

Remarkable Symbolism

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

MSCNY Article No. 46



In all my travels, I have yet to see a Masonic symbol arrangement as beautiful and remarkable as that shown here on the left. It was likely created many years ago by either a Masonic artist who really knew Freemasonry, or worked under the direction of a Masonic scholar. I created the color version shown on the right, and added the Masonic Creed in an oval to provide a complete “Masonic Message.”

The symbolism will be very apparent to Freemasons who will reflect on our ritual as he sees the following components:

1. Sheaf of Biblical corn
2. Circle

3. Star-decked heaven
4. Moon and Sun (both with faces)
5. Triangle modified to become a level, which uses a plumb line
6. Compasses (correctly placed in the Master Mason’s Degree)
7. All-seeing eye (used in place of the letter “G” to give the double meaning that the “eyes of the world” are upon us and we must be ever vigilant in our conduct)
8. Square – a proper stone mason’s square rather than a carpenter’s square

9. Acacia (positioned in the West, or West of the Temple because that is where Hiram Abiff was buried and a sprig of acacia used to mark his grave.
10. Trowel
11. Setting maul (represents the inevitability of death)
12. Square figure (background) – symbol of the earth, and also the four points of a compass (North, South, East and West). In a lodge setting (perhaps as a carpet), the tip of the triangle would point East. The Moon would be in the North (place of darkness) and the Sun in the south

This type of Masonic symbolism is truly remarkable because one could essentially write a book on what it represents. From what I can see, it is far more intricate and emphatic than that of any other fraternal body; even religious denominations. In many ways, it is a testimony to the dedication of early Freemasons. They were so enthralled with the lessons of Freemasonry that they created what I consider perfect symbolic representations.

Of course, there are people who apply sinister meanings to Masonic symbolism, due to ignorance. There is nothing sinister in Freemasonry—there never was, and never will be. If there were, we would not have Masonic Philately. Would thousands of the world’s most prominent men join the Order if it were not totally in keeping with morality?

The Masonic Creed in my color version of the artwork simply extends the symbolism to include what Freemasonry stands for. We are often asked by outsiders, “What do Freemasons do?” This is actually a tough question because it is not what we do that is important, it is what we stand for. We do all the things other fraternal organizations do—perform a ritual, socialize, do charity work, support one another and so forth. Simply answering the question with these “activities” does not provide a suitable explanation. Freemasons unite themselves in a common cause to bring about a better world based on our Creed. It is this Creed that results in democracy—freedom, liberty, equality and the pursuit of happiness.

Freemasonry was the main ingredient in bringing about democracy. The United States led the way and other countries “saw that it was good” and followed suit. Although we can point to all sorts of “infractions” to the Creed in the course of history, the fact remains that what was inculcated by our ancient brethren is just as valid.

One might ask, “Where does religion stand in all of this?” Other than belief in a Supreme Being, Freemasonry does not interfere in one’s religious convictions. It is beyond doubt that the Bible (both New and Old Testaments) is primarily the basis of the Masonic Creed. This, however, does not preclude pure common sense. What the Creed dictates is equally applicable to everyone, be they religious or non-religious.

In 1969, this US stamp showed our planet from a perspective never before seen since it came into existence. Those of us who were around at the time had a bit of an awakening—a strange and perhaps lonely feeling that this is all of what we have. The single biggest detriment to the continued existence of our planet as we know it has been our inability to meet on the level and act upon the square on a world-wide basis. Our ancient brethren provided a key to the solution by providing the Masonic Creed without “individual” religious restrictions.

