

## SYMBOLICAL LECTURE

Companions, the forms, symbols, and ornaments of R.A.Masonry, and the rites and ceremonies at present in use among us, were adopted by our ancient Companions at the building of the Second Temple. We retain them for the purpose of keeping in our minds the means by which our S ... s were recovered, and also to preserve in our hearts those lessons of morality so strongly inculcated in the various degrees of our order, and which we, as members of this exalted Degree, are especially bound to practice.

The form of every R.A. Chapter, when properly arranged, approaches, as nearly as circumstances will admit, to that of the true Catenarian, Arch. This takes its name from Catina, a chain; and that a flexible chain of a reasonable length, if suspended from its two ends, will fall into the form mentioned as the form of the Chapter, that is, two straight sides and a circular end. By this arrangement we preserve the memory of that vaulted shrine in which our S ... s were deposited; and from the impenetrable nature of this, the strongest of all architectural forms, we learn the necessity of guarding our mysteries from profanation by the most inviolable secrecy. It also typifies that adherence to order, and that spirit of fraternal union, which have given energy and permanence to the institution of Freemasonry, enabling it to survive the wreck of mighty empires, and to resist the destroying hand of time. As the subordinate members of the true Catenarian Arch naturally gravitate towards the centre, or keystone, which compresses and consolidates the whole structure, so we are taught to look up with reverence and to submit with cheerfulness to every lawfully constituted authority, whether for our moral, civil, or Masonic government.

The Three Keystones of the Arch are represented by the three Ps. of the Chapter, for as the S ... s contained in the vaulted chamber could only have been recovered by drawing forth the three keystones thereof, so a perfect knowledge of the S ... s of this exalted Degree can no otherwise be obtained than by passing through the Three Ps. Chairs.

In this Degree we acknowledge Six Lights: namely, Three Lesser, and Three Greater. The Three Lesser Lights represent the Law, and the Prophets; and by their number refer us to the Patriarchal, the Prophetical or Judicial, and the Monarchical Dispensations, through which the Hebrew nation successively passed. The Three Greater Lights represent the Sacred Word itself, and by their number allude to the Creating, Sustaining and Destroying Power of the Almighty. These lights are placed in the form of an equilateral triangle; each of the lesser, as you will perceive, bisects a line

drawn between two of the greater, thus subdividing the large triangle into three lesser ones at its extremities, and of themselves forming a fourth in the centre, all of them equal and equilateral. This arrangement has a geometrical correspondence with the mysterious Triple Tau, which forms two right angles on each of its exterior lines, and two others by the union of those lines in the centre, two right angles being equal to the three angles of a triangle.

The Jewel worn by Companions of the Order combines a certain number of angles, which, upon examination, will be found to be equal to the angles of the Six Lights, and of the Triple Tau respectively.

The Ribbon worn by Companions of the Order is a sacred emblem denoting light, combining its two principal colours, purple and crimson, which colours were also interwoven in the Veil of the Temple. Its irradiated form signifies Justice tempered with Mercy; it is therefore considered a fit emblem of royal dignity and power.

The Ensigns upon the twelve staves represent the twelve tribes of Israel, and are figurative of the peculiar blessings bestowed upon each of the Patriarchs by their Father Jacob, who, before his death in Egypt, assembled them together for that purpose, as we find recorded in the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis.

The Four Principal Banners represent the Standards of the Four Divisions of the army of Israel. Their Devices united will form the figure of that wondrous living creature which was seen by the prophet Ezekiel on the banks of the river Chebar, combining the forms which those banners severally represent; namely, a Man, a Lion, an Ox, and an Eagle - a Man to personify intelligence and lordly power; a Lion to represent strength and dignity; an Ox to denote patience and assiduity; and an Eagle to display the promptness and celerity with which the will of the Almighty is ever executed.

The Bearings or Devices upon the three Sceptres denote respectively the Regal, the Prophetical, and the Sacerdotal Offices. These symbols of office are always conferred upon those entitled to receive them in a particular manner, and are accompanied by the possession of peculiar secrets.

The V.S.L., the Square, and the Compasses, are retained in this Degree as well as in Craft Masonry, and with the same uses: the V.S.L. to rule and govern our faith, and on which to obligate our candidates; the Square and Compasses united, to regulate our lives and actions.

**The Sword and Trowel were adopted by R.A.Masons to commemorate the valour of our ancient Companions, who assisted at the building of the second temple; for we read that they wrought with a trowel in their hand, and a sword by their side, in order that they might be ready, while performing the work of the building, to defend the Temple and the Holy City from the unprovoked attacks of their enemies; by this they have left a sacred and impressive lesson to succeeding ages, that, next to the obedience due to lawfully constituted authority, a manly and determined resistance to lawless violence is one of the first of social duties.**

**The Shovel, Pickaxe, and Crowbar may be termed the Working Tools of this Degree, they having been the implements with which the three faithful Sojs. were furnished to prepare for the foundations of the Second Temple. The Shovel to clear away the earth, and the fragments of the former building; the Pickaxe to loosen the stones; and the Crowbar to take purchases. These we spiritualise thus: The work of the Shovel reminds us of the mortal state in which the body is laid in the grave in burial; the stroke of the Pick-axe reminds us of the last trumpet's sound when the grave shall be opened and deliver up its dead; and the Crowbar, being the emblem of uprightness, typifies the erect posture in which the body will arise on that awful day to meet its tremendous but merciful Judge. Thus the working tools of this Degree teach us, not only to contemplate the close of this our mortal existence, but also to look forward with hope to that better life which is to come; and that however and wherever the remains of the body may be disposed Of after death, we may hope, with holy but humble confidence, that both body and spirit will finally arise into immortal and eternal life.**