiter, and therefore he giueth to everyone 17 and a halfe."

To know the "actual" size of the pillars, it is necessary to know the length of a cubit. And here is room for speculation and many authorities! The Abingdon Bible Commentaries says: "The common cubit, equal to about 18 inches, the longer Royal cubit to about 20-½ inches." John Wesley Kelchner, whose restorations of King Solomon's Temple are to be found in Masonic Bibles, considers the cubit to bee equal to two feet. The Standard Dictionary gives the cubit as the measure of length determined by the average arm from elbow to middle finger tip. The Britannica considers that the Temple cubit must have been in excess of 25 inches, Canon J.W. Horsley, Past Grand Chaplain, England, who has studied and written much upon the pillars, give a table of sizes in which the cubit is but 14 2/5 inches.

Many rituals set forth the fact that Hiram cast the pillars on the plains of the Jordan, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan, or Zeredetha. Both I Kings and II Chronicles are authority for the statement. But if there ever existed a "clay ground" in the location specified, it has disappeared and left no trace. Explorations (Lynch in 1847, Ridegway in 1874 not only found no clay ground, but no trace of smelters, furnaces, or other means of melting and casting brass. The point is of little importance - the pillars and the Temple vessels were cast, somewhere. But a failure of fact in a statement so absolute may be an indication the other I Kings and II Chronicles' statements about the pillars were also inaccurate as to facts - "vide" the height statements.

The "globes celestial and terrestrial" which usually surmount American Lodge room pillars are wholly modern inventions, without basis in Scriptural fact. Somewhere, at some time, some ritual maker confused the spherical form of the chapiter with an additional an additional sphere. Desiring to account for it, he drew a map of the world on one and a map of the heavens on the other! But in the Kings and Chronicles accounts and in Josephus, there are no mentions of celestial and terrestrial globes.

All this is more interesting than important. The symbolical meaning of the pillars is the vital matter to Freemasons. In the eyes of critical scholarship, the ancient meaning was of the might and majesty of Deity. From the dawn of religion, the pillar, monolith or built up, has played an important part of the worship of the Unseen. From the huge boulders of Stonehenge, among which the Druids are supposed to have performed their rites, through East Indian temples, to the religion of ancient Egypt, scholars trace the use of pillars as an essential part of the religious worship; indeed, in Egypt the obelisk stood for the very presence of the Sun God himself.

The ancient believed the earth to be flat and that it was supported by two Pillars of God, placed at the western entrance of the world as then known. These are now called Gibraltar, on one side of the strait and Cueta on the other.

Some writers have suggested that the pillars represent the masculine and feminine elements in nature; others, that they stand for authority of Church and State, because on stated occasions the high priest stood before one pillar and the King before the other. Some students think that they allude to the two legendary pillars of Enoch, upon which, tradition informs us, all the wisdom of the ancient world was inscribed in order to preserve it from inundations and conflagrations. William Preston supposed that, by them, Solomon had reference to the pillars of cloud and fire which guided the Children of Israel out of the bondage and into the promise land. One authority says a literal translation of their names is: "In thee is strength," and, "It shall be established," and by a natural transposition mat thus be expressed: "Oh Lord, Thou art almighty and Thy Power is established from everlasting to everlasting."

Quoting Abingdon again:

"The fact that each pillar had a particular name further suggests that they were not simply a part of the architectural adornment, but originally bore some analogy to the pillars which, singly or in pairs, formed an important feature of the Semitic sanctuaries. At Melkart's shrine at Tyre there were, according to Herodotus, two costly obelisks at which Melkart (and probably his wife-consort) was worshiped. Two pillars also stood before the temples in Paphos and in Hierapolis. Ashurbanipal on the occasion of his expedition to Egypt and Ethiopia recounts that part of his spoil included 'two obelisks high with resplendent plating of fine workmanship from the threshold of the gate of the Temple.' Therefore, these pillars at Jerusalem, built, like the Temple itself, by Phoenician workmen, were probably intended to be symbols of the Deity; they were an artistic refinement of the Mezzabah, or stone obelisk which, at many Israelite sanctuaries, still stood beside he altar in much later days. But it does not necessarily follow that Solomon and his subjects so interpreted the significance of these novel and foreign brass objects: for them the Ark in the 'oracle' seemed to have symbolized Jehovah.

But it is possible that instead of Jachin (or Jakin,) 'he (Jehovah) was carved on one pillar by Huram-abi and subsequently altered into his name; and Boaz (i.e., 'in him is strength') may be a later substitution for 'Tammuz,' whose cult was very prevalent in the Semitic world."

The Entered Apprentice in the process of being passed to the degree of Fellowcraft "passes between the pillars." No hint is given that he should pass nearer to one than the other; no suggestion is made that he either may work a greater influence than the other. He merely passes between.

A deep significance is in this very omission. Masons refer to the promise of God unto David; the interested may read Chapter VII of II Samuel and gather that the establishment promised by the Lord was that of a house, a family, a descent of blood from David unto his children and his children's children.

Used to blast stumps from fields, dynamite is an aid to the farmer. Used in war it kills and maims. Fire cooks food and makes steam for engines, fire also burns houses and destroys forests. But it is not the power but the use of power which is good or bad. The truth applies to any power; spiritual, legal, monarchical, political or personal. Power is without either virtue or vice; the user may use it well or ill, as he pleases.

Freemasonry passes the brother in the process of becoming a Fellowcraft between the pillar of strength - power; and the pillar of establishment - choice or control. He is a man now and no minor or infant. He has grown up Masonically. Before him are spread the two great essentials to all success, all greatness, and all happiness. Like any other power - temporal or physical, religious or spiritual - Freemasonry can be used well or ill. Here is the lesson set before the Fellowcraft; if he, like David, would have his kingdom of Masonic manhood established in strength he must pass between the pillars with understanding that power without control is useless, and control without power, futile. Each is a compliment of the other; in the passage between the pillars the Fellowcraft not only has his feet set upon the Winding Stairs but is given - so he has eyes to see and ears to hear - secret instructions as to how he shall climb those stairs that he may, indeed, reach the Middle Chamber. He is to climb by strength but directed by wisdom; he is to progress by power, but guided by control, he must rise by the might that is in him but arrive by the wisdom of his heart.

So considered, the inaccuracies and misstatements of ritual regarding the pillars become relatively unimportant; whether eighteen of thirty-five cubits high, whether cast in one place or another, whether or not surmounted in Solomon's day with globes terrestrial and celestial, matter little. The lesson is there, the meaning of the symbol to be read. The initiate of old saw in the obelisk the very spirit of the God he worshiped. The modern Masonic initiate may see in the two pillars the means by which he may travel a little further, a little higher towards the secret Middle Chamber of life, in which dwells the Unseen Presence.

MIDDLE CHAMBER

There were three stories of side chambers built around the Temple on three sixths; what, therefore, is called in the authorized aversion a middle Clamber was really the middle story of those three. The Hebrew word is yatsang. They are thus described in First Kings vi, 5, 6, 03: And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about. The nethermost chamber was five

cubits broad and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house. The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third.

These chambers, after the Temple was completed, served for the accommodation of the priests when upon duty; in them they deposited their vestments and the sacred vessels- But the knowledge of the purpose to which the middle chamber was appropriated while the Temple was in the course of construction, is only preserved in Masonic tradition. This tradition is, however, altogether mythical and symbolical in its character, and belongs to the symbolism of the Winding Stairs, which see.

In modern Freemasonry, the Middle Chamber is the symbolic place of reward. This was thought of as the place where the Fellow Craft met to receive wages for their labors on the Temple of Solomon. During its construction, they assembled on the evening of the sixth day of the week. Those who were entitled to the wages of a Fellow Craft were invested with certain mysterious signs, tokens, and a word, which enabled them to pass the inner and outer guards and to enter the Middle Chamber. If they did not have the proper identification, they did not get into the Middle Chamber or receive their wages.

Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia

Grand Lodge of Spain

PROVINCIAL

GRAND LODGE OF VALENCIA

2.4- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART FOUR

Provincial Education Programme
Fellow Craft Degree

THE WINDING STAIRS

In the First Book of Kings (vi, 8) it is said: "The door for the Middle Chamber was in the right side of the house; and they went up with winding stairs into the Middle Chamber, and out of the middle into the third." From this passage the Freemasons of the eighteenth century adopted the symbol of the Winding Stairs, and introduced it into the Fellow Craft's Degree, where it has ever since remained, in the American Rite. In one of the higher Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite the Winding Stairs are called cochleus, which is a corruption of cochlis, a spiral staircase.

The Hebrew word is lulim, from the obsolete root lug, to roll or wind. The whole story of the Winding Stairs in the Second Degree of Freemasonry is a mere myth, without and other foundation than the slight allusion in the Book of Kings which has been just cited, and it derives its only value from the symbolism taught in its legend.

The Winding Stairs forms an important tradition in Freemasonry and is the focus of the lecture of the Fellowcraft degree. While being prominent within the lecture, there is very little reference to this staircase in Biblical accounts of King Solomon's Temple. In I Kings 6:8 one reads, "The entrance to the lowest floor was on the south side of the temple; a stairway led up to the middle level and from there to the third." (NIV) Out of this limited reference, Freemasonry has constructed an allegory that can only be interpreted from a symbolic standpoint.

The Winding Stairs is an impressive and significant Masonic symbol when carefully examined. A critical study suggests that the Winding Stairs might veil more different subjects than any other Masonic symbol. It represents allegories as well as symbolic truths. It embodies science as well as moral and spiritual truths. The splendor of the conception of the Winding Stairs is one of the most interesting examples of symbolic concealment practiced by our early Masonic ritualists.

The allusion of the Winding Stairs leading to the middle chamber of the Temple is apparently a veil to divert the mind from many interesting symbols along the way that are overlooked unless the Mason carefully considers the journey into the middle chamber. In the Biblical account, nothing is said about the two columns at the foot of the stairs; no reference to the globes upon the columns; nothing to show the number of steps contained in the stairway; or that the steps were divided into three series of three, five, and seven steps. There is nothing to suggest the three degrees of initiation, nor imply the five steps represented the five Orders of Architecture or the five human senses, nor indicate that the seven steps led through the liberal arts and sciences.

In fact, one should consider the Winding Stairs as a compound symbol that is constructed to bring together several separate symbols found in the three degrees. Each of these symbols has their own separate significance when used alone. Yet when brought together in a single symbol, it represents a most interesting lesson within the allegory.

The two columns and the globes thereon are symbols belonging to the Entered Apprentice Degree, the three steps are symbols belonging to the master's degree, while the five and seven steps are essential elements of the Fellowcraft Degree. The symbol as a whole can be thought of as depicting the new initiate emerging from the profane world about to begin his journey from darkness in search of moral, mental and spiritual light. If he succeeds in completing his journey, and in acquiring the lessons along the way, he has the hope of attaining a special understanding of his relationship to God that he could not obtain without careful introspection.

The Entered Apprentice begins his symbolic journey in search of Masonic light and knowledge at a point between replicas of the two columns, which undoubtedly represent the columns of Jachin and Boaz of King Solomon's Temple. The First Degree in Masonry is designed to be only a preparation and purification for a nobler and higher purpose. The lessons are primarily intended to prepare the recipient for the mental, moral, and spiritual light that is to be achieved in the succeeding degrees.

It is therefore in the Second Degree that the real intellectual work begins. The candidate finds stretching out before him the winding stairs, a symbol of discipline and instruction, inviting him to ascend, and teaching him that he must commence his real Masonic labor. Here he enters upon those glorious yet difficult researches in the laborious task of self-improvement now placed before him as a duty. He cannot stand still if he is a true Mason. His Masonic destiny requires him to ascend the winding stairs, step by step, until he has reached the summit, where the treasures of knowledge await him. For the faithful performance of this task a reward is promised. The reward is improvement of his intellectual facilities; the moral and spiritual elevation of his character; and the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom.

Here he proceeds onward and upward through the liberal arts and sciences where he will find divine laws by which the Great Architect creates, preserves, and rules the wonderful universe in which we are fortunate enough to live. Thus, it appears that the Winding Stairs represents the progress of an inquiring mind and a sincere heart, through toils and labor of the intellect, in acquiring an understanding of the sciences displayed upon the steps. This is a preliminary step toward the attainment of divine truths, which every Mason should pursue in his quest for self-improvement, on a journey that never ends.

If the Winding Stairs did nothing more than point out the pathway for the attainment of true Masonic light and knowledge, it should be one of the more treasured Masonic symbols. However, it contains much more than a simple inspection uncovers. The seeker of true Masonic light will miss much if he remains satisfied with the Monitorial explanations of the Winding Stairs. He must zealously study this important symbol and the ascending journey it represents to discover true Masonic knowledge that is finally reflected at the very top of the stairs, "which none but true craftsmen can ever see and fully comprehend."

HIRAM KING OF TYRE

Hiram was one of the most noted of all the Kings of Tyre; he was contemporaneous with both David and Solomon, and on intimate terms with both. Like Solomon, he was much disposed to mysticism; tradition has it that the two kings often exchanged enigmas for solution. In legendary Masonry, Hiram, King of Tyre, was Grand Master of all Masons, and Hiram Abif was Master of the Order in Jerusalem. Viewing the Temple after its completion he recognized the preeminence of the Great Architect of the universe in its perfections and yielded the supremacy in Masonry to Solomon Jedediah as the representative of Jehovah. In the symbolic supports of Masonry, he represented the pillar of strength, because, "by his power and wealth he assisted the great undertaking." Legendary Masonry represents him as frequently visiting Jerusalem for consultations with Solomon and the chief architect Hiram Abif during the construction of the Temple. Formed friendly alliance with David… — (2 Samuel 5:11) —Supported Solomon in the building of the Temple… — (1 Kings 5:1-

11) — Supplied workmen and material for the construction of the Temple… — (1 Kings 9:26-28 - 2 Chr. 2:3-16) — Refused 20 cities offered to him by King Solomon… — (1 Kings 9:10-12 - 2 Chr. 8:1,2)

Known also as "Huram" and "Horam," Hiram was the king of Tyre in the time of King David and King Solomon. While he was politically allied with David, Hiram's workmen helped David's people to build David's palace in Jerusalem, and then after Solomon succeeded his father David as King of Israel, Hiram's workers also participated in the building of the first Temple (see Temples). Much of the fine cedar for both the palace and Temple came from Tyre.

Hiram In Bible History

Hiram was politically expedient; when he saw David's God-given power, for his own survival Hiram knew it best to make himself an ally of David rather than an enemy, although it seems that their personal friendship was genuine:

"And David became greater and greater, for The Lord, the God of hosts, was with him. And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house." (2 Samuel 5:10-11 RSV)
After David died, Hiram continued the friendship with Solomon, providing materials and skilled workmen for the building of the Temple:

"Now Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, when he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father; for Hiram always loved David."
"And Solomon sent word to Hiram, "You know that David my father could not build a house for The Name of The Lord his God because of the warfare with which his enemies surrounded him, until The Lord put them under the soles of his feet. But now The Lord my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune. And so, I purpose to build a house for The Name of The Lord my God, as The Lord said to David my father, 'Your son, whom I will set upon your throne in your place, shall build the house for My Name.' [see also "My Father's House"] Now therefore command that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me; and my servants will join your servants, and I will pay you for your servants such wages as you set; for you know that there is no one among us who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians."

"When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, he rejoiced greatly, and said, "Blessed be The Lord this day, who has given to David a wise son to be over this great people."

"And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, "I have heard the message which you have sent to me; I am ready to do all you desire in the matter of cedar and cypress timber. My servants shall bring it down to the sea from Lebanon; and I will make it into rafts to go by sea to the place you direct, and I will have them broken up there, and you shall receive it; and you shall meet my wishes by providing food for my household."

"So, Hiram supplied Solomon with all the timber of cedar and cypress that he desired, while Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, and twenty thousand cors of beaten oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year. And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and the two of them made a treaty." (1 Kings 5:1-12 RSV)

THE TRIVIUM & QUADRIVIUM OR 7 LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

The 7 Liberal Arts and Sciences is lectured on famously in the Middle Chamber, but do we take note of the significance of why it's so important?

So, let's take a closer look at what they actually mean and how they developed.

The trivium is the lower division of the seven liberal arts and comprises grammar, logic, and rhetoric or (input, process, and output).

The quadrivium consists of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. These followed the preparatory work of the trivium, consisting of grammar, logic, and rhetoric. In turn, the quadrivium was considered preparatory work for the study of philosophy (sometimes called the "liberal art par excellence").

The Fellowcraft is admonished to study the Liberal Arts and Sciences, which are grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. When we study the historical background for this list, we will uncover layers of Masonic meanings for us in each of the seven areas of knowledge.

Parts of the original list date back to ancient Greece. Sometime during medieval times, the completed list had become central to educators and scholastics.

A History of the List

The phrase, the liberal arts, comes from the Latin artes liberales. Liber is translated both as Free and Book. Much of the well-educated in antiquity disliked work. If you were indentured as an apprentice, you were not free to study what you wanted. You had to do what was assigned to you. The artes illiberales were vocational studies aimed for an economic purpose, such as a being a stonemason. So it is intriguing that speculative Masonry encourages us to study the liberal arts and sciences.

The history of the seven liberal arts and sciences is intricate, but chiefly Pythagoras, Plato, and St. Augustine play key roles in framing it.

Pythagoras was not only a great mathematician and philosopher, he was a master Greek theologian. His students in the Academy looked for connections between Geometry and the Divine. His disciples sought relationships in music, arithmetic, and astronomy. Pythagoras is associated with the last four in the list of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. Pythagoras was at his peak around 520 BC.

Provincial Education Programme

About BC 400, Plato wrote of the importance of education for citizens in The Republic. Plato emphasized logic, philosophy, and dialectic. For Plato, logic represented our highest cognitive faculty. To see both sides of an argument, the pro and the con, is to understand it.

St. Augustine of Hippo left behind 5 million words that still exist today. Though he lived in the third century AD, he was the greatest teacher of rhetoric in the known world. He held that if one wished to defend truth, one must be eloquent to refute falsehood through the power of oratory. He filled out the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences with his emphasis on grammar and rhetoric.

An Orderly List

There is wisdom in the order of the items in the list. Teachers and scholastics have found these seven and their general order to be of great utility. Home-schoolers today are returning to this list to start with grammar and rhetoric in their education.

As infants, we are unable to speak. We must learn words to describe everything. Words organize our thoughts. Language is essential for learning. As we progress up the winding stairs, we learn to speak with eloquence and grace, which is rhetoric. We learn to use logic to make our arguments persuasive and true.

We advance up the lessons to higher levels of arithmetic, geometry, and music. These require abstract thinking and greater levels of concentration. As we mature in life, we gain perspective and wisdom as we enjoy the glorious works of creation, the stars and planets, astronomy, and the Divine. The order of these topics was developed over a thousand years. They continue to attract our attention today.

In the beginning there was The Trivium

The Trivium comes from the Latin for Three Vias or roads. The first three of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences represent a crossroads or intersection where the public meets. We could call it the public square, where the public meets to discuss the usual topics of the day: the weather and harvest.

Those who excel at quickly remembering common experience are good at “trivia.” Trivia is at the center of everyday knowledge. The Trivium consists of Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic.

1. Grammar

In Genesis, the first job given to Adam is to name all things. Adam is told to name them and to have dominion over creation. Knowing the name of things gives a man authority to speak and to understand.

In elementary school or Grammar School we learn to recite the alphabet, numbers, and colors. Grammar involves words and meanings. The earliest lessons in speaking involve repetition and alliteration. We say tongue twisters and recite phrases to learn to speak. We say, “she sells sea shells

by the seashore" as an articulation exercise. Children learn their own language as well as foreign languages. To learn another language, grammar and structure are essential.

Grammar can be divided into technical or exegetical grammar. Technical grammar is what most of us associate with the word grammar diagramming sentences with subjects and verbs. Grammar involves learning declensions for verbs and nouns. But exegetical grammar involves learning the meaning of words, their nuances, and how they fit in different settings.

We learn that deferential language is appropriate to use for speaking to those in authority over us. We are told to keep a tongue of good report in the FC Charge. The FC historical lecture directs us to have an instructive tongue so that we become better men. Grammar teaches us to speak clearly and concisely.

2. Rhetoric

A synonym for rhetoric is persuasion. To study rhetoric is to study speaking and writing to persuade others. Too often we think of rhetoric as unimportant, as in the throwaway line, "well that was just a rhetorical comment." Rhetoric is serious business: it has substance. Rhetoric is essential in the study of law and regulations. Roscoe Pound, Albert Mackey, and Allen Roberts were some of the greatest writers on Masonic jurisprudence. They were marvelously persuasive writers as well.

Influential Romans learned to speak in public with fluency and oratory. Newly initiated Entered Apprentices are invited to speak in Lodge on whatever was on their hearts. Public speaking is terrifying to some: but to Freemasons, we learn both to speak to listen to others.

Rhetoric adds force and elegance to our thoughts. As we improve in rhetoric, we captivate the hearer with both the strength of our arguments and the beauty of our expression. Our mastery of rhetoric teaches us to entreat and exhort our brethren to acts of charity. Skillful rhetoric uses tact to admonish our brothers. Rhetoric weaves praise to applaud excellence in conduct or deportment.

Discussion in lodge gives us practice in listening to train the ear. As we climb the winding stairs, we must gain mastery of our five senses. One of the moral principles taught in the FC Degree is to have an attentive ear. Listening teaches us to hear the poetry of language and word order. We know somehow that Faith, Hope, and Charity sounds better than Charity, Faith, and Hope.

Lodge discussions offer opportunities to explore styles of learning. Our oaths and promises are heard and repeated. We prepare them in our posting. We listen to historic lectures, orations, or talks on speculative Masonry. The various tokens and grips in our ritual are lessons in listening. We are asked, will you be off or from? By listening we hear the word and give the proper reply. As we talk and listen to each other in lodge, we grow in appreciation of debate and exhortation. We are brothers speaking to and listening to one another.

3. Logic

Logic is the third step of the Trivium. Logic directs and guides us after truth. It consists of a regular train of argument where we deduce or infer from the facts. Logic leads us to conclusions based on our knowledge.

We use all of our faculties of conceiving, judging, reasoning, and disposing of questions before us. Logic trains the mind to think clearly. We are charged to be good men and true. Sincerity and plain dealing should distinguish any Mason.

Dialectics is the term used to describe critical thinking. We weigh the pros and cons to find the better choice. We observe the world. As we see patterns and relationships, we begin to make predictions using inductive reasoning. Dialectics guides us to make proofs or syllogisms.

Early on, we find that you can disprove assertions easier than prove them. Reductio ad absurdum means to find a contradiction that proves the opposite. It is easy to disprove, “all elephants can fly,” simply by finding one that can’t. A single observation proves that, “not all elephants can fly.”

The education of our minds includes proofs and deductive reasoning. We start to see actions that help one person may not help all. We learn to avoid arguments that something is true or false simply by who says it, instead of its inherent truth.

As we advance in logic, we begin to think about proofs for the existence of God. We see the beauty of an autumn leave, so intricate and perfect. The teleological proof of Gods existence is that design in nature proves that there must have been a designer, our G.A.O.T.U.

Grammar, rhetoric, and logic are the trivium, or first three, of the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. We are charged to polish and adorn the mind by studying them.

The Quadrivium

The Quadrivium is associated with science and learning the mysteries of the universe. Pythagoras is chiefly responsible for these four branches of science: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

The Quadrivium means the Four Vias or paths. Where four roads converge is the center of the town or city. We leave the village of three roads and progress to the more advanced level of the city. A robust mind progresses as if upon roads or paths to the secrets of wisdom. A wise man strolls along the paths of science.

4. Arithmetic

Arithmetic involves computation or reckoning with numbers. Ignorance of numbers leaves many things unintelligible. To perceive the world accurately, we need facility with counting and measurement. Mathematics is taught step by step. We first learn to count before we learn to add and subtract. As a science, it is progressive by building skill and familiarity through frequent practice.

We develop abstract operations such as addition and multiplication. A number of Masonic writers have handed down a useful moral lesson: For the Freemason, the application of this science is to:

Add to your knowledge

Never subtract from the character of your neighbor

Multiple your benevolence to your fellow creatures

& Divide your means with those in need.

Arithmetic offers a structured system. In has rules, order, and operates in terms of equations. Balance and equality are principles learned in arithmetic that should remind us to act on the level.

There is beauty in arithmetic and mathematics. We discover symmetry and proportion. Numbers fascinates us. Leonardo Fibonacci in AD 1201 discovered that rabbits reproduced in a series of 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 13. Ratios of any two successive numbers approach the Golden Mean, which is 1.618. The inverse of 1.618 is .618. The same digits reappear. The Parthenon was built on this same proportion of the length 161.8% of the height.

We feel awe and wonder at the beauty of mathematics. We find fractal patterns in biology, chemistry, and physics that are repeated. The Fibonacci spiral is found in conch shells. Mathematics shows that some propositions are right, and some are wrong. It indirectly teaches us about morality. There is no moral relativity here.

5. Geometry

Geometry concatenates geo and metric, or earth measurement, within it. Geometry discovers unmeasured areas by comparing them to areas already measured. Geometry is synonymous with self-knowledge, the understanding of the basic substance of our being. Freemasonry places special emphasis on geometry.

The tools of geometry are plumbs, squares, and levels. They are the basic tools of operative Masons. We use them in speculative Masonry to teach lessons of right-behavior, rectitude, and truthfulness. Our conductor in the FC degree leads us much like the apprentice is led by a Master of his trade.

The sense of seeing is developed in Geometry. We grow in perceiving which structures are in order and which ones are not well arranged. We acknowledge that geometric is the foundation of architecture.

6. Music

Music is the sixth of the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. Pythagoras and his followers were keen on studying music as a science.

Music is part of us. Our heartbeat is the basic pattern, with sounds ranging from the first cry of a newborn baby to our last gasp for breath. The sense of hearing is improved, so that we recognize ditties and rhythms and syncopation. Clapping and singing are part of who were are as humans.

Vibrations cause sounds. Pitch is determined by the frequency of the vibrations. We learn to hear major, minor, and chromatic scales. We attempt to match the pitch of the lead singer. It takes discipline, but we achieve harmony. Many have sought to hear the sounds of the universe in radio frequency. Whole pieces of music have been dedicated to the music of the spheres.

The Senior Warden is sometimes associated with this Science, as the Warden asks for harmony in the Lodge.

7. Astronomy

Astronomy is last in this list of Arts and Sciences as we contemplate the stars and planets, and yes, the G.A.O.T.U.

Time and space seem to dwarf us. We feel tiny as we look at the Milky Way. Often it is said that the Fear of God is the Beginning of Wisdom. Looking at the universe helps to instill both fear and a sense of the glory of the universe.

The globes in the Lodge teach us to understand the rotation of the earth around the sun and the diurnal rotation of the earth. Daylight shrinks in the days before December 22nd, and then begins to lengthen. We observe this. Times and seasons are understood by contemplating astronomy.

A Charge in the Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Seven Liberal Arts & Sciences are branches of Wisdom or Learning. If we are to become better men, we should work on becoming better able to understand our world. These seven are key to learning other areas of knowledge including history and psychology. These branches are like rooms in a magnificent garden in which we should daily stroll.

There is a charge to us in these seven steps. That charge for us is to continue to be learners. Our education doesn't stop in high school or college. We are to continue to read classic literature, the Bible, biographies, history. We should see ourselves as life-long learners.

We should better comprehend the use of music, plays, and art in our lives. We should use math and geometry. We need to continue even with the Trivium to expand our vocabulary and practice writing. As we persevere in learning throughout our lives, we will become better