

Mystic Masonry: In Symbol, Ritual, and Allegory

An esoteric interpretation of Masonic symbols in the 2nd Degree

By Robert V. Lund

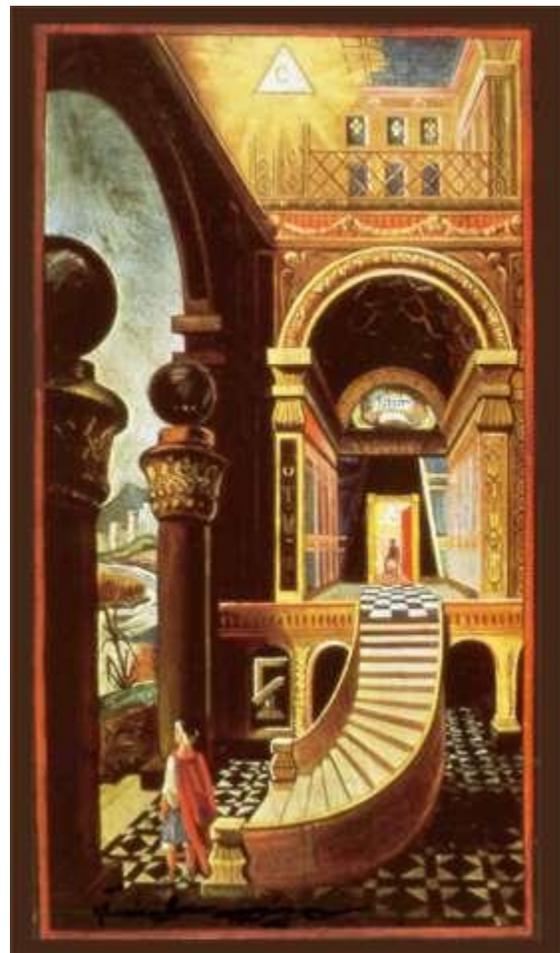
The Second Degree Tracing Board

The Second Degree tracing board, shown below, captures the important lessons of the Fellowcraft Degree in the various symbols shown in the board.

Being initiated in to the second degree assumes that the candidate has mastered the principles of the first degree – that of overcoming his base nature. He should have mastered his physical body, his lower state.

The object of this degree is to raise the candidate's consciousness, to turn from the outer physical state to an inner moral and intellectual state. It signifies a budding of the psyche, bursting forth from a seed into germination.

The two major visual items in the tracing board are the two pillars and the middle chamber of the temple. Having to walk between the two pillars is symbolical of balance – taking the middle path, moving neither to the right nor the left. We will deal more with this later. Moving up the stairs is symbolical of raising oneself up and inward towards the middle chamber, representative of our inner



selves. The stairs represent different levels of consciousness. Again, we will deal with these in more detail later.

The Square

In the tracing board, to the left of the stairs, can be seen the working tools of the emulation ritual.

We have dealt with these already, but I must mention the square at this point, since it is again an important symbol in this Degree, since it is found in various parts of the Second Degree ritual: the candidate is received on it; the obligation is taken with the arm supported by a square; and the Lodge is opened on it. It is also one of the working tools, in the Emulation ritual, of this Degree. During the Obligation, five squares are formed: The left foot, left knee, right foot, right knee, and left arm.

As part of the Obligation, the candidate pledges that the Square will be the guide of his Masonic conduct.

We need not go into the symbolism of the Square here, as it was dealt with thoroughly in the First Degree.

The Chequered Floor

This is shown on both floors in this Tracing Board. However, this has already been covered in the First Degree Tracing Board, so it will not be addressed again here, except to remind us of the duality of all things. This is one of the Natural Laws.

The Ear of Corn

The word of the Second Degree, which denotes “plenty” is usually designated by an ear of corn by a stream of water. This can be seen in the Tracing Board outside the entrance of the Temple.

The term originates from a Hebrew word which, according to Wikipedia, literally means the part of a plant containing grains, such as an ear of corn or a stalk of grain or, in different contexts, "stream, torrent".



The word is also defined as a custom, principle, or belief, distinguishing a particular class or group of people, especially one regarded as outmoded or no longer important. It usually refers to a word whose pronunciation identifies its speaker as being a member, or not a member, of a particular group. In many cases of conflict between groups speaking different languages or dialects, one side used shibboleths in a way similar to the above-mentioned Biblical use, i.e., to discover among them members of the opposing group. So, one can see the context in which it is used in this degree – the battle between the Gileadites and the Ephraimites.

So too should we distinguish between Masons and non-Masons, between those following a spiritual path and those that are not. Discussions in regard to this subject should not be had with those not qualified, those not able to understand. This is also the meaning of the penal clause in the First Degree.

The symbolism of the ear of corn provides us with an allusion to growth. There is a reference to an ear of corn which was given to candidates in the ancient Egyptian mysteries: it indicates the hope of intellectual and *spiritual* growth, nurtured by the waters of intellectual and *spiritual* enlightenment. This meaning should always be borne in mind during the Fellowcraft degree.

The Pillars

At his initiation, the candidate was introduced to the left pillar which stood at the porch-way, or entrance, to King Solomon's Temple, which was named Boaz. In the Second Degree, he is informed of the right pillar, Jachin. These two pillars will be seen in many pictures and symbols related to Freemasonry. Many Lodges also have replicas of these two pillars standing in the Lodge. Much importance is given to these pillars in the ritual ceremonies, but very little, regarding their import, is explained.

The porchway of the Temple symbolizes the outer natural life which forms a portal to an inner supernatural life at the central sanctuary which we have not yet consciously reached, but to which we labour to ascend by an in-winding stairway, gradually rebuilding body and mind, with a view to creating a new reconstituted organism adapted to that sublime degree of existence.

In the tracing board lecture in the first degree, the initiate is told of three pillars that support Freemasonry: Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. Later, we will see a correspondence between these three pillars and the pillars of the Temple. As we deal with the symbolism of the two pillars of the Temple, we will discover that, between them, there is actually a third pillar. This third pillar represents you, and this will be explained as we work through the meaning of them.

Pillars have always been a prominent feature of all great systems of religion, and of initiation into the great mysteries. The entrances of the great cathedrals are normally two great towers which represent two great pillars. You will find a similar feature in all the great mosques.

In ancient Egyptian temples, where initiations into the mysteries took place, initiates had to pass between two pillars. The Temple of Delphi in Greece was reported to have used two pillars in their initiations.

The pillars are meant to denote the entrance to the path of enlightenment - the path that leads from the physical, material world to the divine, spiritual world. Travelling the path is our ultimate purpose on earth, of returning to the Creator as perfected beings. The path is a narrow one and, as it states in our ritual, we should “walk uprightly and with humility before God, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left from the strict path of virtue.”

In Freemasonry, the pillars are shown to be capped with a terrestrial and celestial globe. Originally, they were said to be capped by two bowls: one of water and one of fire. The bowl of water signified the earthly man (the material) and the bowl of fire signified the divine man. In one of the Apocryphal Scriptures (2 Esdras, 7; 7 8), the path to true wisdom and life is spoken of as an entrance between a fire on the right hand and a deep water on the left.

They also represent the active and passive expressions of Divine Energy, as well as other opposites, such as light and darkness; body and soul; sun and moon; male and female; good and bad; summer and winter; etc. In other words, they represent the duality of the manifested material world, as dictated by Natural Law. This symbolism is reinforced by the mosaic pavement in the Lodge. The lower, physical part of us is earthly and materialistic while our higher, divine portion is spiritual. These two portions of ourselves are always in conflict, the spiritual and the carnal ever warring against one another, and the enlightened man learns to create a perfect balance between them and to establish himself *in strength* so that his own inward lodge or temple stands firm against all weakness, temptation, and adversity. As stated in our Masonic ritual, the pillars when conjoined, denote *stability*.

This duality, as taught in Pythagorean and Egyptian numerology, and in Rosicrucian teachings, will always produce a triad.

They are also said to be hollow. In some versions of the ritual, it is stated that they were a repository for knowledge and wisdom, and that they were made of metal to withstand fire and flood. Perhaps this is a symbol to tell us to keep our knowledge safe so that it may be passed on to others.

The pillars are said to be adorned with net-work, lily-work, and pomegranates.

Lily-work denotes purity and directs us to be pure of body, mind and spirit.

The ritual says that pomegranates denote plenty. The fruit is extremely ancient, having originated in Persia and then spread across the Middle East, Asia and the Mediterranean. In all the cultures where it was found, the brilliant and unusual red fruit tended to have strong religious associations. The rich color suggested blood, and hence life, vitality and prosperity. The huge number of seeds suggested fertility.

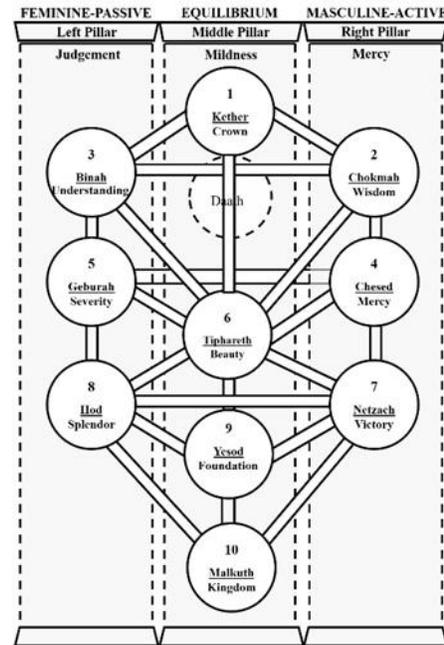
However, the Hebrew word for “pomegranate” is “Ramam”, which means “to rise up” or “to be exalted, or lifted up”.

This spiritual use is suggested by some of legends associated with the pomegranate in world religion and mythology. Mohammed urged the eating of pomegranate to combat envy and hatred. The Buddha was said to have used pomegranates to calm a cannibal demon. There are strong esoteric traditions that pomegranate juice can absorb and counteract negative energy. Anyone exposed to strong negative emotions or environments should consider a regular dose of pomegranate juice to help with spiritual cleansing and purification.

The pomegranate may signify that it is the “fruit of the Spirit” and indicates that we should now, as with the winding staircase, rise up and become exalted, and also to plant the seeds of knowledge and spirituality everywhere, so that it may take root and spread.

In addition to being replicas of the pillars in King Solomon’s Temple, the two pillars are derived also from the Kabbalistic Sephiroth, or Tree of Life, which is a symbol used in the Kabbalah, a system of mysticism. Kabbalah is a set of esoteric teachings meant to explain the relationship between an unchanging, eternal, and mysterious infinity (which we might call the Great Architect Of The Universe) and the mortal and finite universe. It defines paths to understanding and perfection.

To simplify some of the concepts, the ten Sephiroth are divided into three vertical columns. The right-hand column is called the pillar of Mercy, which has its basis in Wisdom. The left-hand column is called the pillar of Severity, also called Judgement,



which is founded on Understanding, and also Strength. The middle column is called the pillar of Equilibrium, incorporating Grace and Beauty, and keeps the other two in balance, which perfectly defines the purpose of our two Masonic Temple pillars. It is also the Crown, in which all the powers of the superior worlds are manifested. You will recognize, from this description, the derivation of the pillars of Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty.

The Kabbalah is a complex teaching, and will not be dealt with here. However, it should be understood that further study is required if a fuller understanding of the symbolism of the pillars is to be obtained.

As the candidate takes his place between the two pillars, representing the pairs of opposites, and the start of the narrow path, he is to find balance and equilibrium to be successful in his spiritual journey.

The Winding Staircase

The dominant image in the tracing board is the winding staircase, which is appropriate since it is **the most important symbol of the Second Degree**. On approaching the altar, the candidate is instructed to take the five steps “as if ascending a winding staircase”.

In other words, he is directed to *mount*, spirally, by a certain number of winding steps. Motion now becomes circular, and he advances now not merely forward, but *up*, and *in*, towards the centre.

This spiral ascent implies that the time has come for the Candidate to leave the level of the physical and *rise* to the level of the mental. He must divert his thoughts and desires from sensuous and material things, and concentrate them on the much more important things of the *mind*. The Antient Ritual states explicitly that the candidate ascends to the summit of staircase and arrives at the Middle Chamber of the Temple: there to receive further instructions related to the wages of a Fellowcraft. Remember that the temple represents one’s own being, so the candidate is approaching *his centre*.

From the moment of ascending the winding staircase, the Candidate is *mentally* leaving the outer world, more and more, behind him, and rising up into an inner invisible world. He is making what has been called in some groups “*the ascent of the mind to the Source of Light*”. His labours, as a Fellow Craft, should now be devoted to learning the secrets and mysteries of these new regions, and will claim all his energy of mind, but its proper exercise will create new faculties as he progresses, and make possible for him what he may initially think is beyond his power and ability.

This ascent is also made towards the East (or source of Light) by a journey of five steps. Why five, and not more nor less? Because, as we have learned elsewhere in this book, man's nature is resolvable into a spectrum of seven distinct principles (corresponding with the seven officers forming a Lodge), but of these

seven, the two lowest are left out in this Degree, and the five higher ones alone are engaged. Our two lowest principles (which are physical) are the senses and desire, both of which should be transcended in this Degree, whilst the higher psychic and spiritual faculties need to come into function, and it is to each of these that a step is allotted. The five-pointed star is a geometrical symbol of man's five higher principles.

You may be wondering how one can dissociate the five higher principles from the two lower ones when they all seem inseparable? Learning to do this is one of the principle lessons of this Degree. In gaining any true knowledge of ourselves, we must learn to discriminate between the material sense-world and the supra-sensual world, and between things transient, and things enduring. As the Theosophists say: "lead us from the unreal to the real". We do this, to some degree, when our bodies are asleep and the mind continues to function vividly, as it often does in dreams, and shall certainly have to do so when, at death, the outer senses and reason drop away altogether, leaving us with only our five higher principles. But it is important to be able to do this consciously, as the Divine Wisdom teaches. It is the function of the Second Degree to train the mind, the higher principles, to function consciously apart from the senses. This is a difficult thing to do, but everyone must pursue his own study of it, in his own way, and the true seeker will soon learn details and methods of doing so himself.

The ritual mentions the three, five, and seven steps of the winding staircase. The three steps were dealt with in the Entered Apprentice degree. The five steps have just been discussed. The seven steps represent the sevenfold nature of man, as just discussed, but also the seven planes of existence taught by the mystery schools. These have different names but are defined as: the Physical; the Astral; the Mental; the Intellectual; the Spiritual; the Monadic; and the Divine. Understanding these planes, and the seven aspects of man, helps us to understand our place in the Universe and can help in defining a spiritual path. It is also taught by the Mystery schools that man exists in only 5 of the seven planes of existence. There is a lot more that can be said about these, but this is not the place.

The Warden seen at the bottom of the stairs is there to prevent any unqualified access to the middle chamber. Notice that it is not “unauthorized” access but “unqualified” access. That is, the candidate must have mastered the control of the material self before being qualified to rise up to the middle chamber (the significance of which will be covered later).

The Middle Chamber

At the summit of the winding staircase is the middle chamber of the temple. Remember that the temple represents one’s own self. The candidate, by ascending the staircase, is approaching his own centre. Residing at the centre of one’s being is one’s true, divine self.

From the moment of ascending the winding staircase, the Candidate is mentally leaving the outer world, more and more, behind him, and rising up into an inner, less material, invisible world. This is what has been called in some groups “the ascent of the mind to the Source of Light”. His labours as a Fellow Craft should now be devoted to learning the secrets and mysteries of this realm. These labours will require all his energy of mind, but its proper exercise will create new faculties as he progresses. These faculties will make possible for him what he may, initially, think is beyond his power and ability.

In the allegory of the wages paid at the temple, the Entered Apprentices, representing those who are not yet very spiritually evolved, received simple maintenance (corn, wine, and oil), whereas the Fellowcrafts were paid their wages in “specie”, which, according to American or Antient ritual, they could only receive in the Middle Chamber. In other words, their wages (or payment) were of a spiritual nature, suitable to their more evolved spirituality. The fact that they received them in the middle chamber, which is an allegory for the secret chamber of the Heart (the centre), wherein resides the Divine Spark, is evidence of this. In Ontario or Emulation ritual, this is implied: it tells that a password was required by a Fellowcraft to ascend the winding staircase which led to the middle chamber of the temple. The password (see Ear of Corn above) refers to spiritual growth.

To find our own Centre (our real self) involves a turning inwards of our faculties of physical sense and thought, and a deeply introspective penetration of the elements of our own nature, until our true selves are found at the centre of our being. This task is represented in our ritual by the perambulations and by the path of the winding staircase, leading from the ante-rooms of our nature to the Centre, which the candidate must ascend, asking, seeking, knocking, along the way; being subjected to tests of his progress, and receiving, without “scruple or diffidends”, such wages of either good fortunes or adversities as the universe may know to be his due. In the Mystery Schools, this is called Karma.

The innermost sanctuary is found to be closely guarded. Nothing unclean can enter or approach that holy place. In the biblical description of the Temple of Solomon, is stated that, in the forecourt, stood the great laver of water for the cleansing of one’s pollutions, and the altar of fire for the sacrificial burning up of one's impurities. The sword of the Tyler, preventing anyone unqualified to enter the Lodge, indicates that danger exists to those who are not properly prepared to approach the Centre, or who might rashly rush in. The sharp instrument and cable tow of the first degree first introduce this point.

As the ritual indicates, the password in a Fellowcraft lodge is to prevent any *unqualified* person from ascending the winding staircase which led to the middle chamber of the temple. This is a test of merit for one’s mental state: if your spirit does not ring true, you will not be able to enter a higher state of consciousness.

The Letter “G”

The Emulation ritual states that, after our ancient brethren had gained the summit of the winding staircase, their attention was particularly directed to certain Hebrew characters, which **יהוה** are depicted in a Fellowcraft Lodge by the letter “G”, denoting God, the Grand Geometrician of the

Universe. It alludes to the sacred name of the Deity to whom we should all, with reverence, most humbly bow.

In the American and Antient ritual, the letter "G" is also defined as the initial of Geometry, and further description is given. Geometry is defined as the noblest of sciences, on which the superstructure of Masonry is erected.

The American and Antient ritual states:

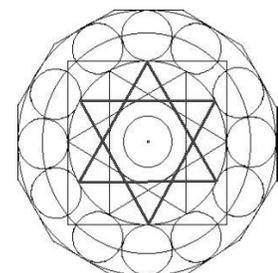
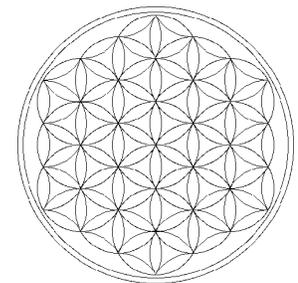
"By Geometry we may trace nature through her various windings to her most concealed recesses. By it, we discover the power, the wisdom and the goodness of the Grand Artificer of the Universe and view with delight the proportions which connect this vast machine."

"A survey of nature and the observations of her beautiful proportions first determined man to imitate the Divine plan and study symmetry and order."

"Tools and implements of architecture are selected by the Fraternity to imprint on the memory wise and serious truths and, thus, through a succession of ages, are transmitted, unimpaired, the excellent tenets of our institution."

This defines the whole purpose of our signs and symbols, and by this description we are steered towards Sacred Geometry whose symbols hold the keys to the divine plan.

The structure of the universe is determined by certain mathematical constants which express themselves in the form of 'patterns' which are woven into the very fabric of nature. They are also symbolic of the underlying metaphysical principle of the inseparable relationship of the part to the whole. It is this principle of oneness, underlying all geometry, that permeates the architecture



of all diverse form. This principle of interconnectedness, inseparability and union provides us with a continuous reminder of our relationship to the whole, a blueprint for the mind to the sacred foundation of all things created.

The circle, square, and triangle are the basic geometrical shapes upon which all creation is based.

In the closing ritual of a Fellowcraft Lodge, the Senior Warden indicates that the letter "G", representing God, the Grand Geometrician of the Universe, is situated in the centre of the building. Bearing in mind that the Lodge represents oneself, this indicates, once more, that the Divine presence is at the centre of our being.

Corn, Wine and Oil

We learn, in the emulation ritual, that Entered Apprentices were paid their wages in corn, wine, and oil. In the Antient ritual, it is the Fellowcraft who are paid such wages.

The Michigan ritual states *"You have now arrived at a place representing the Middle Chamber where you are received and recorded as a Fellowcraft and are now entitled to your wages as such, which are the corn of nourishment, the wine of refreshment and the oil of joy, which denote plenty, happiness, and peace"*.

Corn, wine, and oil were the most important products of Middle Eastern countries, and they constituted the wealth of the people. They were esteemed as the supporters of life and the means of refreshment. David, in Psalm 104, names them among the greatest blessings that we enjoy, and speaks of them as *"wine that makes glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face shine, and bread which strengthens man's heart"*.

W.L. Wilmshurst makes the following statement in his book "The Ceremony of Passing": *"Why is corn used in preference to any other symbol of growth? The traditional secret teaching is briefly this: - Corn is a "Sacred plant". Its source has always puzzled the botanists. It is not indigenous to this world; it is never found, like other cereals and seeded grasses, in a wild state, from which its growth has been stimulated by intensive culture. This golden, graceful, prolific, and needful plant, it was taught, was never a growth of this earth, but 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 of giving man an emblem of his own soul and of its infinite and prolific potentialities. (This ancient tradition is repeated in Psalm 78; 24-25, A.V., "He gave them of the corn of heaven; man did eat angels' food")."*

I will add that it is meant to describe the candidate himself and his own spiritual condition. He is the corn planted near, and nourished by, a stream of water. His own spiritual growth, from the Apprentice stage, is typified by the ripening corn: the cause of its growth being the Divine "dew of heaven".

Wine is said to be the mystic blood of eternal life. Esoterically, wine is a symbol of the mind exalted by the consciousness of Divine things.

Another quote from W.L. Wilmshurst: *"Corn and wine at once call to mind the sacred elements in the Christian Eucharist, and also the myth of the sun-god, who rises into mid-heaven to ripen the corn and the grape, and thus gives of his life for the benefit of others. These are types of the things most valuable to man; and to say that anyone is paid in corn and wine thus means that the richest of earth's treasures are the reward of his work, and that at the same time they carry with them the blessing of God."* W.L. Wilmshurst

Alchemically, Corn and Wine are related to Body and Mind which are the two lower principles of human nature. Oil and Salt are related to Soul and Spirit which are the two higher principles of human nature. Wisdom results when the purified Body and Mind become fused with the "fire" of the Spirit.

The oil typifies the great gift of wisdom. As oil is expressed from the olive, so is wisdom expressed by the soul of man from all his experiences on earth. After all the material results of work have turned to dust, the wisdom resulting from all the efforts made, and the experiences undergone, remains in the heart of man. The reward of work in the world is not only outward, in the things that are gained, but also inward, in the heart and mind of man himself.

Previously, we were "restored to light". Now, we are being enabled to develop that light as an interior illumination in our middle chamber, and the payment of our wages consists, no longer of mere physical sustenance (corn, wine and oil), but of something greater, which we may use as we will, as it is paid in specie, that metal which, properly prepared and transmuted, will produce the "potable gold" of the spiritual man.

W.L. Wilmshurst puts it this way:

"In their higher symbolism Corn (or Bread) and Wine relate to those of the Altar, and were Eucharistic elements in the Mysteries long before the Christian Master in a certain "upper room" (or higher level of application) took over and gave a new application to the wheat of Ceres and the wine of Bacchus-Dionysis ; while Oil, the crushed out and refined product of the olive, refers to that Wisdom which is the ultimate essence of experience and knowledge, and which has been associated, in the different Mystery teachings, with Minerva, with Solomon, and with the Mount of Olives.

The spiritual Craftsman not only earns his own wages proportionately to his work; his own labours automatically supply them. God, as his employer, has already lodged them within him in advance; he has only to appropriate them as he becomes justly entitled to them by his own labours, as the sons of Jacob found their money restored to them in their cornsacks.

The Mason is himself likened to an ear of corn, nourished by a fall of the Water of Life. In virtue of the animal element in his nature he is himself "the ox that treadeth out the corn," separating his own golden grain from the stalk that bore it. He is himself the "threshing floor of Araunah," winnowing his own chaff from his own wheat. He treads his own winepress alone; in singleness of effort and in the solitude of his own thought distilling his own vintage, until the cup of his mind runs over with the wine of a new order of intelligence. He is his own oil-press, and out of his own experience and self-realisation extracts wisdom—that oil which anoints him with a joy and an ability above his fellows, and that runs down to the "skirts of his clothing," manifesting itself in his personality and in all his activities."

On the collar of Grand Lodge Officers are displayed ears of wheat and branches of olive. Symbolically, this indicates that those who arrive at the summit of the Craft possess that which they display.

Corn, wine and oil are also used in the consecration of a new Masonic Temple. The adoption of these symbols is reference to the oldest antiquity. In religious ceremonies, anointing with oil was considered a necessary part of them. This rite has descended to Christian practices. The tabernacle in the wilderness, and all its holy vessels, were, by command of the Most High, anointed with oil. Those entering the priesthood went through the same kind of ceremony, and the prophets and kings of Israel were consecrated to their offices by the same rite.

Thus, Freemasonic Lodges, which are symbolic temples to the Most High, are consecrated to the sacred purposes for which they were built by placing corn, wine, and oil upon the altar of the Lodge. So, this

mystic ceremony instructs us to be *nourished* with the hidden manna of righteousness, to be *refreshed* with the Word of the Great Architect of the Universe, and to rejoice with unspeakable *joy* in the riches of divine grace.

The Three-fold Sign

The Sign of Fidelity

The word “fidelity” means the quality of being faithful. The sign of fidelity is in use universally as a sign of truth, honesty, integrity, and fidelity.

A similar sign was used by Roman soldiers as a salute and to imply that orders would be carried out with integrity. In ancient Greece, it was used to greet priests. Some native Americans used it as a sign of friendship. Afghans and Arabs use it in greeting to show that the greeting is from the heart.

In the Middle East it was and has been for centuries used in a similar manner, implying honesty.

In the USA today it is used when reciting the pledge of allegiance or reciting the national anthem, as a sign of fidelity to the state. In the Second Degree, it forms part of the three-fold sign. This sign also incorporates a square – made by the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. The Sign of Fidelity, for us as Masons, is to remind us to be faithful to our word and deed, and to maintain, uphold, and live according to, Cosmic Law, and to faithfully continue on the spiritual path.

The hand is over the heart, and should remind us that the heart is one of the major energy centres (or Chakras) in our bodies.

When making the sign, imagine holding your heart in your open hand.

The Hailing Sign

The second part of the Sign, the Hailing sign, or sign of Supplication, is called the sign of Perseverance in other jurisdictions, but in its essence, it is the sign of preservation, the sign associated with God the Preserver, under whatsoever name He is called, throughout the world.

In ancient Egypt, it is associated with Horus; in India with Hanuman, the skilful craftsman who built the bridge of Rama, the seventh incarnation of Vishnu, the Preserver. It was in this position that he brought the fruit of the tree of life to the dead and dying in the battle which Rama waged against Ravana, the Demon King. In Mexico, Quetzcoatl makes this sign when he is wounded by the evil giant.

So, it will be seen, firstly, that the Sign is of great and genuine antiquity, and has been passed down by a regular line of successors from the days of the Ancient Mysteries; and secondly, that it is clearly associated with God the Preserver and the idea of preservation. This fact emphatically shows that when we speak of the G.G.O.T.U. we are speaking of the Preservative aspect of God.

The Penal Sign

The Penal Sign is shown on numerous Egyptian frescoes and is referred to in the Book of the Dead. The significance of the penalty itself lies in the fact that among the ancient Egyptians the heart was regarded as symbolising the good and bad in man. It was weighed at the judgment against the feather, the symbol of truth, and if a man's life had been evil the heart and the Feather failed to balance and he was rejected. If therefore the heart could not be produced, clearly the man was doomed to destruction. As in the First degree the throat was indicated because it is an important occult centre, so here the heart should be considered to have a similar significance.

Knowledge

In this degree are repeated entreaties to study the liberal arts and sciences (that polish and adorn the mind). The candidate requires a well-rounded education before being able to understand and progress further. He is permitted to extend his researches into the hidden mysteries of nature and science.

The American ritual refers to “all the active powers of the soul” which “present a vast and boundless field for philosophical disquisition, which far exceeds human inquiry and are peculiar mysteries known only to nature and to nature’s god”.

The candidate is told that Masonry and Geometry were originally synonymous terms. That geometry is of a Divine nature.

We should see that all of these statements require that we understand the true nature of the universe, and our own position in it. I refer again to the seven planes of existence and the seven-fold nature of man.

Conclusion

We’ve dealt with most of the symbolism of the second degree, but there are three important things in this degree that I want to emphasize:

Firstly, the winding staircase, by which we should understand the raising of our consciousness.

Secondly, that we move to the middle chamber or centre of the building, understanding that it is at our own centre that we find the divine presence.

Thirdly, that we require education, in order to understand the universe, both material and invisible.

I hope that what I have imparted to you here will be starting point for your further study and understanding.