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SYMBOLISM OF THE EASTERN STAR

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Throughout civilization and all Christendom for centuries down through the ages, all men of all classes, have given reverence to that great light emanating from the ancient and mysterious "Star in the East". Stars have been looked upon as symbolic of great events. Legend tells that the births of Abraham and of Moses were announced by the sudden appearance of strange and brilliant stars flashing across the heavens. It was a star that heralded the birth of Christ, and guided the wise men to the manger. Thus from the early beginning of history man has regarded the stars as MESSENGERS or SIGNALS sent out by that great unknown force. The symbolic star is pointed or rayed. In order to carry it's meaning to humanity, man has given to the star a certain shape that is peculiarly it's own.

In the Order of the Eastern Star we have symbolic shapes and numbers; the shapes being the TRIANGLE, THE SQUARE, the CIRCLE, and the PENTAGON; the numbers being THREE, FIVE, SEVEN AND TWELVE.

The triangle comes down through the ages as a sacred emblem of the Hebrews, who were the first recorded people to have knowledge and belief in the one true and living God. After their wanderings in the desert, when they took up abode in the pagan country and began to teach their beliefs, they were persecuted and therefore compelled to worship in secret. If they were in public and desired to pray to their God, they did so in silence. They needed a concrete symbol of this prayer which their fellow worshipers who might see the sign, would recognize and join them in their worship. Therefore they used the TRIANGLE, which symbolizes THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY GHOST. Since this is a sign of silent prayer, we are taught in our work that the Chaplain does not use this sign of when she approaches the Altar to lead in prayer as her's is an audible prayer, but we do make this sign to open Bible when we enter the Labyrinth to ballot, since we are supposed to offer a silent prayer for Divine guidance every time we cast a ballot. When the Conductress opens the Bible at the Altar, she makes this sign renewing the Obligation for the entire Chapter; and as a silent prayer that all may keep the Obligation. We make the sign of the Triangle when we enter or leave the Chapter room while in session signifying our pledge to keep the Obligation till we meet again.

The Square is applied by all people as having reference to one's code of morals. In our work it teaches us to square our actions by the moral code of our order. The Square holds an important place in our rituals and the making of the square corners should be carefully observed in all floor work. The North, South, East and West suggest the four corners of the earth when man believed the earth to be flat and the meaning still persists though the error of this belief has been proven.

The Circle is an emblem that has come down to us through the symbolism of the Egyptians, the Indians and other ancient people. All of these used it as a figure to represent that which has neither beginning nor end. It represents God, or the Deity, because we have no knowledge of when He was not and no intimation that He will ever cease. It represents eternity, because it has neither beginning nor ending.

The candidate, after assuming our Obligation, is conducted around the Altar in such a manner as to make a complete circle. This is significant of the fact that the Obligation is not taken for the one night alone, but for all time. After each one of the lessons, a station is encircled, significant of the fact that the lesson is not one for the time, but it should remain with the candidate throughout life. After all the lessons are given, the entire labyrinth

encircled, significant of the fact, that these lessons, together with the one received at the altar, make a complete unbroken circle, and as these lessons apply to every period of our lives, the Daughter, the Sister, the Wife, the Mother and the Widow, there is no place in our lives where this circle can be broken. (2)

The Pentagon is a plain figure with FIVE sides and FIVE angles--the signet of King Solomon. In our Order there are FIVE degrees, fixed and unchangeable. This number was chosen to correspond with the emblem of the Master's carpet. In ours we have two Pentagons, one within and one without the Star. The former is called the five fold cord of LOVE, whose colors are BLUE, YELLOW, WHITE, GREEN AND RED, and whose properties are Obedience, Constancy, Loyalty, Faith and Love. The outer Pentagon is the five fold cord of FELLOWSHIP and the attributes of the gold band that encircles the Grand Chapter emblems. They are Sacrifice, Diligence, Courage, Integrity and Love.

The frequent recurrence of certain numbers in the sacred literature in ob-vious. This is true of the numbers, THREE, FIVE, SEVEN AND TWELVE.

The number THREE represents the FATHER, SON AND HOLY GHOST, or as mentioned before the TRIANGLE.

In the opening ceremony when the Worthy Matron asks the duties of the officers each responds with THREE duties she has to perform, with the exception of the Conductress, Secretary and the Worthy Patron who each has FIVE. All the signs are given with THREE motions. The grip of the Order has THREE motions. There are THREE words in each pass. The Bible is opened and closed with THREE motions. Our Order is dedicated to THREE purposes. (Secret work, Obligations)

The Number FIVE as mentioned before represents the PENTAGON. In our order there are: FIVE raps at the door; FIVE points to the Star; FIVE emblematic colors, flowers, emblems, symbols and signs; FIVE letters in the cabalistic word; FIVE words in the cabalistic motto; FIVE lessons for emulation; FIVE words in our response to prayer; FIVE degrees of relationship of women to Master Masons (wife, mother, widow, sister, and daughter); FIVE of our jewels have triangles.

In the Bible, reference to the number SEVEN far surpasses other numbers. It may well be termed the representative symbolic number. The Sabbath being the Seventh day suggested the adoption of SEVEN as the coefficient, so to say, for the appointment of all sacred periods. It requires SEVEN officers to constitute a quorum (const. & By-laws 1110). There are SEVEN ties in our obligation. There are SEVEN circles made in the initiation.

The number TWELVE was first used by the Egyptians when they divided the elliptic into twelve signs of the zodiac, or in other words, when they divided the year into twelve periods. This is a number held in reverence by both pagan and Christian. In pagan religion, we find there were TWELVE superior and inferior gods. In our own Bible and religion we find that the number TWELVE was held so much in reverence that it occurs many times throughout the Old and New Testaments. There were TWELVE tribes of Israel, TWELVE Apostles, in the new law, the New Jerusalem had TWELVE gates, TWELVE foundations, etc. So the symbolic interpretations evidently is that our landmarks represent the TWELVE foundations of the New Jerusalem. Since we base our order upon TWELVE landmarks (inside the Chapter room). The TWELVE outer officers, whose symbolic badge is the Star, represent the TWELVE Apostles who were the messengers that were to carry on the great work of Him, whose emblematic star is the center of our Labyrinth.

**THE EAST**-- The Hebrew terms descriptive of the East differ. One being the place of the rising sun. The other being, that which is before or in the front of. We are taught that all Chapter rooms should be situated due East and West. This is because after Moses safely conducted the Children of Israel through the Red Sea, he there, by Divine command, erected a Tabernacle, situated due East and West in order perpetuate the remembrance of the mighty East wind by which this miracle of deliverance was wrought, and also that the rays of the rising sun might shine through the East end and light up the Altar, or Holy of Holys situated in the opposite end. The East has long been considered the source of LIGHT, WISDOM, AUTHORITY AND INFORMATION. The sun has its appearance in the East and this gave rise to the thought that East is the source of all good. In our Chapter that station in the East is the highest honor within the gift of the Chapter.

**THE NORTH**--The North has long been called the place of darkness, where travelers are guided only by the Northern Star. The initiate enters a darkened Chapter room and is placed in a position facing the NORTH, symbolizing the candidate being in darkness as to what will be made known to them here.

**THE SOUTH**--from the South we get the symbol of NEW LIFE, or the first breath of spring. So it is, that the conductress, representing the station of the South leads the candidates through the ceremony of initiation introducing them to the lessons of our Order.

**THE WEST**--The West is the farewell of the sun, the close of the day. Thus in the closing of the Chapter the Worthy Matron requests a response from the West.

**THE LABYRINTH**--The meaning of LABYRINTH is MANY LANES. The first labyrinth was built by a famous Athenian architect, who was directed to build an abode for a monster out of which he could not find his way. Thus a building of winding passages was designed into which none dared to venture without a guide. The Labyrinth of the Star is symbolic of the journey of life, and its devious pathways and turnings, and we too need a guide to safely lead us through. No candidate is to travel the Labyrinth of our Star without being escorted. Symbolic in our journey of life we should always be ready to walk by the side of each other.

**THE ALTAR**--With reverence we approach the ALTAR, which symbolizes for us the UNIVERSAL MIND, the ALL in ALL as present in the heart of every human being. The ALTAR represents the Seat of Power. The open Bible is the WORD OF GOD and the Light of the World. That is why it is forbidden to pass between it and the East. It is Holy Ground. The Altar is a Holy Thing with the open Bible upon it. We should always back out of the Labyrinth, symbolizing not turning our back on the ALTAR or the BIBLE.

The ruling of no hats in the Chapter room when Chapter is in session symbolizes nothing between you and your GOD.  
The ruling of no gloves being worn in the Chapter room when Chapter is in session symbolizes nothing between you and your sisters and brothers.

Our Chapter rooms should be heated enough so outside wraps are not needed for comfort symbolizing the warmth of our FRIENDSHIP in our Chapter.

Compiled by Ruth Gay, P.M.  
Nitosis Chapter, 247  
Asotin

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