



Chichester Chapter of Improvement

Lesson / Tutorial 2. The Platonic Bodies. (26th April 2025)

By the end of this lesson / tutorial the student Companion will be able to:

- Understand the significance of the Platonic Bodies.
- Investigate and analyse the phrase, “Consider the meaning of your actions when in a state of darkness”.
- Investigate and analyse the phrase, “Consider the vision revealed to you when you were restored to light”.

Recommended Ritual: Ceremony of ‘Exaltation’, part 1, up to candidate’s first retirement from the Chapter.

Distance Learning:

Mentors Notes: <https://thesquaremagazine.com/mentorsnotes/>

Solomon: <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

Pre-lesson reading/audio:

‘Sacred Geometry and the Royal Arch Jewell’.

Educator 1.

Review Lesson 1.

BriefHistory.

In Lesson 1 we discovered that after the Great Fire of London an immense number of stonemasons were employed in rebuilding the city. Hence a number of ‘operative’ Lodges were formed to accommodate them. As such non – stonemasons (Accepted or Speculative Masons) were also included in their number within the Lodges. Some 30 years later the city was almost rebuilt and operative stonemasons left to find work elsewhere leaving fewer Lodges for the ‘Speculative’ Masons to congregate and so it went into decline.

In the early 1700’s there was an initiative to bolster the number of ‘Speculative’ Masons and so four Lodges came together to form the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster later to be known as the Grand Lodge of England.



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Anderson, Desagulier and others wanted to change the then ritual of two Degrees by adding a third. These degrees were to represent man's development. The moral man, the educated man and the enlightened man or man of faith. The Third Degree being in two parts, Master Mason and Royal Arch Mason. The writers looked at the Old Testament for its allegory and chose the 'building of a nation' from the Book of Exodus as its vehicle.

And so we have our 'Grand Originals' and the story of the three Temples which all come together to form the two parts of the Third Degree. The Hiram story forms the first part of the Third Degree and revolves around the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem where the 'Word' is lost. The second part is about Moses finding 'enlightenment' and the 'Word' and sharing the Word with his people in the first Temple in the wilderness of Sinai. The second part goes onto the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the rediscovery of the 'Word' and all that it means.

Lesson 2

Previous to this lesson I sent to you a 'paper' and audio clip on '*Sacred Geometry and the Royal Arch Jewell*', which I hope you had time to read or listen to as it gives an explanation of the Platonic Solids which we are going to touch on today.

In today's lesson we will:

- **Investigate and analyse the phrase, "Consider the meaning of your actions when in a state of darkness".**
- **Investigate and analyse the phrase, "Consider the vision revealed to you when you were restored to light".**
- **Understand the significance of the Platonic Bodies.**

Let us break down those actions whilst in a state of 'Darkness'.

1. You are met at the door of the Chapter Room by the Janitor who summons Scribe Nehemiah to test you. Scribe Nehemiah the man who was sent to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Jerusalem representing your faith.
You gave proof that you were a Master Mason, a man who has developed as a moral, educated and reflective man that is seeking 'enlightenment', as Moses found enlightenment at the foot of



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Mount Horeb in the wilderness of Sinai. Nehemiah tests you to see whether or not you are qualified to take that final step, to discover that which had been lost to you.

What has been lost to you?

Where do you hope to find it?

You are given a position where, as a Master Mason, you cannot fail to adhere to. If you do fail to adhere to that position you will not receive 'enlightenment'.

2. You are given the Passwords. Words that are substituted for the original as, in days gone past, only a Past Master of the Craft was eligible to enter the Holy Royal Arch.
3. You entered the Chapter in a state of darkness seeking light and were guided by the Principle Sojourner. Note the mode of your preparation, slip shod and blindfolded. Slip shod to represent the bare feet Moses was ordered to be when standing on sacred ground before his God, and in darkness searching for the light. The Principle Sojourner guided you through the wilderness as Moses was guided by his God. You were taken to a vaulted chamber where you made a discovery. We will examine the vaulted chamber in a future lesson.

You found a manuscript containing the first written words of God. *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light': and there was light".* A discovery that led you to your 'enlightenment' as Moses was 'enlightened' by God appearing from a burning bush and giving him the Laws on 'how to live a virtuous life'. The Ten Commandments.

When restored to light.

4. The vision when you were restored to 'Light' represents your 'enlightenment' and replicates the time that Moses received from



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God His Laws whilst He appeared in the 'burning bush'. A profound moment when you discover the very essence of your being. An altar surrounded by fire on which is placed a plate of gold and, according to Tobias Churton in his book 'The Lost Pillars of Enoch', the symbolism of a square, the four corners representing the four platonic bodies of fire, air, earth and water; the circle representing the universe, without beginning or ending, the fifth platonic element and a triangle representing the Christian 'Trinity' on which the Word is found. Of course the Symbolic and Mystical lectures will go more deeply into the inscriptions but the overall effect is to replicate Moses experience at the foot of Mount Horeb in the wilderness of Sinai.

5. Behind the altar is a triangle within which is the VSL. The VSL being the guide to your faith. The triangle being a 'Sacred' symbol represents access to a 'higher knowledge' and according to Greek philosophy the three sides represent light, darkness and time, making it the essence of creation. Later in the Mystical Lecture an explanation is given on what the **scepters** forming the triangle represent.
6. Unseen and from behind the triangle words are spoken from the three Principles as if a haunting voice is coming from the darkness to explain what has gone before and what is yet to come. What has gone before – Craft Masonry, the development of man, and what is yet to come Royal Arch Masonry and man discovering his faith. Like God's words coming out of the fire at Mount Horeb.
7. The banners that form a triangle leading to the altar have Scribe Ezra and Scribe Nehemiah at its head in their white surpluses which gives recognition to the ceremony of 'Passing the Veils' the final veil being white and the entrance to God's presence the 'Holy of Holies'. The twelve banners forming the triangle in this instance of 'enlightenment' esoterically represent the twelve signs of the Zodiac and their heavenly influence as a guide on your journey to find the 'Light'.



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8. As you lower your eyes you see in front of the altar the five platonic solids representing, fire, air, earth, water and the universe. These solids, are explained in the piece of scripture which was read; “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth and the earth was without form and void,.....” It is these elements that when conjoined represents the creation all things. Their collective meaning is the form and shape of the universe. Individually their meaning is:

- A. **Tetrahedron** (Fire) – the energetic force that burns away impurity igniting sparks of virtue. It encourages the Mason to uphold zeal for truth and righteousness.
- B. **Octahedron** (Air) – the breath of life, sustaining life and gives animation to the body. It gives the lesson of communication and the spread of sacred knowledge
- C. **Hexahedron or Cube** (Earth) – a solid and unchanging form which is tied to our mortal nature. It stands for integrity and the foundational virtues upon which one’s life should be built.
- D. **Icosahedron** (Water) – with qualities of fluidity and adaptability to cleans and refresh. Its lesson is of purity, renewal and emotional equilibrium encouraging adaptability in the face of change.
- E. **Dodecahedron** (Spirit or Aether) – with 12 pentagonal faces linked by Plato to the heavens and the 12 zodiac signs thus a symbol of the cosmos as a whole. It represents the unity of the physical and spiritual, inculcating those Masonic virtues of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Inscribed on the Royal Arch Jewell, the design of which revolves around the platonic solids, are the words “Si talia jungere possis sit tibi scire satis” – *“If though canst comprehend these things, though knowest enough”*



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9. To the right are the sword and trowel that are used to build and protect our faith. Opposite and on the left side are the VSL, Square and Compasses, the three Great Emblematical Lights which gave us the strength to endure all things.
10. The Working Tools of a Royal Arch Mason stand between them, the Crow, the Pick and the Shovel. The crow reminds us that it is our sacred duty to lift from our minds the heavy weight of passions and prejudices which incumber our progress towards virtue. The Pick loosens the hold which long habits of sin and folly have had upon our disposition. The Shovel removes the rubbish of vice and ignorance which prevents us from beholding that eternal foundation of truth and wisdom upon which we are to erect the spiritual and moral temple of our second life, our second temple. A Temple built even stronger than the first having learnt from that which became missing or lost when Hiram was killed and the first Temple destroyed.
11. As we look to our feet we see the result of the work we had to do in order to see that bright light. The journey and the hardship we faced with our Companions for it is not a journey that we completed alone. The importance of losing our ego, and with humility receive the Word of God and 'enlightenment'. Our feet are slipshod for God said from the burning bush unto Moses "Put off thy shoes from thy feet as the place where you are standing is holy ground."
12. And so we have before us the journey, following Moses's path to find the centre of his faith and 'enlightenment', along with representatives of Aholiab and Bezaleel, for the journey you undertake is not taken alone. We have the altar which was part of the Second Temple, the first at Jerusalem, which was destroyed, with the initials of the second of the 'Grand Originals', Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre and Hiram Abiff inscribed on the altar. And the voices from behind the triangle telling you about the past and informing you what is in store for you in the future. Zerubbabel prince of the people, Haggai the prophet and Joshua the high priest, the third set of the 'Grand Originals'.



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As you see from this lesson the first part of the ritual initially follows the path of the first of the Grand Originals, finding 'enlightenment and the 'Word', as they travel to Jerusalem where the Second Temple is built, the First Temple being the Tabernacle housing the ark of the covenant. Whilst at Jerusalem the Sojourners find amidst the rubble of the second Temple, which is symbolized by the Craft Degrees, the lost secret. The third Temple, the second at Jerusalem, is then built after rediscovering the essence of their faith. Built on the site of the first, better and stronger than the first.

Now take a pause and think to yourselves what the writers of the Third Degree Parts I and II had in mind.

Anderson, Desagulier, Montagu and Richmond were all men of very strong religious convictions. All were members of the Royal Society and friends of Isaac Newton who was the Society's president from 1701 until his death in 1727. Newton studied the scriptures as avidly as mathematics and astronomy.

Newton believed that Pythagoras and Plato had discovered the true 'system of the world', that of natural philosophy and true religion. He was anti-Trinitarianism but believed fervently in God. The early 18th century academics were preaching 'enlightenment, scientific revolution and tolerance' which became the motto of 18th century Freemason, not 'brotherly love, relief and truth'. Newton saw himself as both a prophet and a reformer. As we look into the two parts of the third degree we can see such influence over the writers, whether they be members of the Horn Tavern Lodge or elsewhere. It is not known whether Newton was a Freemason but, in 1861, the founders of the Cambridge University's Lodge named it Isaac Newton University Lodge.

It is my belief that the writers of the Third Degree parts I & II were members of the Horn Tavern Lodge, a very influential Lodge in Palace Yard next to Parliament. Their influence spread to France and America. I would suggest France through Desagulier and Richmond and America through Montagu. Their belief in the coming together of science and religion is evident in the Royal Arch ceremony with the 'Grand Originals' story aligning with the scientific theories of the creation of all things and the 'Word'. What do you think?



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Some sources say that the guiding of the blindfolded candidate by the P.S. relates to being guided over the rubble of the destroyed building of the first Temple at Jerusalem. Guided to the spot where they start to clear away the rubble and make their discovery.

That is the beauty of esoteric Freemasonry. A story or allegory is told and each of us looks at it from a different perspective, and takes a different view point. Who is right and who is wrong? Neither, as it is a personal journey of discovery. A personal journey, not a lone journey, to enlightenment. It is taken with others seeking the same truth but not always on the same path.

Educator 2

Recommended Ritual: Ceremony of 'Exaltation', part 1, up to candidate's first retirement from the Chapter.

Under the direction of Educator 2 (Standards and Performance Tutor)

Summary Given by an educator..

Distance Learning:

Mentors Notes: <https://thesquaremagazine.com/mentorsnotes/>

Solomon: <https://solomon.ugle.org.uk>