

## MYSTICAL LECTURE

Companions, the mystical knowledge of this Degree comprehends the forms and the explanations of the several Signs, the nature and import of the S.W., and the traditional ceremonies used in sharing and communicating our Secrets in R.A.Masonry. There are five signs in this Degree, corresponding in number with the F.P.O.F., in which the M.M. is instructed. But whereas those F.P.O.F., and the corresponding Signs of the Third Degree, refer us simply to the relative duties we owe each other as F.M.s, the Signs of this Degree, taking a wider range, mark in a peculiar manner the relation we bear to the Almighty, as creatures offending against His justice, yet still the acknowledged children of His mercy.

The Signs in this Degree are, first, the P.S.; second, the H. or R.; third, the P. or S.; fourth, the M.; and fifth, the F.

If you will stand, I will demonstrate, and you will copy.

The first, or P.S., is given thus. It is the only sign in Freemasonry with which we are thus far acquainted, which is given exclusively with the L.H.

The H. or R.S. is given by placing the L.H. upon the f .. d, and the R.H. upon the h.... thus.

The P. or S.S. is given with uplifted h ... s and b.k.s, the R.F. in advance of the b... y.

The M.S. is given by placing the h ... s, p ... s inwards, to the side of the b ... y, with the t ... s forward, implying a defenceless position.

The F.S. is given by throwing the body forward upon the L.F., and the h ... s in this position, as though we would p ... e ourselves upon the earth.

If you will now be seated I will explain them more at length.

The P.S. marks our Obligation, and is intended to remind us of the fall of Adam, and of the penalty of death entailed thereby on all his posterity. The action itself (*sign is given*) indicates that the stiff-necked and disobedient shall be cut off from the land of the living by the judgments of God, even as the head is severed from the body by the sword of human justice.

The H., or R.S., teaches us to bend with awe and reverence at the footstool of our Almighty Creator. In this position Moses stood when the Almighty spake to him out of the flames of fire in the midst of the bush; for we read that 'Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God'. He therefore v ... d his e ... s (*sign is given*) from the brightness of the Almighty's presence,

and laid his hands upon his forehead in token of obedience to the will of his Maker.

This position was also accidentally assumed by the P.S. when, upon his second descent into the vault, he raised the veil from the face of the altar. In order to read the inscription, he veiled his eyes from the brightness of the sun's rays and when he saw the S.W. he made this sign of Fidelity and Secrecy.

The P. or S.S. denotes that humble frame of mind and heart, without which our prayers and ablutions of praise cannot find acceptance at the throne of Grace, before which how should a frail and erring creature of the dust present himself, but with a unveiled and blank forehead (*sign is given*). In this devout posture did the father of the human race first kneel to God and bless the Author of his being, and from him his devout attitude in prayer has been handed down to his descendants through all their generations.

The M.S. reminds us of the weakness of human nature, and admonishes us that we are unable of ourselves to help ourselves, or to resist the powers of darkness, unless assisted by that help which cometh from above. In this defenceless posture (*sign is given*) we acknowledge at once our weakness and our dependence, and confess that we can do no good nor acceptable service, but through the strengthening power and mercy of the Most High, without whose especial favour we must ever have remained unprofitable servants in His sight.

Adopting, lastly, the manner of our ancient Companions, the Jews and their atoning priests, we use this outward form of contrition and humility, (*sign is given*) as the fifth or F.S., as though we would prostrate ourselves with our forehead upon the earth, thus figuratively throwing ourselves upon the mercy of our Creator and our Judge; still looking forward with humble confidence to the fulfilment of His gracious promises, by which we hope to be finally admitted to the brightness of His presence, and to the joys that are at His right hand for evermore.

The initial letters on the West side of the P ... I represent the names of the Three G.M.s who presided at the building of the First Temple, namely, S.K.I., H.K.T., and H.A.B. At its base you will see the mysterious Triple Tau. This is said to be the mark or sign spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel, when, in his vision, he saw the man clothed with linen, having the writer's inkhorn by his side; and the Lord said unto him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof", by which mark they were saved from among those who were cut off for their idolatry by the judgments of the Most High. Therefore this has ever been considered the mark of life.

**In ancient times it was the custom for every operative mason to put his own mark upon the stone which he had hewn, and for every overseer of the work to put his mark upon that portion of the building of which he had the oversight. In accordance with this custom it was expected that on the completion of K.S.T., H.A.B., the Chief Architect, would have placed his own mark upon some conspicuous portion of the building; but in consequence of his untimely death before the Temple was finished, it was concluded that no such mark existed. When, however, the discovery was made of the vaulted chamber, and the altar and the mystical characters engraven on its base beneath the initials of the three G.M.s who presided over the second or Sacred Lodge, no doubt was entertained that the mysterious Triple Tau was the united mark of the three distinguished men who by wisdom, strength, and beautifying skill, had planned, erected, beautified and adorned the Temple.**

**The word upon the circle is the Hebrew name of God, that Sacred and Ineffable Name or the Most High, which a pious Hebrew could scarcely be induced to pronounce or to write, usually substituting for it the word Adonai, which in our translation is rendered Lord. This sacred word is indicative of the Eternity, the Omnipotence, the Omniscience, and the Omnipresence of the Most High, the Eternal, Incomprehensible, Unchanged, and Unchangeable God, who alone has His Being in and of Himself, and who gives to all others their being, so that He was what he is, is what He was, and will be both what He was and what He is, from everlasting to everlasting, all actual perfection originating in His essence. The circle, having neither beginning nor end, is an appropriate symbol of the eternity of the Almighty's being, He having neither beginning of days nor end of years.**

**The Triangle, in the days of Pythagoras, was esteemed as the most sacred of all emblems, and when an oath of more than usual solemnity had to be administered, it was always given upon the Triangle; and when so taken, no one was ever known to have violated it. The Greek character Delta is formed as an equilateral triangle, and from the sacredness attached to the form of the Triangle, this character was always called the Sacred Delta. The Egyptians called it the Sacred Number Three, a number of Perfection. It was an object of worship among them, as a symbol of the Grand Principle of animated existence, which extends its influence throughout all created matter. It was called by them Avolet, and Aberowith, that is to say, the Soul of Nature; but we, better instructed, looking from Nature up to Nature's God, regard this as another symbol of that Almighty Being, by whom the operations of Nature are originated, sustained and perfected.**