

CANBERRA LODGE OF RESEARCH & INSTRUCTION

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Notes on Volumes of the Sacred Law.

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AS Masons we are concerned with the Volume of the Sacred Law as furnishing, the unerring standard of truth and justice and providing us with Divine precepts by which to regulate our actions: also as imparting Divine sanction to the Obligations. We are familiar with the use of the V.S.L. known to us as the Holy Bible, necessarily not familiar with the Sacred Volumes used by those brethren, at present a considerable number, who are Muslims, Hindus, Zoroastrians, and so on, and whose respective Sacred Volumes are used in the Lodges of which they are members; in Lodges under the English, Irish and Scottish Constitutions in association with the Holy Bible as the Sacred Volume of the Grand Lodge from which the Lodge derives its warrant.

I propose to refer only briefly to the Holy Bible. Our reigning Master, then an Associate, read a paper on "The Great Light" on 23rd July, 1953 (Vol. X, pp. 88-95), and Bro. G. R. Brookes, Associate, read a paper on the V.S.L. on 20th March, 1938 (Vol. IV). Brethren requiring information on the Holy Bible can usefully refer to these papers. I shall give some idea of the history and contents of the Sacred Volumes revered by brethren of other faiths, with the hope that it may assist brethren to understand how the respective Sacred Volumes are the Great Light for those brethren, as the Holy Bible is for us; and to touch upon the circumstances in which the brethren of the respective faiths came to partake in the teachings of the Craft.

Let us begin with THE KORAN, THE SACRED SCRIPTURE OF ISLAM, regarded by Muslims as the word of God; except in a very few passages, the Speaker throughout is God. The process of revelation is explained in the Koran itself as follows: "In Heaven is the original text (xlili, 4); by the process of sending down, one portion after another (xxv, 32) was communicated to Muhammad, through the intermediation of an Angel . . . " The call of Muhammad to his ministry is dated 610 A.D., his death 632. At that time Arabian paganism in the North had gradually come under the Christianising influence of the Byzantine Empire, and in the, South successively under Jewish and Persian influence. The doctrines to which the Prophet himself assigned most value seem to have been the unity of God and the future life: the Prophet claimed throughout that his revelation confirmed the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. Thus, in the Sura of Mary

(Chapter xix) the Prophet gives an account of Zacharias, John, Mary, Jesus, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Ishmael and Idris (Enoch) and says (vv. 58ff): "These are the men to whom Allah has been gracious; the Prophets from among the descendants of Adam and of those whom we carried in the Ark with Noah; the descendants of Abraham, of Israel, and of those whom we have guided and chosen . . . But the generations who succeeded them neglected their prayers and succumbed to temptation. These shall assuredly be lost. But those that repent and embrace the faith and do what is right shall be admitted to Paradise . . . which the Merciful has promised his servants in reward for their faith ..." ("The Koran" Penguin L. 52. p. 35).

With ideas of the Supreme Being so closely connected with those of the Old and New Testaments it is not surprising that we find Muslim brethren early in the history of speculative Freemasonry. Apart from an indirect allusion (Gould III 320) to "several Turks of distinction" having been admitted to "the Lodges of Smyrna and Aleppo" by 1738, the initiation in 1776 is recorded (id. ib. 333) of Umdat-ul-Umara, eldest son of the Nabob of Arcot who reigned in succession to his father, 1795-1801. The next recorded instances in India are also members of princely families in 1842 and 1850 (id. ib. 336). The well-known painting of the Annual Festival of the Royal Cumberland Freemasons School, by Thomas Stothard, published in 1802, shows three Muslim personages among the Masons of high rank in the foreground. (Freemasons' Guide and Compendium. Bernard E. Jones: P1. XVII) In 1808, the Persian Ambassador to Paris was initiated there, and in 1810 his colleague in London "was granted the rank of Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England" (Gould III 338). The erection of Lodge "Islam", No. 587 S.C., at Bombay in 1876 suggests that Muslims were then coming forward in fair numbers and they have continued to do so in Lodges in what is now India and Pakistan.

The oath on the book is thought to have originated in late Jewish and early Christian times: it is traditional among Muslims also, but I have not been able to trace early instances of its use. There is no practice of kissing the book: an obligation is sealed by bending over and touching the copy of the Koran with the forehead. In Calcutta the words ". . . or in any other manner equally binding on your conscience" are added, when necessary, to the usual formula.

The book regarded as THE HINDU V.S.L. IS THE BHAGAVADGITA. usually known as the Gita, one among a large number of books regarded by the Hindus as Scriptures. They have never been collected in a single volume, as the books comprising the Holy Bible have been for many centuries. and none of them is a "revealed" book i.e, a book made known by divine agency or inspiration. In the words of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (Upton Lectures,

1926 p.17) they “register the intuitions of the perfected souls”. They fall into three main divisions, the oldest group probably dated 1500-1200 B.C. and the next something before 500 B.C.; the third group includes the Gita, possibly dating about 200 B.C. This is the chief of a number of didactic poems, concerned with religious teaching, interpolated in the great Indian epic the Mahabharata; it comprises eighteen divisions each with about forty or fifty verses. It does not lend itself to quotation; the general nature, of its contents is indicated by Rev. Dr. A. C. Bouquet (“Sacred Books of the World”, 1954, pp. 229-230, Pelican A 283) as follows:—“During the last half-century . . . the Gita has steadily increased in favour, and devout Hindus regard it with something of the fervour and reverence which Christians accord to the Gospels, and especially to the Fourth Gospel with its last discourses . . . Perhaps the chief importance of the Gita lies in the fact that it establishes a permanent compromise between . . . the belief in a Personal God who could be an adored Friend, and the . . . conception of an Impersonal and All-pervading Absolute . . .

The difficulties experienced by Hindus in gaining admission to the Craft are dealt with in a note kindly supplied by my former colleague and mentor W. Bro. Guy D. Robinson, P.G.D.. Dist. Grand Secretary, Bengal, from which this and the following seven paragraphs are derived. The initiation of the first Hindu took place on 1st Dec., 1849, the applicant being a Jain; these are classed broadly as Hindus, but are recorded as a separate religion in the Indian census; in 1941 in round numbers 255,000,000 Hindus were recorded and 1,500,000 Jains. In his application he stated that his sect of Jains, one of three main sects, neither worship nor adore any image or object of any kind soever . . . we believe that the Supreme Being . . . is the first cause of everything created . . . by His wisdom of construction .

This seems to have been regarded as equivalent to a belief in T.G.A.O.T.U. The V.S.L. used for the Obligation is not stated, nor indeed in the following instances unless otherwise specified. On 13th March 1861 H.H. the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh was initiated in Lodge “Star in the East”, Calcutta (Cf. Gould III 336), still working as No.67 E.C., in what is described as a “tremendous meeting”. The general question of the eligibility of Hindus for admission into Freemasonry was discussed at length at the Quarterly Communication of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal at Calcutta on 22nd September, 1863. The record of the proceedings makes it clear that this was a broader question than that of the validity of the Bengal by-law, forbidding the entry of Asiatics without the permission of the Provincial Grand Master, which was in force until May 12th 1871 (Gould loc. cit.), but it seems very probable that the decision of Grand Lodge on the validity of the by-law disposed also of the decision of the District Grand Lodge on the broader question, as we shall see later, We are not permitted or equipped to discuss questions of theology and philosophy, but it is necessary to bear in mind, for the present purpose,

that Hinduism is polytheistic, seeing God in diverse aspects, and pantheistic, seeing God as "an absolute and all-embracing spirit, the one and only reality," The substantive objection was that, as worshippers of many gods, they could not consistently adhere to a system of morality based on a belief in one G.A.O.T.U. The would-be entrants into the Craft contended that the Hindu Triad, Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver and Siva the Destroyer, represented "the ceaseless working of the Absolute Spirit as a creative, preservative and destructive principle" and similarly with the rest of the Pantheon, A secondary, or procedural, objection arose from the view that there was nothing on which a Hindu could be obligated so as to render his obligation binding on his conscience. The use of the Gita as a representative Hindu Sacred Volume did not become general for another forty years or so. St. John's Lodge, No. 486 E.C. of Calcutta, had initiated Khetter Mohun Gangooly. A Hindu gentleman of good position, a practising lawyer, with a Provincial Grand Master's dispensation. The proposer and seconder were also practising lawyers. A P.Dy. Prov. G.M. gave notice of motion in the following terms: "To ask whether the admission of Hindus into Freemasonry is in consonance with the principles of the Order, as inculcated by the Grand Lodge of England". The mover contended that the admission of Hindus was "not in accordance with the principles of the Order, nor calculated to maintain its secrets inviolate".

With regard to the former proposition he submitted that ". . . the belief in one God is a fundamental necessity . . . but Hindus worship not only graven images but a variety of created things and beings..."; with regard to the latter he said ". . . there is nothing upon which we obligate them, so as to render their Obligation binding on their consciences. We cannot . . . allow them to be obligated upon any of their idols or objects of worship . . . and a Hindu cannot with any efficacy be obligated upon the Bible because he does not believe in its sacred doctrines

The Master of St. John's Lodge, W. Bro. Dr. Frank Powell, read out the declaration made by the candidate: "I am not a Pantheist or a Polytheist . . . I believe in the existence and superintendence of one Great Architect of the Universe . . . whose will is law, whose laws are impressed on the heart of every right-thinking individual . . . and whose never-failing justice shall reach the transgressor of His laws on the great day of judgement to come". With this declaration before him, the Master "sought the advice of the (acting) Provincial Grand Master, and ascertained that a Dispensation would be granted." He dealt with the "point of some difficulty", the method of obligation, by putting three questions to the candidate "previously to performing the ceremony. I asked him whether he believed in one God, whether he believed that the Bible correctly described the attributes of the Deity, and whether an obligation taken on the Bible would be binding on his conscience? All these he answered in the affirmative".

The proposer, Bro. C. Piffard, made a long and closely reasoned speech. With regard to the obligation, he said, “. . . while an obligation is essential, the particular mode of obligation, or the instrument used in the ceremony, is an accident dependent upon and regulated by circumstances”. With regard to the other issue, “that although they come to us professing to believe in only one Supreme Being, yet they are in fact idolaters, as . . . they. . . permit idolatrous rites and ceremonies to be performed in their houses”, he quoted the example of Elisha and Naaman (II Kings V. 1-19) and said Masons should not “profess to hold views more rigid than those entertained by the Jewish prophet Elisha”.

Winding up the discussion the Provincial Grand Master said, inter alia: “With regard to the declaration made by . . . a Hindu . . . , that an obligation taken on the Bible would be binding on his conscience, I do not consider it to be satisfactory. The Bible to a Hindu, who does not reverence it as the inspired word of God and the only guide to Salvation, can be nothing better than any other book containing moral precepts”. The result of the voting was unfavourable to the initiation of Hindus.

When Grand Lodge declared the Provincial Grand Lodge By-Law to be illegal in 1871(Gould III 336) the Grand Secretary’s letter shows that it was on the footing of the Ancient Charge, “Let a man’s religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the order, provided he believe in the glorious architect of heaven and earth, and practise the sacred duties of morality.

It will be seen that our Brethren found themselves oppressed by difficult questions of principle. When these were solved Hindus came freely into the Craft, the first to attain the Eastern Chair being Prosonno Coomar Dutt, in Lodge “Anchor and Hope” No.234 E.C. of Calcutta, in 1874 and 1875. He subsequently attained high Masonic rank, and his portrait hangs in Freemasons Hall, Calcutta. At the present time about a third or more of the Craft In India are Hindus.

THE SACRED VOLUME OF THE SIKHS, a community numbering 5½ millions at the 1941 census Sikh religion, an offshoot of the Hindu religion, but inculcating monotheism and rejecting caste, was founded by Nanak the first of the Gurus, or spiritual leaders, born in 1469. His tenth and last successor, Govind, assassinated in 1708, declared the line of Gurus extinct, and the spiritual leadership “vested in the Granth Sahib, or Holy Book, as God’s representative on earth”. The book consists very largely of devotional hymns. At the beginning is a series of aphorisms called the Japji, “which every Sikh is under a duty to know by heart, and parts of which are to be

recited early in the morning daily". An extract from this part of the Book follows, expressing the Sikh idea of the G.A.O.T.U.: -

"There is but one God whose name is true, the Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal;
unborn, self-existent . . . The True One was in the beginning . . . The True One is now also . . .
The True One also shall be."

The Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, mentioned above as initiated in Calcutta in 1861. was a Sikh, and Sikhs have long been well represented in Masonry, often by brethren of secular as well as Masonic distinction.

THE SACRED VOLUME OF THE PARSEES IS THE ZENDAVESTA, the original document of the religion of Zoroaster, the founder of the national religion of the Iranians from the time of Cyrus the Great (550 B.C.) to the close of the Sassanian period, 641 A.D.

Darius and his successors were Zoroastrians. Parsees are the followers in India of Zoroaster, descendants of the ancient Persians who emigrated to India on the conquest of their country by the Arabs in the 8th century A.D. The doctrine of Zoroaster has been summarised as follows:

"At the beginning of things there existed two spirits, which represented good and evil . . . Ormazd

is light and life and good in the ethical world of law, order and truth. His antithesis Ahriman is

darkness, filth, death, and produces all that is evil in the world . . .

The ultimate triumph of the good spirit is . . . the quintessence of Zoroaster's religion." The

Zendavesta is used for obligating Parsees in Calcutta, and W. Bro. S. M. Ayrton, P.D.G.W.,

informs me it is also used in Bombay, most of the Parsee, community being resident in these two cities.

Lodge "Rising Star of Western India", No.342 S.C., was founded in Bombay on 15th December, 1843, "for the admission of natives of India into the Masonic Craft." Its membership has long been strongly, but not exclusively, Parsee. Its foundation was due to a Parsee, Maneckji Cursetji, who unsuccessfully sought admission to Lodge Perseverance (then No. 546 E.C.) He went to England in 1841 but was unable to get initiated there; he was eventually initiated in Paris in Lodge A la Gloire de l'Univers, (Information: W. Bro. Guy D. Robinson, P,G.D.).

It should be noted in connection with the foregoing, that the constitutional provision of the Grand Orient of France before 1877 was distinguishable from the Ancient Charge, viz. "1st- (Freemasonry's) principles are the existence of

God, the immortality of the soul and human solidarity. 2nd.-It regards liberty of conscience as the common right of every man, and excludes no person on account of belief.”

Gould (III 336) states that a Parsee, Brother Cama, was elected Treasurer of the Grand Lodge of England in 1886. The Parsees, though a small community, are socially and culturally prominent and contribute an important share to the work of the Craft. Such Lodges as Cyrus 1359 E.C. in Bombay, and Darius 4814 E.C. in Calcutta, are chiefly manned by Parsees.

BUDDHISM arose in the 6th century B.C. as an offshoot of the prevailing Hindu religion of Northern India. It sought reform in rejecting the Hindu scriptures of that epoch and in teaching an independent morality, which was set forth as being the discovery of the founder. There are at least four or five canonical collections of Buddhist scriptures, the best known being that written in Pali, a literary language related to Sanskrit. THE PALI CANON, THE TRIPITAKA, or three baskets (suggesting a line of carriers with baskets) consists of (i) the Vinaya, or Book of Discipline, which may be classified as a manual of moral theology (ii) the Sutta Pitaka, five collections of discourses; and (iii) the Abhidhamma, or Higher Doctrine, described as long and difficult . . . full of . . . philosophical theology.” The second part contains the famous Discourse of the Turning of the wheel, traditionally the first sermon preached by the Buddha, in which the way to Enlightenment, the Ultimate Good, is called the “Noble Eightfold Path” - “right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness, right concentration.” (Sacred Books of the World, p. 142). There is no general theory of “revelation” attached to the Buddhist Scriptures. Though revered as sacred they are treated as human records. Buddhism now has relatively few adherents in the Country of its origin - 232,000 recorded in 1941 - but flourishes in Ceylon and eastwards as far as China and Japan.

During a visit to Hong Kong from November, 1955 to February 1956 I noticed that the Holy Bible was used for such degrees as I saw worked with Chinese candidates and assumed that those concerned were either Christians or, in the technical sense, not enthusiasts. For the purposes of the present paper W. Bro. R. B. Anderton, D.G.D.C., Hong Kong and South China, has kindly made enquiries on my behalf, with the following results: W. Bro. K. M. A. Barnett. P.D.G.Swd.B., and a scholar of repute. reported that Chinese Muslims would swear on the Koran. Apart from certain minorities a Chinese may be a Buddhist, a Taoist, or a Confucian. Various sects of Chinese Buddhists have their respective Sacred Writings, but Brother Barnett does not know whether they use them to give sanctity to an oath. The Taoists have the Tad Te King, but do not swear oaths on it. The Confucians have the Four Books and the Five Classics, but do not swear

oaths on any of them, "Sacred Books of the World", p 176 f. dates the Tao Te King about 240 B.C., and states that "its doctrine is one of Quietism, or passivity . . . "when the Nestorian missions entered China (in the 7th century) it was the teaching of Jesus about non-resistance to evil which attracted the attention of the Taoist-minded Chinese, because they saw in it something which they thought corresponded to their own principle of passivity. One brief quotation from the work cited (p188) must serve as a sample of Confucian views: "Each one has within him the principle of right, what we call Tao, the road along which we ought to walk . . . , Virtue is the practice of moral law. Virtue is what is received into the heart. Before serving one's parents and following one's elder brother, already to possess a perfectly filial and fraternal mind, this is what is termed Virtue." Brother Barnett proceeds to mention various methods of swearing in China, none of them suitable for Masonic ceremonies, and states that "the practice of London Courts, where a Chinese witness is required to break a saucer, is not taken from any Chinese custom and no one here can trace its origin." In his opinion "the custom of swearing oaths on a book is an alien one." He mentions that among the questions put to prospective candidates is one, whether he would regard an oath taken on the Bible as binding on his conscience. It seems that candidates usually, but not always, reply in the affirmative. W. Bro. P.J. Hope, P.M., Erin Lodge, No. 463 I.C.. reports that he has "seen a Buddhist brother obligated on the Koran and before the Ob. he lit a candle and after the Ob. snuffed it out." W. Bro. H. S. Mok, P.D.G.W., reports that the first Chinese to be initiated in Hong Kong was Dr. Ma Luk in 1905. Also that the first Lodges in China (other than those of the three old Grand Lodges) were affiliated to the Philippine Constitution and the Bible was used both for Christians and non-Christians. Perhaps the whole custom of swearing on a book being alien, the use of a Sacred Volume may well be regarded by non-Christian Chinese as symbolic, and as allowing of considerable latitude in the identity of the volume used, whether Bible, Koran or a Chinese Classic such as those mentioned above. A final quotation from "Sacred Books of the World" (p. 181) may be relevant: "Anyone who reads these extracts (from the Chinese classics) can easily understand why the missionaries to China in the 17th and 18th centuries came to believe that the Chinese possessed the main elements of Natural Religion, and only needed the addition of Divine Revelation in order to complete their faith."

I trust the foregoing remarks will have illustrated some of the different forms in which the belief in the glorious Architect of heaven and earth, and the practice of the sacred duties of morality. are living realities to our brethren of diverse faiths.

'A daily advancement..'
CANBERRA LODGE OF RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTION
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Masonic Tracing Boards and the Western Metaphysical Tradition

The symbols used in 18th-century Masonic tracing boards are references to the vast body of literature and philosophy which documents Renaissance thought.

Masonic Tracing Boards are training devices. In the earliest days of speculative Masonry, the Master would sketch designs on the floor of the Lodge using chalk. Then he would talk about the drawing during the meeting. During the course of the 18th century, the drawings were transferred to "Tracing Boards" which are pictures, one per Degree, that encapsulate the symbols of each of the Degrees. The Boards to which we will refer are English.

Speculative Masonry started in the 1600s, and its symbols are references to that vast body of literature and philosophy which documents Renaissance thought. In the Renaissance, the dominant metaphysic was Judeo-Christian monotheism with an admixture of Classical thinking. Renaissance philosophers incorporated many Greek (particularly neo-Platonic) and Jewish mystical ideas into their orthodox Christianity. Some of these influences came from the Hermetica which had, itself, been a substantial influence in the formation of early Christian doctrines. Others came from Kabbalah, the mystical tradition of Judaism. This fusion of classical and Jewish philosophy is called the "Hermetic/Kabbalistic Tradition"; and after it had been interpreted in the context of orthodox Christian doctrine, it became the basis of Renaissance thinking. Speculative Masonry dates from the end of the Renaissance (the mid-17th century), and it is no surprise that Masonic symbolism reflects this tradition.

The First Degree Tracing Board, which looks at first glance like a collection of heterogeneous objects, is, I think, a representation of the entire Universe. It is also a picture of a human being standing in a landscape. Neither of these images is immediately obvious, but I think the ideas will become clear.

The central idea of Renaissance thought was the unity of the Universe and the consequent omnipresence of the Deity. This idea is represented by the "Ornaments of the Lodge." The fact that Masonry has gathered these three objects into a single group suggests that we consider them together. The Ornaments of the Lodge are the Blazing Star or Glory, the Checkered Pavement, and the Indented, Tessellated Border; all refer to the Deity. The Blazing Star or Glory is found in the Heavens at the center of the picture. It is a straightforward heraldic representation of the Deity. Look at the Great Seal of the United States on a dollar bill, and you will see the Deity represented there in the same manner. The Checkered Pavement represents the Deity as perceived in ordinary life. The light and dark squares represent paired opposites, a mixture of mercy and justice, reward and punishment, passion and analysis, vengeance and loving kindness. They also represent the human experience of life, light and dark, good and evil, ease and difficulty. But that is only how it is perceived. The squares are not the symbol; the Pavement is the symbol. The light and dark squares fit together with exact nicety to form the Pavement, a single thing,

a unity. The whole is surrounded by the Tessellated Border which binds it into a single symbol. The Border binds not simply the squares, but the entire picture, into a unity.

The idea of duality occurs throughout the Board: from the black and white squares at the bottom to the Sun and Moon at the top. In the central area of the Board, duality is represented by two of the three columns; but here the third column introduces a new idea. The striking thing about these columns is that each is from a different Order of Architecture. In Masonic symbolism, they are assigned names: Wisdom to the Ionic Column in the middle, Strength to the Doric Column on the left, and Beauty to the Corinthian Column on the right. How shall we interpret these Columns and their names?

One of the major components of Renaissance thought was Kabbalah. The principal diagram which is used by Kabbalists to communicate their ideas is the "Tree of Life." The column on the right is called the "Column of Mercy," the active column. That on the left is called the "Column of Severity," the passive column. The central column is called the "Column of Consciousness." It is the column of equilibrium with the role of keeping the other two in balance. The three columns all terminate in (depend on) Divinity at the top of the central column. Referring to the columns on the First Degree Tracing Board, note that the Corinthian Pillar of Beauty is on the right; in the classical world the Corinthian Order was used for buildings dedicated to vigorous, expansive activities. The Doric Pillar of Strength is on the left; the Doric Order was used for buildings housing activities in which discipline, restraint, and stability were important. The Ionic Pillar of Wisdom is in the middle. The Ionic Order is recognized as an intermediate between the other two and was used for Temples to the rulers of the gods who coordinated the activities of the pantheon. The Three Pillars, like the Tree of Life, speak of a universe in which expansive and constraining forces are held in balance by a coordinating agency.

The Universe of the Renaissance philosophers consisted of "four worlds." The Kabbalistic representation of this idea is shown in the figure above by the four large circles denoting four "worlds." They are the "elemental" or physical world, the "celestial" world of the psyche or soul, the "supercelestial" world or spirit, and the Divine world. These same levels are represented on the First Degree tracing board pictured on the front inside cover of this issue. The Pavement represents the "elemental," physical world; the central part of the Board, including the columns and most of the symbols, represents the "celestial" world of the psyche or soul; the Heavens represent the "supercelestial" world of the spirit; and the Glory represents Divinity.

These ideas describe the "landscape." Where is the man?

Another important Renaissance concept was that of a Macrocosm (the universe as a whole) and a corresponding Microcosm (the human individual). The idea is that the universe and human beings are structured using the same principles (both being made "in the image of God"). Consider the Ladder. It extends from the Scripture on the Altar to the Glory which represents the Deity; and in the Masonic symbolism, it is said to be Jacob's Ladder. We consider the ladder together with another symbol,

the Point-within-a-Circle-Bounded-by-Two-Parallel-Lines, which is shown on the face of the Altar.

These symbols are discussed together because in many early Masonic drawings they appear together as if they have some connection. (See the illustration from *Masonic Miscellanies*, 1797, at the head of this article.) Consider the Two Parallel Lines first. They, like the Doric and Corinthian columns, represent paired opposites, active and passive qualities. In Masonic symbolism, they are associated with the Saints John; the Baptist's Day is mid-summer, the Evangelist's is mid-winter.

Now, this Point-within-a-Circle-Bounded-by-Two-Parallel-Lines, together with the Ladder and its three levels, reveals a pattern very similar to the three columns. There are three verticals, two of which, the Lines, relate to active and passive functions while the third, the Ladder between them, reaches to the heavens and provides the means "by which we hope to arrive there." The ladder has "three principal rounds" or levels, represented by Faith, Hope and Charity, which correspond to the three lower levels of the four-level Universe we observed earlier.

Both the Macrocosmic "Landscape" and the Microcosmic "Man" share the fourth level of Divinity, represented by the Blazing Star, or Glory. Taken together the Ladder and the Point-within-a-Circle-Bounded-by-Two-Parallel-Lines represent the human individual made "in the image of God," according to the same principles on which the Universe is based.

A Mason is sometimes called "a traveling man." One of the Masonic catechisms gives us an insight into this term. "Q. - Did you ever Travel? A. - My forefathers did. Q. - Where did they travel? A. - Due East and West. Q. - What was the object of their travels? A. - They traveled East in search of instruction, and West to propagate the knowledge they had gained." Notice the cardinal points of the compass on the Border of this Tracing Board; they define the East-West direction in Masonic terms, and, in doing so, they describe the nature of the journey to which the new Mason apprentices himself. That journey from West to East is represented, symbolically, by the progress through the Masonic Degrees; and it is, in fact, the ascent up Jacob's Ladder—one of the "Principal Rounds" for each Degree.

The notion of a "mystical ascent" was part and parcel of the Hermetic/Kabbalistic Tradition. It is a devotional exercise during which the individual rises through the worlds of the soul and the spirit and at last finds himself experiencing the presence of Deity. Some of these ascents are deeply Christian in their character. In *De Occulta Philosophia*, Agrippa "rises through the three worlds, the elemental world, the celestial world, the supercelestial world...where he is in contact with angels, where the Trinity is proved, ... the Hebrew names of God are listed, though the Name of Jesus is now the most powerful of all Names." (Frances A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*, London, RKP, 1979, p.63)

The Second Degree Tracing Board shows a familiar pattern: two columns which have opposite characteristics, and between them a staircase, a form of ladder. We cannot investigate this symbol here because of space limitations (see *Heredom*, vol. 5, 1996, for a fuller explication), but we know we are to climb this staircase. The picture summarizes the Renaissance idea of the approach to Deity as an interior journey.

On the Third Degree Tracing Board, the grave probably does not refer to physical death. During the Renaissance there was much discussion about "the Fall of man" and its effect. "The Fall" seems to refer to some event by which human beings, who were at one time conscious of the Divine Presence, lost that consciousness. After "the Fall," ordinary human life, as we live it on a day-to-day basis, is "like death" when compared to human potential and to a life lived in the conscious awareness of Divine presence. The grave suggests such a "death" to be our present state. The acacia growing at the top of the grave suggests that there is a spark of life which can be encouraged to grow and refers to the possibility of regaining our original Divine connection.

The view of the Temple in the center of the Third Degree Board shows "King Solomon's Porch," the entrance to the "Holy of Holies." The veil is drawn back a little offering a glimpse into that chamber where the Deity was said to reside. This suggests that at the end of the journey from West to East some process analogous to death enables the individual to experience the Divine presence. After this process has occurred, he lives once more at his full potential. Again, I think that this refers neither to a resurrection after physical death nor to a life after physical death; both of which are the domain of religion, not Masonry. Rather, it refers to a psychological/spiritual process which can occur, if it be God's will, within any devout individual who seeks it earnestly and which I believe it to be the business of Freemasonry to encourage. After all, we claim to be Freemasons, and this is that Truth, the knowing of which "make[s] you free."

W. Kirk MacNulty, 32°