

Holy Royal Arch of Jerusalem¹

A Lecture

Companions, the discovery which has been made is of the greatest importance, and you see that the world is indebted to Masonry for the preservation of the Book of the Sacred Law. Had it not been for the wisdom and precaution of our first Grand Master in constructing under the Temple a secret vault, which remained proof against the devouring flames, and fury of the enemy, this the only remaining copy of the Law, would have been lost at the destruction of the Temple. The characters on the triangle – the meaning of which the Sojourners could not understand – represent, as has been suggested to us by the, learned Sanhedran, the name of God in three different languages; and all indicate, in our opinion, the true and long lost method of pronouncing the Sacred Word inscribed upon the circle; for it is of too essential a nature to be comprehended by human wisdom, or pronounced by the tongue of any individual. Lastly, Masonic tradition informs us, that the ancient Master Mason's word – lost at the building of King Solomon's Temple would, one day be recovered and as the Jewel which Sanhedran discovered bears the mark of Hiram Abif there can be no doubt that the characters on the triangle signify that lost word and the manner of pronouncing it, for we know that it could only be imparted when the three Grand Masters were present, and consented to give it.

In future it shall be adopted as the Grand Word of the Royal Arch degree, and let it never be spoken unless in the manner I shall now proceed to explain. (This is done)

Our ordinary signs are five in number.

The First or P. S. which is given thus (it is demonstrated), and refers to the Soj. guarding his eyes from the intensity of the sun's rays, when their reflection shone so brilliantly on the gold plate found on the pedestal.

The Second is the sign of Salute, called also the Reverential is given so (it is deomstrated), and refers to the second ascent from the vault. Tradition informs us that the Sojourner, on bringing up the Roll from the vault, bound his two companions to

¹ http://www.bluecob.com/FFTM/?page_id=755

secrecy by the P. s., he himself being obliged to use his left hand, as his right was occupied with the Roll.

The Third is the Penitential or Supplicatory s., given so (it is demonstrated), in allusion to the thankfulness of the chiefs of the Sanhedrin when they recovered the long lost Book of the Law.

The Fourth is the Monitorial or sign of Suffering, given so (it is demonstrated), in allusion to the descent of the Sojourner into the vault,

The Fifth, called the Fiducial sign is made thus, (it is demonstrated) in allusion to the Sojourner prostrating himself before the pedestal when he discovered what it was.

The Grand sign refers to the opening of the arches by the removal of the three stones, which stones are typified by the three Principals Z. H. and J. The three halts in giving it, and the three arches formed by the three Ps. allude to the three descents of the Sojourners before they discovered the mysterious triangle.

The Rods, we use as emblems of power; as such they have been employed by all nations, but we use them in commemoration of the Rod wherewith Moses wrought so many wonders in the land of Egypt and in the wilderness. You have received explanations of the five ordinary signs deduced from the important discoveries made by the three Sojourners; but these signs may also have been adopted from other considerations.

The P. sign reminds us of the fall of Adam, and the dreadful penalty thereby entailed on his posterity, no less than death. We should herefore bow with resignation before the chastening hand of the living God, engrafting at the same time His law on our hearts; hence the R. s. In this expressive form the father of the human race presented himself before his offended Judge, and listened to the denunciation of his first and terrible judgment, and it was in after times adopted by Moses at the foot of Mount Horeb, where the Lord God appeared to him in the burning bush, to support the dazzling radiance of the Deity, he shielded his eyes from the divine splendour, at the time placing his hand on his heart in token of submission and obedience. The Penitential sign denotes state of heart and mind, without which our prayers and oblations can never be acceptable at the throne of grace, before which how should a frail and erring creature of the dust present himself, but with uplifted hands and bended knees betokening at once his humility and

dependence. In this humble posture Adam first presented himself before God, and blessed the author of his being; again did he thus present himself before his offended Judge when he endeavoured to avert His wrath, and conciliate His mercy; and this expressive and contrite form he has handed down to posterity forever.

The M s. reminds us of the weakness of human nature, unable itself to resist the powers of darkness without that help which comes from above. By the action itself we acknowledge our own frailty and feebleness, and confess that we can do no good nor acceptable service but through strengthening power and mercy of the Most High without whose special favour we must ever be found unprofitable servants in His sight. Therefore, according to the manner adopted by our holy ancestors and like practised by the atoning Priests, we shew by this, the F.s, the outward form of contrition and humility, as if would prostrate ourselves with our faces to the earth, and throw ourselves upon the mercies of the living God, looking forward with a becoming confidence to the accomplishment of His gracious promises by which alone we shall be enabled to pass through the ark of our redemption into those mansions of bliss and glory, and into the presence of Him who is the Great I Am, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.

Our Jewel is deserving of your attention.

On the bottom scroll is inscribed the motto "*Nil nisi clavis deest*, nothing but the key is wanting", which may be taken in its literal sense. Then the Circle is an emblem of eternity with the motto "*Talia si jungere possis sit tibi scire satis*, if thou comprehendest these things thou knowest enough."

Within we have a chequered pavement to represent the uncertainty of life, and the instability of things terrestrial; and on it the representation of a pedestal of pure white marble, in the form of the altar of incense, being the true double cube, and, therefore, both in figure and colour the perfect emblem of innocence and purity.

The whole delineates the secret vault with the rays of the meridian sun illuminating the Altar, the Book of the Holy Law being placed thereon. Instead of the representation of the vault, we sometimes find on Royal Arch jewels, within the circle, two intersecting triangles said to denote the elements of fire and water, and with the motto "*Deo regi*

fratribus honor fidelitas benevolentia,” thus declaring that the wearer is desirous of doing his duty, and of filling up with justice that link in the chain of creation wherein his Great Creator bath thought proper to place him. Within this is another triangle with the sun in its centre, its rays issuing forth at every point- an emblem of the Deity – represented by a circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere, denoting His omnipresence and perfection ; it is also an emblem of Geometry ; and here also we find the perfect emblem of the science of Agriculture pointed out by a pair of compasses issuing from the centre of the sun, and suspending a globe, denoting the earth, and thereby indicating the influence of that glorious luminary over both animal and vegetable creation; admonishing us to be careful to perform every operation in its proper season, that we lose not the fruits of our labour.

Underneath these is the compound character known as the Triple Tau one of the Royal Arch mason’s emblems. This mystical character signifies in its figurative appearance Hiram of Tyre, or Hiram Abif the letters bearing the same Phaenician import as they do with us. It signifies also T. H., *Templum Hierosolym* the Temple of Jerusalem, and is used as the Royal Arch symbol, whereby the wearer acknowledges himself a servant of the true God; who had there established His worship, and to whose service that glorious Temple was erected. The Royal Arch symbol therefore may aptly recall to our minds our constant duty to offer worship to The Great Elohim; The Most High: The Everlasting: The Almighty God.

The equilateral triangle was much revered by ancient nations as containing the greatest and most abstruse mysteries, and as a symbol of God, denoting a Triad of Intelligence, a Triad of Deity, a Triune God. Moreover, the Tetragrammaton, or incommunicable name was written by the Jews in a triangular form: the initial letter denoting the thought, the idea of God, a ray of light too transcendent to be contemplated by mortal eye; this name of God, the Tetragrammaton, could not be more aptly placed than in the symbol, or triangle, itself and hence the true meaning of the Royal Arch double triangle, but originally represented thus So that while this sacred emblem was deservedly revered by the Jews, both it and the double triangle itself are adopted as Royal Arch symbols.

In a Royal Arch Chapter we have seven lights placed in the angles and centre of our double triangle. Some interpret the three greater and the three lesser as if identical with those explained. to you in the Entered Apprentice degree, while others consider them

symbolical of wisdom, strength, and beauty; and truth, concord, and peace, well known expressions illustrative of our Order, but the more learned Jews consider the three greater lights to represent Wisdom, Truth, and Justice, while Christians consider them as emblematical of the Trinity. The three lesser will then exhibit the three Principals, and also the moral and religious light which is derived from the Patriarchal, Mosaical, and Prophetical dispensations. The whole taken together being emblematical of the beauty and harmony which is visible in all the works of Nature, where nothing is wanting nor anything superfluous. By all the central beam from the Altar is held to be that which irradiates the whole. The seven lights may also be held to represent externally the ordinary three great lights of masonry, while the inner four shew forth the Tetragrammaton itself.

In approaching the Altar you were commanded to halt seven times and make obeisance at the third, fifth, and seventh step. The same practice is said to have been observed by the Most Excellent Grand Master, King Solomon, on passing each of the seven pillars which supported the arch of the private gallery through which he passed daily to offer up his praises to the Almighty. It ought to remind you of the works of Creation, to keep the seventh day holy also of the seven months required, for the erection of the Tabernacle as likewise of the seven complete years for the building of the Temple, and the seven additional months, six being added to finish the work, and the seventh in sacrifices and thanksgiving at the dedication.

I shall now describe to you the Sacred Pedestal. A cube has ever been considered the symbol of equality, purity, and justice; so, therefore, the double cube was selected by our forefathers as the shape of the Altar of incense, being a type – in a superlative degree – of the purity, excellence, and durability of the divine power.

The characters on the front of the pedestal are the initials of the names and designations of the Grand Masters, who presided over the Sacred Lodge. They are delineated in Hebrew characters, thus :



Shelomoh Meleck Israel,

Huram, Meleck Tsur,

Huram. Ben Almanah,

meaning Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram the Widow's Son : or,
Solomon Rex Israelis, Hiram Rex Tyri, Hiram Vidua Filius.

Below these characters near the foot of the pedestal is the Triple Tau.



Around the top of the pedestal are sculptured ornaments; the top itself should be of pure gold and illuminated from above, but we use enamelled glass illumined from below on it is a circle, and a triangle.

The Circle is an emblem of eternity having neither beginning nor end, and fitly reminds us of the purity, wisdom, and glory of the Omnipotent, which is without beginning or end.

The Triangle is a symbol of divine union, and an emblem of the mysterious Triune, equally representing the attributes of Deity, and His Triune essence. On the circle of gold you behold the great and awful name of God, the sacred, mysterious, and ineffable Tetragrammaton.

It is not in the power of any mortal adequately to solve or analyze the import or comprehensiveness of this word. Suffice it to observe that it implies the self-sufficient power of the Omnipotent, typifying the eternal duration of the Godhead, of that Great Being who is of, by, and from Himself, the origin and source of all power and majesty incomprehensible and that it denotes, with wonderful and peculiar accuracy, the eternally un hanged and unchangeable existence of the Almighty, who was, and is, and ever shall be the same great and living God. This awful name was held in such veneration by the children of Israel, that it was never uttered but once a year, and then only by the High Priest, when at a solemn assembly he entered the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies, and after many religious ceremonies in propitiation of the nation's sins; and, at the present day, no true Israelite would dare to pronounce, or even write it, in his prayers, public or private, but invariably adopts the substitute words Adonai or El Shaddai. This word also implies that the God of Israel will be faithful to His promise, and keep the covenant He made with the seed of Abraham.

It is lawful for three Jews who are Royal Arch Masons to pronounce this Holy Word by the three distinct aspirations, but in no other way, and it is always pronounced by us in the same manner.

On the three sides of the triangle you behold the three sacred syllables, which collectively constitute the peculiar and grand word which you have sworn never to pronounce but in the presence of two or more Companions of this exalted order, and in the manner pointed out to you.

Of this mysterious compound the first syllable is a Chaldaic word signifying "I Am." It is also a Hebrew word which signifies "I shall be" thus wonderfully referring to the present, future, and eternal existence of God. It also denotes the incomprehensible

majesty of the Omnipotent, and is composed of two of the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. The second is a Syriac word, and signifies "Lord" or "Powerful" ; but is also a compound word, being formed of a preposition, Beth, which in many oriental languages signifies "In" or "On," and another expression, which implies "Heaven" or "On High." The third, which is an Egyptian word, signifies "Father of all" ; it is also a Hebrew word implying "Power." The three syllables therefore, or the whole expression, convey the following divine import " I am and shall be Lord in Heaven on High, the Powerful, the Father of all."

Such is the account of the Pedestal, of the circle, and of the single triangle found by the Sojourners and from this we may infer that the equilateral triangle was the original mark or signature of a Master Mason, and the same as that preserved by the Mark Masters, which was pointed out to you in that degree. But the three ancient Principals of the Sanhedran Zerubbabel; Haggia and Joshua added another triangle intersecting the former, on the sides of which they caused to be engraved the secret word of these offices. These cannot be imparted to you at present, as they are only given to Principals of Chapters.