

[Book Review Tony Pope, published in *Harashim* #26, April 2003.]

Masonic Symbols and Signposts, Leon Zeldis

Anchor Communications, Lancaster, VA 22503, USA, <<http://www.goanchor.com>>; x+166pp, pb, perfect binding, greyscale illustrations, no index; ISBN 0-935633-27-8, US\$19.95 plus US\$8.40 airmail to Australia or New Zealand.

The fifteen essays which comprise this work include some which will be familiar to readers of *Haboneh Hahofshi*, *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, and *Harashim*, and many which are new. Anyone unfamiliar with the writings of Leon Zeldis should not expect a clone of A E Waite, W L Wilmshurst or Manly Hall. Bro Zeldis writes more in the tradition of Alex Horne, Colin Dyer, Allen E Roberts and our own Murray Alford. He approaches ritual and symbols from the historical perspective of the 'authentic school', to which he adds his own philosophical insight.

In the Introduction, 'The value of symbolism', Zeldis writes:

Seeing only the external aspects of ritual, one may be inclined to call it a theatrical game. Indeed, when ritual is performed without proper preparation, as a charade, a series of actions, words and gestures carried out without thought, ritual becomes a parody.

And in an old favourite of mine, 'The opening ritual' (chapter 8), he advises:

Masonic ritual should be studied on three levels. First, the obvious meaning of the text and the procedures to be followed in lodge. This might be designated the *exoteric* meaning of the ritual. Second, the *symbolic* meaning of expressions, terms and signs, also including the symbolism of the Temple decorations and of the regalia. Finally, the *esoteric* level which, to be able to understand, we must study in the light of the mystical, philosophical and esoteric doctrines known to those brethren who formulated and perfected our rituals . . .

This is the basis of his approach to such subjects as the Hiram Legend (chapter 1), the symbolism of the ladder (3), stone (2), and colours in Freemasonry (4), as well as the Opening ritual (8). He also examines the Masonic connection with celebration of the solstices (7, 9) and the labyrinth (6). Bro Zeldis, as is fitting for a Past Sovereign Grand Commander, extends his research beyond the Craft to the symbolism of colours in the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite (5) and presents an esoteric view of the Rose Croix degree (10).

The other essays cover such diverse subjects as the Dead Sea Scrolls (11), King Solomon's Quarries (12), Sephardic Jewish Freemasons, and two think-pieces: 'Projecting the Values of Freemasonry in Society', and 'Education as the Key to Tolerance'.

Conclusion: This book is a worthwhile addition to your library.