

## CHAPTER 5

# *King Solomon's Porch*

### 1 THE CEREMONY OF RAISING

In the introduction to the Lecture on the Third Degree, we find the statement, 'To a perfect knowledge of this Degree few attain. . .'. It is a humbling idea, not much dwelt upon by those Brethren who do not like to think that their knowledge of the Craft may in some way be incomplete. The statement echoes similar ideas to be found in all mystery systems - 'many are called, but few are chosen' is the Christian idiom; in classical Greece it was 'the candidates are many, the Initiates few'. It is certainly true that of the many people who start on the path of interior development, on the journey to the East, many get stuck along the way. The reasons should be clear enough from the examples in the previous chapters. The step represented in the Third Degree, however, is an unusually large one. It is, in fact, difficult even to speak about the Ceremony of Raising because, in the same way that the work of the Fellowcraft is generally misunderstood, so the processes of Raising are virtually incomprehensible in terms of everyday human experience in the material world. In this section, even more than in the previous two, we must depend upon the device of interpreting the symbolic structure of the Craft, and we must place our trust on the fact that the individual Mason will, in the course of his travels, come at last to experience this event for himself. In the Second Degree the Work relates to the fourth part of a circle, to a single word. In this Degree the candidate is enabled to 'render the circle of (his) Masonic duties complete'. It is the same circle being referred to, and the man who experiences this Raising in fact, rather than in ceremonial representation, can in truth operate consciously in all four worlds.

When the Candidate for Raising presents himself at the door of a Master Mason's Lodge, he is (according to the symbolism, at least) a very remarkable man. He has brought the ordinary physical and mental processes under control; he has acquired an understanding of his deeper psychological processes; and he has demonstrated his

conscience and moral fiber with respect to their use. The fact that he is prepared to forgo the use of his substantial capabilities for his personal benefit is an indication that the candidate has achieved a substantial detachment from the goods and pleasures of the physical world. It seems strange, then, that the password by which he gains admission to a Master Mason's Lodge should be closely related to the substance used to epitomise materiality and the acquisition of physical goods. There are two reasons for this reference to the physical world at this point in the candidate's journey. First, by giving the candidate such a name, the Craft implies that he has become the master of the things symbolised and can use them without becoming 'contaminated' by their influence. A similar concept is to be found in the Christian and Jewish mystical traditions in which the individual had to 'know the angels by name', that is be familiar with and equal to them, before they would let him pass on his journey through Paradise and Heaven. The Chinese picture this state by showing a sage seated backwards on a horse. Here, the notion is that the old man's control of the horse (his body and its psychological environment) is so complete that he can ride safely in this obviously dangerous position. This is the level of detached control which the candidate for the Third Degree is said to have achieved over his lesser nature. The second reason for this reference to things of the physical world has to do with the purpose of creation. In the first section, we saw that the Deity called the relative universe into being so that 'God might behold God' and that the three lower Worlds of Separation were created, formed and made so that Adam Kadmon, the Image of God, might experience all things. As part of this Grand Design, each individual on his journey back to his home in the Divine World carries his fragment of experience, his worldly possessions, which will contribute to the whole experience of the Divine Adam. In this context, the password identifies the candidate as a pilgrim carrying a precious cargo as he starts on this critical phase of his journey.

The candidate enters the Master Mason's Lodge with his eyes open, that is with his physical and mental faculties alert; but he cannot see; because the Lodge is in darkness. In the ordinary interpretation, we say that the darkened Lodge alludes to the darkness of death. In a certain sense, which we will examine in due course, it does. In a more subtle way the darkness implies that the Master Mason's Lodge exists at a level of consciousness not heretofore experienced by the candidate. The 'light' (consciousness) which illuminates this place is of a more subtle nature than that which illuminates the psyche, and the organ of perception within the candidate by which he can respond to

this more subtle light is not yet active. Indeed, the Master Mason's Lodge symbolises a consciousness in contact with a different world, the World of the Spirit, and the whole purpose of the Degree is to comment on the nature of the transition between the Worlds of the Psyche and the Spirit. When this transition is complete, and the candidate is able to operate with the consciousness of a Master Mason, the lights in the Lodge are turned on. The candidate should understand this illumination not as a change in his environment, but as the activation of that faculty within himself which enables him to see in the ambient light of a 'Master Mason's Lodge'.

After his admission, the candidate is again the object of a prayer offered for him on his behalf. The prayer, although quite formal, is of great importance because, as we have seen, a properly run Masonic Lodge will never undertake its labour without the consent of the Deity and; in addition, the event of Raising will not occur, in fact, without the influence of Divine Grace. Then follows a series of tests during which the candidate demonstrates his proficiency in the previous Degrees (symbolised by giving the signs) and the fact that he is properly prepared for Raising. These symbolic tests represent events which occur deep in the psyche and which ensure that the individual does not expose himself to the risks of expanded consciousness until he is ready to experience it. In a sense, these testings occur continually in a manner similar to, but more profound than, those which we have observed in connection with the passing from the Degree of Apprentice to Fellowcraft. Until one is ready to pass these tests, one is entirely unaware of them, let alone the responses needed to pass them. When the Lodge (that is, his own interior being) is content that the individual is properly prepared, he is permitted to take the obligation (that is to make the commitment) which sets the process of Raising in motion.

The obligation of a Master Mason is, by far, the most comprehensive commitment required in any of the Three Degrees. Even if it be interpreted in its narrowest, most literal sense, the adherence to the provisions of the obligation is likely to cause a change in one's behaviour. If one interprets it broadly, the obligation affects every department of one's life. In fact, however, a careful examination of the obligation of a Master Mason indicates that, with the exception of summonses from a Master Mason's Lodge and the commitments to secrecy which we will discuss below, the several provisions are a catalogue of the proper relationships between mature human beings, and nothing more. The difference between the (real) Master Mason and other people is that, if one is in conscious contact

with the upper part of one's psyche and the contiguous part of one's spirit, a conscious departure from these proper relationships will cause serious and immediate damage to the persons involved. Although it stresses relationships with one's Brother Master Masons, the fact of the matter is that the obligation applies to all mankind. One should understand this (and all Masonic obligations) in the context of the duties one owes 'to God, one's neighbour and one's self'. Indeed, the candidate for the real (in contrast to the ceremonial) Raising is about to experience an event which will teach the lesson of the brotherhood of man with startling intensity. There is, however, a sense in which the provisions of the obligations do apply particularly to the Brethren and that is in the area of instructing a less experienced brother. This brings us again to the subject of secrecy.

Secrecy in the Master Mason's obligation has two aspects. The first is the same sort of secrecy about the work of the Degree that we have noted in the previous two obligations. At the purely exoteric level this secrecy relates, as we have seen, to the symbolic modes of identification. The actual secrets, that is, the body of information known to people who have become consciously aware of their indwelling spirit by making the transition we are about to consider, cannot be communicated between individuals in any conventional way. We can infer that the obligation requires that the new Master Mason will not improperly induce the experience in others. In any case, the concept (which we saw in the Entered Apprentice Degree) of secrecy as a container for one's experience is as valid and important for the Master Mason as it is for the Apprentice.

The second aspect of secrecy deals with the secrets of a Brother Mason. It is worth noting that, in this respect, the obligation requires one to keep 'his secrets when entrusted to my care - murder, treason, felony, and all other offences contrary to the laws of God and the ordinances of the realm being at all times most especially excepted' (Emulation Working). With all those exceptions, one might wonder what sort of thing could be considered a Brother's personal secret. In fact, the reference has to do with the manner in which one works at the business of Masonic Labour as a process of interior development. As one tries to see the Divine laws which are described in the Craft's symbolism operating in one's own life, one begins to understand one's personal experience in a new light. Events from the past, and particularly one's own actions, appear in a new, sometimes painful context. These events are often intensely personal and not infrequently involve deep remorse. The intimate discussions in which these personal experiences are shared, discussed, and finally

understood in the context of the operation of Divine law are the sharing of 'a Brother's secrets'. The necessity for secrecy in this context should be obvious and the failure to maintain such secrecy will certainly reduce the effectiveness of a Lodge as a means to assist in the individual growth of its members and may destroy it altogether.

The last provision of the obligation which we will consider is the requirement to answer summonses. At the level we are considering, this does not refer to the bit of paper which comes through the post to summon us to the 'duties of the Lodge'. It is much more than that. The sign of a Master Mason, that is the real sign, the quality that sets him apart, is in one sense quite obvious to the world at large. Only another (real) Master Mason can recognise the sign for what it is, but its quality shines clearly like a beacon, and almost everyone recognises the person who exhibits it as someone extraordinary. Such a person is recognised as 'one to whom the burdened heart may pour forth its sorrow, to whom the distressed may prefer their suit', although just why this should be, most people would be at a loss to say. But they ask for help. The calls come by letter, telephone or 'out of the air', but they come, and they cannot be ignored. These calls for help form a major part of the 'summonses sent' from a Master Mason's Lodge (even though the person sending may be unaware that such a 'Lodge' exists within him) which one must answer to the limit of his own skill in the Craft.

The traditional penalty of this obligation, like the others in the Craft, is entirely allegorical. It is enough to say that it relates to the centre of one's being. In earlier times the physical penalty was used in an attempt to destroy that part of the person which ordinarily survives death. Such an idea is clearly superstitious, but taken as a serious allegory, it gives a clue to the scope of the obligation, and to violate the obligation (in a real sense) is to seriously hinder the possibility of conscious awareness of the Deity.

When the candidate looks at the three Great Lights on which he has been obligated, their configuration indicates that he is in an area of the psyche in which the Spirit predominates. The Lodge is still dark because, although he has assumed the responsibilities, he has yet to experience the transition by which he will be enabled to 'see' in this environment.

## 2 THE TRADITIONAL HISTORY

The portion of the ceremony of Raising which follows the obligation is deceptively simple. In its exoteric sense it is a beautiful object lesson in fidelity and steadfastness, and most Masons interpret it in that

way. In its allegorical interpretation, it appears very quickly to be a teaching of ingenious construction and cosmic scope. The travail and subsequent Raising fill the place in the ceremony which is occupied by the 'testing of the Wardens' in the previous Degrees. In this case, however, the candidate has left behind the levels of consciousness which the Wardens represent. He is about to make a transition into a different world, and his test is the transition itself. The ceremony surrounding the Raising actually deals with two related subjects: the raising of the candidate and the traditional history. We will consider each of these subjects separately in order to catch a glimpse of the purpose of the Degree.

The traditional history describes the murder of one of the chief architects at the building of Solomon's Temple. This crime is said to have taken place at a time when 'the work (on the Temple) was nearly completed', and the unavailability of the architect was such a profound loss that the project could not be completed as it had been planned. Indeed, the ritual suggests a loss of universal scope which requires a temporary arrangement to substitute for the original intention. Note that the traditional history contradicts the Biblical account of Solomon's Temple, which states (I Kings 7:40) that the architects finished all the work they did for Solomon. This apparent contradiction between the Craft's central legend and the Judeo-Christian version of the Volume of Sacred Law, the Craft's most venerated authority, together with the scope of the loss implied indicates that the traditional history has reference to an event very different from the construction of an ancient building. One does not need to look far to find the alternative. There are legends which appear in cultures all over the world describing some primordial tragedy which is the cause of humanity's present situation. Even in the western traditions, the story of this fundamental loss is told in a variety of forms of which our traditional history is but one. Here we will consider this primordial event as it is recorded in the Judeo-Christian idiom where the doctrine is called the Fall of Man.

It is difficult for western man to analyse the fall and expulsion from Eden, objectively. From one point of view our culture's materialistic orientation makes light of such 'old fashioned tales' and advises us not to consider them seriously because they have no scientific basis. On the other hand the story of the Fall of Man has been the subject of so much religious commentary, and the concepts of original sin and its associated guilt have become so much a part of collective western thought, that it is difficult to detach one's self in order to study the subject at all. The scientific objection is actually

easy to deal with. The reason that the material in Genesis 1 and 2 lacks scientific basis is because it deals largely with a body of human experience which is outside the field properly investigated by the physical sciences. We have seen that the Biblical account of Creation (to use the Judeo-Christian idiom) relates to the creation of the Spiritual World and the formation of the Psychological World; the phenomena investigated by the physical sciences do not appear in Biblical material until after the expulsion of the first human beings from Eden. It is harder to get a grip on the subjective attitudes about original sin which have become accepted unconsciously as part of our western frame of reference. We can get some perspective on the subject, if we try to envisage the process of the Fall of Man in a context which makes use of both the Biblical material and the findings of scientific community. We will develop this idea with the attitude of one who describes an event in the remote past, and our perspective will not be limited to the physical world.

We have already considered the first chapters of Genesis as a description of the creation and formation of the spiritual and psychological worlds, events upon which western science does not comment. The moment of 'Making' corresponds to the 'Big Bang' with which recent findings indicate that the physical universe began. The development of the physical universe is not discussed in the Biblical account; and we can consider that the universe and our own planet, evolved according to the accepted theories of physical cosmology, geology, biology and evolution. Meanwhile, in the Upper Worlds, human beings were 'called forth, created (and) formed', at which stage they participated in the events described in the stories of Eden. Now the term 'Garden of Eden' has a very exact connotation in the Jewish mystical tradition from which the book of Genesis is derived. It refers specifically to the World of Formation, to the psyche. Thus, we may understand the encounter with Lucifer in the form of a snake to be an event which occurred in the Psychological World and at a time shortly before human beings made their appearance in the physical world. That appearance occurred when the evolutionary processes (operating under divine law) had produced an animal which had a nervous system capable of being a vehicle for human consciousness. At that time the first of the 'men and women' were 'expelled' from Eden, the psyche, and sent into incarnation in the physical world where they occupied the 'coats of skin', the animal bodies, which Divinity had 'made' for them. It has been customary in the west to regard the whole affair as the result of Adam's 'sin', and to think that somehow the business could have been

avoided, if only Adam had done as he had been told. On reflection, however, it seems unlikely that an event of such scope and importance as the introduction of human consciousness into the physical world could have been unforeseen by an Agency with the attributes of Divinity. We can suggest that Adam's 'sin' indicated the capacity for free will which is present in human beings. It also involved the acquisition of some awareness of the World of the Spirit, where the paired concepts of Good and Evil first emerge. At this stage Adam, representing mankind, descended into the physical world. It was the process by which consciousness was extended into the most remote part of the relative universe.

In the Craft's Legend, which treats the same event, we find something of the same quality. The architect permits himself to be murdered in the service of some greater cause, and the details of the Legend give us some additional clues into the nature of the Fall. The placement of the Legend in the Third Degree suggests that it is an event which occurred deep in the psyche, in the collective unconscious to borrow Jung's term. This supports the view that we are considering an event which relates to the entire human race. The murder was committed with the working tools of the Fellowcraft, except that the Square of Truth has been replaced by an Apprentice's Tool, the Gavel of Passion in its grossest form. As well as emphasising the psychological nature of the event, the symbolism suggests that the process has to do with the effect of willfulness and uncontrolled passion where truth and integrity should be found.

The result of the architect's murder was the loss of something of great importance, the Secrets of a Master Mason - that is, the things known to a person who is in contact with the level of the Spirit within himself. The reason that the secrets can no longer be communicated is that the murdered architect, the Junior Grand Warden (representing the Self in this Primordial model) is no longer in his place. Like Adam, expelled from Eden (the psyche) into the physical world and no longer able to converse with Deity, the slain architect (the Self) is said to have been interred (in Earth, the element of the Physical World) in a grave (body) 'five feet or more in depth' (varying with each individual) outside the Holy of Holies (where Divinity is manifest) and of very limited extent in an east-west direction (the dimension of consciousness). It would appear that the extension of consciousness into incarnation in the physical world involved a disruption in the continuity of consciousness through the Four Worlds. The Craft's symbolism suggests that this loss may be due to the Self being overwhelmed by the passionate nature of the physical



vehicle. In any case, this disruption in the continuity of consciousness through the worlds is the loss which the Worshipful Master undertakes to assist in repairing when he opens a Master Mason's Lodge. The extension of consciousness across worlds appears to involve a process which is symbolised here by physical death. Death is the other subject treated in the Ritual of Raising.

### 3 DEATH

In spite of the meaning conventionally attributed to the ritual, the death which is enacted by the candidate in the Third Degree is quite clearly not the physical death which terminates our period in incarnation; for at its conclusion the ritual includes reuniting the candidate with 'the companions of his former toils'. The ceremony implies an event which is much more profound and very much less frequently experienced than the death of the body. Nonetheless, the act of dying is one of the human processes most commonly used as an allegorical representation of this more profound event which occurs deep within the being of the mature and properly prepared candidate; and an examination of that physical process will serve us as a starting point for our attempt to glimpse the nature of the event itself.

From the clinical point of view, death comes when the biological machinery ceases to operate and the body begins to decompose into its constituent chemicals. From the perspective of a materialistic philosopher, the cessation of body function is the cause of death, and that (apart from the chemistry of decomposition) is all there is to it. The Craft's point of view of death is very different. We have seen throughout that the human being is considered to be a native of the Upper Worlds. He has a soul which acquires a body when it incarnates at moment of birth. The individual human being occupies his body in much the same way that a driver occupies his automobile and the cessation of biological function, rather than being the cause of natural death, is the result of the vacating of the body by its occupant. In our model of the relative universe (Figure 5) there seems to be a definite barrier between each of the Four Worlds. The barrier between the Divine World and the World of Creation is referred to as 'the Abyss' in the description of creation in Genesis 1, and a similar barrier exists at the boundary between the remaining Three Worlds. Birth appears to be a process by which the individual, inhabiting the Psychological World, acquires a vehicle suitable for operation in the Physical World. As the child grows, he develops his ego, which, as we

have seen, acts as an agency by which the individual operates across the boundary between the physical and psychological worlds. In the Craft's symbolism, we have seen this boundary represented by the door of the Lodge, and the Inner Guard, who controls the passages across that boundary, is the Craft's representation of the ego's function. In this way we can say that every incarnate human being operates in two worlds, or at least in part of them. Physical death is the individual's transition - in consciousness - back across the barrier between the physical and psychological worlds. In this context, birth and death can be seen as processes by which individuals cross the boundary between the two lowest worlds. Birth is the process of extending the consciousness 'downward' (in Figure 5) into the physical world, and death the process of transition in an 'upward' direction. We can think of incarnate humanity as the agency by which a conscious link across that barrier between the psychological and physical worlds is maintained. To this extent, it would seem that the evolution of mankind has already made some progress in repairing the loss described in the Legend of Creation. We have seen that man is a being which is capable of conscious operation in all Four Worlds; but at the present level of development of human consciousness the majority of mankind bridges the boundary between only the lowest two. The purpose of the transition in the Third Degree is to enable the candidate to penetrate the barrier between the Psychological and Spiritual worlds. It is analogous to the transition ordinarily associated with physical death, but it relates to the next higher boundary, and it is to be accomplished while the candidate remains incarnate. With this concept of birth and death as a 'boundary crossing' activity, we can approach consideration of the allegorical death in the Ceremony of Raising.

The newly obligated Master Mason is provided with a brief recapitulation of the first two Degrees. While it is not generally appreciated by the candidate, this recapitulation puts his position in perspective and it serves as an indicator of the sort of person to whom the event symbolised by the Raising is likely to happen. Starting with the ordinary ego consciousness, he has made contact with his Self, the individual occupying the body. He has brought his passions and analytical capacities of that physical vehicle under control so that it has become a reliable servant. He has brought much of what is generally known as the unconscious into his consciousness and investigated the relationships and interactions between the Psychological and Physical Worlds. He has been tempted to misuse the abilities which this understanding and these investigations have

given him, and he has demonstrated his moral soundness by resisting those temptations. In the process, he has developed his own will. It is this man, in control of his psyche and his body and in a large measure understanding the relationship of both to the Divine Plan, who is 'entitled to demand that last and greatest trial'.

It is unnecessary to comment on the details of the ceremony by which the candidate is introduced to the transition process of which death is the allegory, but we can extract some of the principles from it. We have already seen that it is the crossing of a barrier between worlds. We should note that it is not the ego which is slain, that was subjugated long ago. It is the Self, symbolised by the Junior Warden in the Lodge and the Junior Grand Warden in the traditional history, that 'dies'. That Self is the individual, the resident of the Psychological World, who must be true to his principles and surrender his will (which he has worked so hard to attain) and his concept of himself to the demands of a greater purpose. Note that in this process the trusted functions of the psyche which have been developed with such care are actually a liability in this situation. This is because the individual, who had once thought of himself as a body and now considers himself to be a psychological being, is about to cross the threshold between the Psychological and Spiritual Worlds. To do so he must die to his concept of himself as a Self (the essence of the psychological organism) in order to realise his identity as a Spiritual being who possesses a Self; just his Self possesses a body. The allegorical death represents the entry into this transition process.

The act of Raising represents the emergence from the transition process into the World of the Spirit. Notice that the two Wardens, both representations of lower parts of the psyche, cannot accomplish this process, but the Worshipful Master, representing that part of the psyche at the level of the Spirit and in contact with Divinity, accomplishes the task with the help of the Wardens. The Lecture on the Third Degree indicates that one is enabled to be raised by 'the help of God [Divinity], the united aid of the Square [Psyche] and Compasses [Spirit] and my own industry (the Masonic Labour of the candidate)'. The Lecture goes on to say that the candidate has been raised 'from a superficial flat to a lively perpendicular'. The reference is to the geometric progression by which the Craft describes the Four Worlds, and shows quite clearly that the candidate is considered to have crossed the barrier between the 'superficies' of the psyche and the 'line' of the spirit.

The posture into which the candidate is raised is of great importance. It is a symbol of the oneness which pervades the relative

universe. Heretofore, it has been one of the fundamental principles upon which the Craftsman has based his work; now it is a conscious experience. At this point in the ceremony the lights in the Lodge room are turned on, indicating to the candidate that his transition is complete and that he is now able to see by the ambient light of a Master Mason's Lodge. It is by this light that he will perform his Labours in the Third Degree.

#### 4 THE WORK OF A MASTER MASON

The Ritual and Lectures do not have a great deal to say about the labour of a Master Mason. The Charge urges the newly raised Master Mason to give his attention to 'that most interesting of all human studies, the knowledge of yourself', and suggests that he get on with it while he can. The Lecture indicates that Master Masons are the preservers of the Ancient Landmarks of the Order, and the source of instructors and Rulers of the Craft. Beyond these general comments, however, very little is said about the actual work of a Master Mason. Considering the awesome scope of the experience represented by the Ceremony of Raising, it is small wonder that little is said about labour in the Third Degree. In fact, the nature of the work is such that very little can be framed into words. The examination which we will make must rely heavily on the interpretation of the Craft's symbolism in order to comment on the subject at all.

Of the Immovable Jewels, the Tracing Board is said to be for the Master to 'draw designs on'; and this image contains two powerful ideas. First, unlike the First and Second Degrees which are concerned with the shaping and trying of an individual stone, the Third Degree is concerned with the whole building, with the relationship between the stones. In the Craft's concept of the individual Mason as a building stone cut from the quarry, the First and Second Degrees are concerned with personal development while the business of the Third Degree transcends personal considerations. The second idea centres around 'designs'. Heretofore, the Apprentice and the Craftsman have been working to criteria which have been established for them, but the designer has substantially more freedom of action to determine the form of the structure he will bring into being. This notion of vastly increased scope of action is communicated directly by the configuration of the Great Lights in the Third Degree. The Compasses (representing the Spirit) are no longer constrained by the Square (representing the Psyche) as they have been in previous Degrees, and the person who has reached this level of consciousness

is said to be 'at liberty' to use the capabilities which the Compasses represent; to 'render the Circle of his Masonic duties complete'; to operate consciously in (or in contact with) all Four 'Worlds.

If the Tracing Board and Great Lights give an indication of vastly increased scope for the Master Mason, the Ornaments of a Master Mason's Lodge give an insight into the frame of reference within which he operates. The Porch is the entrance to the Holy of Holies, the place in the Temple of Solomon where the Shekinah, the manifestation of Divinity, was said to be present. In the traditional cathedral architecture, this place is represented by the Tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament, the Body of Christ, is reserved. Within the individual, it is the place where the Divine Spark resides. Thus, the person with the consciousness of a Master Mason operates at a level in contact with Divinity, and his consciousness is illuminated by Divine Light, which enters through the dormer window (in the roof) of the Porch. The Square Pavement has reference to the Physical World (the fourth World, traditionally represented by a quadrilateral figure), and the fact that he walks on it reminds us of the fact that he is to be a conscious bridge between all the worlds. Here we hark back to an admonition which the newly raised Master received long ago, 'without neglecting the ordinary duties of your station in life' - no matter how far the Masonic journey takes him.

The environment of a Master Mason's consciousness may seem awesome, but the consideration of the tools which are given to him to accomplish his work will cause us to realise how desperately important it is that he should have direct access to Divine guidance and how serious are the consequences if he should ignore it. As with the Tools of the previous degrees, the Master Mason's Tools are three - one active, the Pencil; one constraining, the Skirret; and one mediating, the Compasses. Note that while the Apprentice has tools of labour (action) and the Craftsman tools of testing (morality), the Master has tools of design (creativity). These tools, like all the others, are functions of the psyche; but they are so far removed from ordinary consciousness and experience that it is impossible to speak of them except by analogy, and then only briefly.

When one writes, physically, with a pencil, a unique event takes place. At the point of the pencil the thought in the mind of the writer 'changes worlds' from its place in the psyche to appear as written words on the physical paper. In this way, there is, at the pencil point, an interface, so to speak, between the World of Forms and the World of Making. This phenomenon is a direct analogy of an event which occurs deep within the psyche at the place symbolised by the Pencil.

It is an interface between the Spirit and the Psyche, between the World of Creation and the World of Forms; and it is consciously available to, and under the control of the (real) Master Mason. Even when working from the customary level of ego consciousness we can, on occasion, catch a glimpse of the operation of the Pencil. The best description of the experience might be 'inspiration' or, perhaps, 'revelation'. It may be only a new perspective, or it may be an insight into some principle which we had not recognised previously, or it may be a realisation which shatters our existing concepts of reality; but whatever its scale, the quality of the Pencil's operation is that it causes us to gasp as we realise that the revelation is entirely new and that it has come in a flash - 'out of the blue'. That is literally the case, since the Pencil is a tool which introduces substance from the World of Spirit into the psyche.

The Skirret is a tool used to mark out locations on the ground. Its string, connected to the fixed pin, acts as a constraint on the Pencil which makes the mark. This tool of limitation has substantial flexibility - the length of string is variable at the will of the user. It must be used carefully - if the string goes slack it is of no value; and if the centre pin is improperly placed, serious errors are introduced. As the psychological function which balances the Pencil's revelation, we can think of the Skirret as representing 'understanding'. In this context, understanding should convey the impression of slow, patient, steady, painstaking work which is accomplished, perhaps, over a period of years. It is work which requires not simply logic, but reason and integrity, as it seeks to comprehend fundamental laws in all their aspects. The completion of this work comes not with the gasp of revelation, but with a whispered sigh as we say, 'Ah - at last, I understand.'

These ordinary notions of revelation and understanding are mere shadows of these psychological functions as they are available to the Master Mason who is expected to use them with facility in his minute-by-minute activity. It is extremely difficult to give examples of these tools in practical use, but we might get the barest feeling for the process by considering the work of Isaac Newton. When he observed the apple fall in his garden, he experienced the operation of the Pencil. Falling apples had been observed for tens of thousands of years, but Newton recognised, in a flash of insight, that all objects attract one another by their very nature. It was an entirely new thought - out of the blue. Several years later he published the Principia - the Skirret which contained his insight and the understanding which gave it form. It explained the event, related it to

other phenomena in a coherent fashion, and established the direction of scientific thought for the next two centuries. That is the real scope and capacity of the Working Tools of a Master Mason.

The example of Newton illustrates the balance which is required between Pencil and Skirret. Without the labour and understanding which produced the Principia, the revelation of mutual attraction would have remained an interesting flash of insight. Without the revelation itself, the Principia would not have been possible. The balance between the active and passive psychological functions at the level of intellect is achieved by a conscious capacity represented by the Compasses. As used in the Craft, the instrument is not Compasses at all, but Dividers which are used to establish proportion. They embody, in the two legs of a single instrument, the active and passive principles which run throughout the entire psyche (indeed, throughout the Relative Universe) and which are at last integrated at the hinge which joins the two legs. At this point of joining the Compasses of a properly functioning Human Being are in conscious contact with Divinity; and this contact enables the Master Mason to balance and control the creative and constraining psychological functions throughout his psyche and body.

It goes without saying that one who has actually been given these working tools has to exercise the greatest care and discretion in their use. For this reason one must have controlled his physical nature, squared and tested his moral and psychological functions, and died to that concept of himself which would use these tools for his own purposes before he is permitted conscious access to the psychological functions which the tools represent. That is why real Master Masons, the people of any tradition who have real knowledge of themselves, are usually modest and retiring - frequently to the point of self-effacement.

Two cautions need to be given about these Working Tools and the capability they imply. First, one should not shrink from the task, saying that Creation is the province of Deity. It is true that Creation is the province of Deity but there is no intention here to usurp Divine prerogative. The human capacity to create is the inevitable consequence of the fact that mankind is made 'in the image of God'. The task of the Master Mason (which is the ultimate role of every human being) is to surrender his will (in the last analysis, his being) to that of the Deity, and to stand in King Solomon's Porch, in the Divine Light from the dormer window, with his feet on the Square Pavement, and be a bridge across the Four Worlds. And he must do it consciously and of his own free will. Second, one should resist the

temptation to think that one can 'put off' the use of a Master Mason's tools until he has achieved a more elevated consciousness. Remember that the tools are functions of the psyche, and they operate continuously (albeit unconsciously) in every human being. The question is not whether to use the tools, but rather whether or not to use them consciously and in the service of the Deity.

The (real) Master Mason labours in a place and at a task which is hardly known to the ordinary world. It is usually a lonely job; but he has the ability to call for help, when he requires it, upon a body of human beings called the Sons of the Widow. This group takes its name from the Physical World, the 'Mother Earth', cut off, that is, widowed, from the Divine connection by the event we have described as the Fall. In other traditions these people have been called, 'The Blessed Company of Saints' or the 'House of Israel'. The Craftsman comes from the west, seeking instruction; the Master Mason, a Son of the Widow, comes from the east, seeking that which was lost. They are travelling the dimension of consciousness and the goal is to repair the loss. For that reason, the Master Mason provides instruction to his less experienced Brethren.



## CHAPTER 6

# *The Way of the Craftsman*

### 1 THE LODGE AS A WORKING GROUP

Throughout this book we have been considering the Lodge in its capacity as a model of the psyche. In this last section we will touch briefly upon the other principal (but infrequently observed) aspect of the Lodge; a group of people working to apply the principles of the Craft to their own experience and to realise in their own consciousness the levels of awareness symbolised by the Degrees. These considerations of practical work must be brief, because this aspect of the Craft is intensely personal; but we can outline some general principles which, if carefully observed, will lead the serious Apprentice to a situation in which he can undertake more formal work.

Generally speaking, one does not undertake interior work alone. In the broadest sense the traditional form of study in the western world is a group which meets periodically to contemplate some body of text or scripture. Each member of the group in turn reads a paragraph, after which the members discuss the implications of the text, analyse the principles it contains and (if possible) give examples of the operation of those principles in their own experience. This sharing of experience and perspective among the members of the group provides each with a richer insight into the text and to its application to his own life than he might otherwise have had. In a similar way, the recognition of the principles working in another's life assists one to see them operating in one's self. On occasion, this process can cause substantial emotional distress; for example, one might see one's behaviour in a new perspective and realise suddenly that one has hurt a great many people in the past. In such situations, membership in the group is a source of real emotional support during the period of crisis. The text which the group studies serves two purposes. First, it provides the context and subject matter for the discussions; and second, it provides a link through a particular school, line and tradition to the 'teaching', which is the property of the race of man.

If the group is fortunate, it will have a tutor who will be able to draw out the contributions of the individual members and enrich the discussions with perspectives which would not otherwise be available. Such a tutor is usually only one step ahead of the other members. He may be attracted to a group or one of the members may develop into the role. In either case, the position of the tutor is one of extraordinary responsibility because the other members of the group will have placed the guidance of their interior development in his hands, and he is in a position to do them real psychological damage. The role of tutor of a working group requires the greatest personal integrity; and as a general rule of thumb, it may safely be said that the desire for the position is an automatic disqualification.

A group working along the lines outlined above is following the Way of Contemplation; that is, it is using the analytical faculty as a means to come to grips with the teaching. While this is quite a common approach in the west because it fits the western temperament and it requires very little more in the way of equipment than the text itself, it is by no means the only way of study. A group which meets regularly for prayer and meditation is following the Way of Devotion, and this, too, is a common approach which can be practised with great simplicity. The third gate to the temple, the Gate of Good Works, is the Way of Action, and is the approach taken by groups which use ritual as their means of practising their tradition. Clearly, the Masonic Lodge makes use of all three of these methods, with perhaps a little emphasis on ritual.

If one sets aside the social congenialities which ordinarily surround a meeting of a Lodge, the potential parallel between the Lodge and the traditional working group is quite clear. The ritual (on which we will touch in the next section) provides a powerful, dramatic representation of the dynamics of the individual psyche and spirit, the Lectures and Tracing Boards provide a rich field for the practice of contemplation, and the prayers provide an excellent starting point for devotional practice. This balanced combination of action, contemplation and devotion appears to have been the original concept of formal Masonic Labour and any Lodge or Masonic study group which undertakes such a curriculum seriously will find itself amply rewarded. The Craft's Ritual, Lectures and symbolic structure provide the material which directs the contemplation and provides the link to the Tradition. It is for this reason that the Craft consistently refers its student to the Volume of Sacred Law (the one of his choice) and thus to the Deity. In this sense, the Warrant of the Lodge, properly displayed at every meeting, assumes deeper

importance, as does the insistence of the Grand Lodge on the regularity of contact between Masons, particularly overseas. This rigorous attitude does not only prevent Masons from becoming innocently involved with those who would seek to use the privacy of the Craft improperly for their own purposes. It also defines the line through which the Craft traces its connection to the root teaching; it is a matter of fundamental importance.

The Worshipful Master of a Masonic Lodge functions in the same way as the tutor of a working group. The serious nature of the tutor's responsibilities are reflected both in the obligations of the Second and Third Degree and particularly in the prerequisites for the position of Master of the Lodge, which are outlined early in the Ceremony of Installation. To some extent, he should be able to 'provide light and instruction to the Brethren of [his] Lodge' according to the 'genuine principles of the institution'. To accomplish that he requires some real spiritual contact himself and to the extent of that connection he is entitled to the 'Worshipful' style. All the cautions mentioned above in connection with a group tutor apply with additional emphasis to the Worshipful Master of a Lodge which proposes to participate in the serious work of the Craft. This is because the honours and deference which form an important part of the ritual's symbolism can have a distinctly detrimental effect on the Master's ego.

In the usual course of events, very few Masons give their attention to the Lodge in its capacity as a working group. Such Lodges are rare at the present time. There are some, however, and to visit one is a worthwhile experience. To be a member of one is a real privilege. At the present time, as fewer candidates present themselves, Lodge calendars become consequently less crowded; Lodges thus relieved of their heavy schedule of ritual have the opportunity to reflect on this interior aspect of the institution which they perpetuate.

## 2 INDIVIDUAL LABOUR

It may be that the reader will find that these ideas are meaningful to him, he may feel that there seems to be something to this interpretation and that it may be worth pursuing. The question then arises, 'What do I do next?'

Should such a one not be a Mason, he should realise there are many idioms by which this work can be undertaken, and that of these the Craft is only one. A person interested in this work should take some care in evaluating a group or school before joining it. We have indicated the importance of integrity on the part of those who teach in

this work. Sadly, some tutors fall short of the mark, and they should be avoided. In general one should be wary of any group which solicits membership. A very useful rule for evaluating any working group is that it should be hard to find, harder to enter and easy to leave. If it does not meet these criteria, the group is probably better left alone. Should an individual be convinced that the Craft's idiom is appropriate for him, he must petition a Lodge for the Three Degrees, because it is not possible to practise the Craft properly outside the framework of a Masonic Lodge. Such a person must be prepared to do a substantial amount of independent work because the point of view expressed in this book is not widely found in the contemporary Craft. Nonetheless, Providence has a way of directing serious seekers, and the door of a Masonic Lodge is certainly a way into the Mysteries.

It is more difficult to give advice about individual practice to one who is already a Mason and who wishes to pursue the Craft from this point of view. The ideas that follow provide only the most elementary outline; but they too, if seriously practised, will result in providential direction, which in the last analysis is the only kind worth having. One of the most important considerations is an appropriate attitude toward authoritative statements (including those in the preceding pages), and the best attitude one can adopt is 'sceptical faith'. We can learn a great deal from the student of physics in a contemporary university. He reads about a physical principle in his text book, then he attends a lecture on the subject, finally he goes to the laboratory where he conducts an experiment which demonstrates the principle. The faculty of the university is trying to encourage the student in the use of the scientific method, which avoids faith in authority and relies entirely on data collected in controlled experiments. But the circumstances surrounding the educational process poses a dilemma because; if the student does not 'believe' the authoritative material in the text and lectures, he will have to recapitulate the entire history of science in the laboratory in a single year. In practice, the student does 'accept the authority' of his tutors, trusting that the science faculty will not mislead him, but he verifies their teachings with his own work in the laboratory. A student wishing to practice the Craft in the way we have considered it might well adopt a similar point of view. He should receive the guidance of his teachers with tentative acceptance, but he should verify his teachers' statements in his own experience. And like the Physics student connecting wires for an experiment in high voltage electricity, the student of interior work should not undertake work he does not understand or which violates his common sense.

As far as practical work is concerned, first, learn the Ritual. The plain labour of learning it by rote is an exercise which will limber up those psychological functions symbolised by the Gavel (repetitive action) and the Chisel (communication). Then participate in the ritual whenever possible. Ritual is a peculiar thing. Badly done, it is worse than useless; but ritual which is well done is, in itself, not enough. The essential point is that to perform complicated ritual properly one must be awake; and being awake makes one receptive to the meaning which is implicit in the ritual and symbols.

Second, make use of the Opening and Closing. We have seen that the Lodge is a model of the individual psyche which shows the person to have, at his centre, a contact with Divinity. The Ceremonies of Opening and Closing the Lodge represent the opening of the consciousness to that Divine Centre and closing it again with reverence. A brief analysis of the Opening will be of assistance to those who would use it in this way. The ceremony starts when the Master knocks, in response to which the Tyler presents himself and is posted. A similar process posts the Inner Guard. This fragment of ritual symbolises the process by which one makes one's self secure from interruption and turns one's ego consciousness from the concerns of the physical world to the Temple within (symbolised by the Lodge). With the Temple secure, the Master names each Officer and reviews his duties. From the perspective we have adopted, we can understand this part of the ritual as recalling and activating each level of consciousness in the psyche in turn. Before declaring the Lodge open, the Master invokes the blessing of Deity. This piece of ritual, which takes only a moment, is of critical importance. No one should undertake interior work without Divine Permission; and if, for some reason, that permission is withheld, the work should be postponed - the Lodge should not be opened. Only after the assurance of the approbation of Deity does the Master open his Lodge and commence the labour of the evening.

In order to use this ceremony in one's own work, one should set aside a period each day for devotion and meditation; open that period by reciting the Ceremony of Opening, make such prayers, devotions and meditations as one's conscience and religion direct, and close the period with the Ceremony of Closing.

Third, familiarise yourself with the Lectures and with the material to which they refer. It will give an insight into the philosophical turn of mind held by the early practitioners of the Craft. Learn to draw the Tracing Board of each Degree. Practice until you can draw them from memory. As you draw them, review in your mind the principles which

are represented by the various objects as they are discussed in the Lectures. The Craft's symbolism is internally consistent. Remember the rule that the symbolic structure cannot be changed; refine your concepts of the symbols until they reflect the consistency which is inherent in the Craft. Remember that the principles are operating within you and in the world every day. Observe their operation and understand what is happening to you.

Lastly, remember your Lodge at regular intervals. This is a very old practice among groups involved in the work, and has various benefits. For the individual, the process of remembering is, again, an exercise of the Gavel and Chisel. For the group, it is much more. A group (or Lodge), like everything else in the relative universe, exists in the several worlds. By calling the Lodge into consciousness and thinking about it, one invests psychological energy in it, and it becomes 'sharper' at the psychological level. There are a few Lodges whose members have practised this remembrance diligently for many years, and entering such a Lodge is an unforgettable experience. Visitors sense the 'atmosphere' and never fail to comment on it. Although they do not understand it, they know it is different, welcoming, dedicated. One who wishes to use this practice should call his Lodge and Brethren into his consciousness daily at regular intervals, say 10.00 a.m., Noon and 3.00 p.m.; recall the obligations they have to each other and the world, and commit them to the Deity with a brief prayer, perhaps the Tyler's Toast. The process should not require more than thirty seconds.

These exercises of individual labour are all that can, or need, be given in such a book as this. If they are practised faithfully, they will produce tangible results of great benefit. But one who would walk in the Way of the Craftsman must do one thing more. He must remember, always, that he is building a temple to God. He is building an edifice in consciousness in which he, himself, is an individual stone. In time, each human being will square his stone and place it in that temple, and when that temple is complete, God will behold God in the Mirror of Existence and there will be then, as there was at the beginning, only God.

To all poor and distressed Masons  
    wherever dispersed over the face  
    of Earth and Water;  
Wishing them a speedy relief from  
    all their suffering and a safe return  
    to their native country;  
Should they so desire it.

## Note for American Readers

In England in the latter half of the eighteenth century there were two bodies which claimed jurisdiction over the activities of Masons in that country. (In fact there were four, of which only two are of real significance. For a complete treatment of the subject of early history of the Grand Lodge of England see: John Hamill, *The Craft* (Crucible, 1986) and Harry Sadler, *Masonic Facts and Fictions* (Aquarian Press, 1985)). These two Grand Lodges, generally referred to as the 'Ancients' and the 'Moderns', enjoyed a lively, and sometimes tempestuous, competition; and it was inevitable that this rivalry should be reflected in the North American colonies. In the decades prior to the American Revolution there was general agreement among the American colonists that the English government was not treating them fairly. There was, however, substantial disagreement about the remedies which were appropriate. While many thought that independence was the only satisfactory solution, there were also numerous people who felt a strong allegiance to the Crown and were disinclined to break that connection. While it would be overstating the situation to say that Masonry in the colonies was divided on this issue, it is true that the Ancients, who were generally the more egalitarian of the two bodies, tended to attract members who were inclined toward independence, while those who felt a strong connection with England often found their way into Lodges chartered by the Moderns. At the end of the Revolutionary War this pattern of membership resulted in a marked reduction in the influence of the Moderns over Masonry in the United States. As Grand Lodges formed in each of the States they did so largely from Lodges which originally owed allegiance to the Ancient Grand Lodge; and those Modern Lodges which remained were, in general, assimilated into this system. As a result, the symbolic structure which is characteristic of American Masonry was derived, generally speaking, from that of the Ancient Grand Lodge (and also from Scottish Lodges).

The situation was quite different in England. Both Grand Lodges were well established, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century



it was clear to many members of both bodies that it was in their best interests, and the best interests of Masons generally, that the Craft be governed by a single authoritative body. To accomplish this a Lodge of Reconciliation was formed by an action of the two bodies which merged to form the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813. The task of the Lodge of Reconciliation was to formulate the symbolic structure and ritual which was to be used by the United Grand Lodge. In doing so, it used material from both Modern and Ancient workings and this produced a symbolic structure which, while containing some new material, is in many ways more representative of general Masonic practice and thought than either of its progenitors. It is this symbolic structure which is interpreted in this book. However, an American Mason will find that the symbolic structure devised by the Lodge of Reconciliation differs in some ways from that used in the United States, since the American symbolism did not pass through that evolutionary process. With this in mind we will comment briefly on the differences between the two systems and on how the American Mason might interpret the symbolism with which he is familiar in the context set out in this book. (The material presented in this book is by no means a comprehensive treatment of English Masonic symbols. For such an examination see: Colin Dyer, *Symbolism in Craft Freemasonry* (A. Lewis, 1976)).

The basic structure of the English and American craft symbolism is very similar, in general terms, and only two areas of difference require our attention here. These are the Officers of the Lodge and the Working Tools. In general, in the American jurisdictions one finds that a Private Lodge has six officers who are involved directly with the ritual; a Master, two Wardens, two Deacons, and a Tyler. (In some American Grand Lodges the Stewards have a large ritual role, and in a few there is an Inner Sentinel.) To these six Officers, Lodges formed under the English constitution add a seventh officer, the Inner Guard. He is stationed inside the Lodge, at the door; and he controls access in and out under the direction of the Junior Warden. When we consider the Lodge as a model of the human psyche (which is one of the principal notions upon which this book is based) we attach considerable importance to the Inner Guard, who performs a role comparable to that of the ego. In interpreting the American symbolic structure, we must conceive that the Junior Deacon incorporates the functions of the ego/Inner Guard into his own office of messenger. This is not an unreasonable interpretation, since it places the ego inside the Lodge.

With respect to Working Tools, English Lodges recognise three tools belonging to each Degree; and in this book we consider one of each set to be active or expansive, another passive or containing, and the third co-ordinating. In the American jurisdictions the Apprentice has only two tools, the Gavel and the Twenty-four-inch Gauge. In interpreting the American tools we should say that the Gavel represents force, passion and active psychological functions, while the Gauge represents mental processes, analysis, and the containing functions, and that it is the business of the Apprentice to keep them in balance. We can be encouraged in this view by the fact that Albert Pike advances a similar notion in *Morals and Dogma*. The tools of the Second Degree are identical in both systems and do not require our attention in this note. The English tools of the Third Degree, and the concepts they represent, do not appear to be alluded to directly in the American symbolic structure. Nonetheless, the tool which is identified with the Master Mason in American Lodges is, like those considered in these pages, concerned with the relationship between stones. Thus, although the emphasis is different in each system, the symbols in both systems indicate that the work of a Master Mason transcends individual considerations and relates to a trans-personal activity.

These brief comparisons of English and American Craft symbolism will, it is to be hoped, present sufficient stimulating clues to enable the American Masonic reader to relate his own symbolic structure to the ideas which are presented in these pages.