

## **The Symbolism of the Royal Arch**

The City of Jerusalem and its first Temple in the Royal Arch symbolize our Spiritual Natures--Pure and Innocent--fresh from the hand of our Father in Heaven.

By contact with the World it becomes corrupted by Sin--crumbles under the assaults of the enemy, and we become prisoners--slaves-- just as our ancient brethren did to the Chaldeans.

After a period of repentance we determine to lead a new life, and with this end in view, leave our Babylon --where we have been enchained by the Powers of Sin --to start life afresh.

Our journey across the Desert, with its trials and tribulations, represents our first efforts to rebuild our Lost Character, and once more become good and true, and pure before God and Man, i.e.-- to rebuild the Temple which we have once destroyed.

We struggle on--each day is fraught with cherished memories of by-gone years--and each night, as we lie down to rest beneath the Starry decked Canopy of Heaven, finds us nearer our Goal--nearer HOME.

Finally, we reach the spot where we have dreamed that we shall reap our reward. There, standing on the Mount of Olives, we see --NOT the prosperous, well regulated City that we remember, with its impregnable fortifications, soaring Towers, marble Palaces and magnificent Temple erected to the Most High God, but a mass of unrecognizable ruins.

At first, we are disheartened, shocked, discouraged --but, remembering our good resolutions, we turn to the God of our Fathers for strength--and then take up in real earnest our Work in Life-- willing to make any sacrifice to win, and offer unto Him our services in "Any part of the Work-- even the most difficult."

Under His guidance, we are directed where to begin our labors. It is a hard task, this digging among the ruins--this removing the rubbish which Sin and Vice have fastened upon our Souls--but we bravely press on and are finally rewarded by finding the Keystone of an Arch. It is the Keystone of Faith in the Arch of God's Promises attained by Loyal and Devoted Service. We take it up and offer it to the Master, who encourages us, but tells us there is still more work for us to do if we would win the coveted prize--this time more trying and more dangerous.

We return to the scene of our labors--this time to penetrate this Arch--and, searching amid the accumulated damp and slime of years, find three squares which we take up to Him who is directing the Work. They prove to be the Squares of Virtue, Morality and Brotherly Love.

We are put to a further test of our sincerity purpose and asked if we would be willing

to again penetrate this Arch in search of further treasures. Our answer you will remember--and we are told "Go -- and rest assured that your valuable services will not be unrewarded."

Gaining strength and courage with each successful effort, we once more return to the scene of our labors. This time we are more favored--the Sun is now in a position to shine into the Arch and we discover, in a remote corner, a strange Box, all covered with Pure Gold, upon whose top and sides are certain mysterious characters which we do not understand.

We take this up and lay it before the Master -- and then is brought to Light the Treasure of the Ages -- the Long Lost M. M. Word -- the symbol of that Divine Love and Truth which passeth all human understanding.

Then it is that we hear those blessed words calling us to our reward:

"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into that higher and holier Life, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary findeth rest."

Then we are permitted to enter "That Temple not made with hands eternal in the Heavens."

We have expiated our Sin and have been forgiven -- and God has fulfilled his promise and called us Home. The Story of the Royal Arch Degree is of the Reclamation of a Lost Soul -- Redeemed by Trust in God's Love, attested by a Life of Faithful and devoted Service.

Light From the East.

We learn from Students of the Great School of India where many of the most ancient Mysteries are still preserved in their original purity, that, surrounding this Earth is a Circle of Darkness, and beyond that, seven Spheres of Light, corresponding to the Colors of the Spectrum--beginning with the RED and ending with the VIOLET. Beyond this, the Violet gradually fades away and merges with and into a Realm of Light of ineffable Purity and Whiteness--millions of times whiter than anything that Mortals can imagine.

All of these Spheres are inhabited by the Spiritual bodies of Men. Some never get through the Realm of Blackness; others struggle onward and upward--gradually getting higher and higher in the Spheres of Color --all struggling to attain the Light which is hidden from the eyes of mortals until their Spiritual sight is prepared to behold it in all its glory.

TO REVIEW--Thus, we find the Blue Lodge furnishes Rules and Precepts to be followed in this life; and concludes with the sublime lesson of Death and a Resurrection to a Glorious Immortality--a life beyond the Grave. Here the Royal Arch follows and carries the symbolism into that after life--going back far enough to

connect the one with the other.

St. Paul tells us "There is a Natural Body and there is a Spiritual Body."--I.Cor. XV-44.

The Spiritual Body, with the Soul (its Guide) left the Physical Body at the close of the Master Mason's degree, and then passes into the "Valley of the Shadow" --the Realm of Darkness-- representing the Bondage of Sin in Babylon. Aided by the Wings of Faith in God's Promises and guided by the Star of Hope, it finally enters the first of the seven Veils of Light--the Red. Here, freed from the Bonds of Sin for the first time since childhood, it begins its journey through the Spheres with that "fervency and zeal which should actuate all Royal Arch Masons."

As the journey proceeds, the Red begins to fade and merges into an Orange which betokens the first realization of hardship and weariness--and a weakening of the first flush of enthusiasm which was present at the start.

We come to the "Bend of the River" and face the perils and hardships of the Desert. This is symbolized by the Yellow in the list of Colors. (A yellow flag at the Masthead of a ship at sea is a sign of sickness--of distress and suffering on board) And, were it not that the Spirit becomes stronger and Purer with each obstacle that is overcome, many would (and indeed, very many do) fall by the wayside. Fortitude, in the shape of a kindly guide, comes to our assistance and the end of the Desert journey is reached.

"We shall now turn our faces to the South--passing through Syria and toward Damascus.

Once more are we to feast our eyes upon GREEN Hills and fertile valleys--unforgotten through the years of exile.

Grand old Lebanon comes into view, rearing its lofty peak into the azure BLUE of a tropical sky and here we find a host of Helpers-- TRUTH, CONSTANCY, FIDELITY, FRIENDSHIP and HOPE--to welcome and cheer us on our way.

Passing down the Valley of the Jordan many familiar scenes greet the eye and the Spirit is filled with thankfulness at being once more permitted to view our native land. We kneel and pour forth a prayer of thanksgiving to the God of our Fathers.

Presently a single ray of RED (the Color of ZEAL and enthusiasm) comes down the spheres to us with the thoughts of our years of bondage--and the RED, mingling with the Blue in its deepest shade, makes the Heartsease (Indigo Purple) with all its blessed promises of Glories yet to come.

Still pressing on, we climb the Mount of Olives; and there stand in the VIOLET! All about us are the Angels of Purity and Meekness. There are blessed recollections passing to and fro like the rustle of Angels' Wings--and the Guide says "Let us press on."