

**The Ancient Root of the Spirit of Freemasonry by RW Bro. V. G. Popow
Presentation to Heritage Lodge of Research, Toronto, January 30/02**

Introduction-

I'm honoured to be here this evening to honour and celebrate your Lodge's anniversary and its contribution to Masonic society within this province and abroad. When Bro. Ralph asked if I could visit and provide a presentation I really had to think what brethren might find of interest. You like us at the Manitoba Masonic Study Group have heard the usual diatribe on Masonic personalities, regalia, ritual and its importance, history of this or that Lodge. What I thought I might do, as is my usual style, is present to you something very broad and sweeping, a little controversial, and something which might cause you to think as perhaps you never might have before. I'm certainly no authority on the Craft, not a scholar, but simply one who likes to ponder the meaning and importance of things because, quite simply, I believe as Masons and as fully capable human beings- we are here to extend the bounds of our own and our fraternities knowledge. Without knowledge of 'who we are and whence we came' I believe our society may founder even more than it has¹ and the original mystique of what may have been the essence of Freemasonry may be lost forever.

The Ancient Mysteries- Freemasonry's Original Inspiration

"To the man whose mind has been moulded
to virtue and science, nature presents one great
and useful lesson more, the knowledge of himself."

Third Degree, York Rite

I believe the ancient initiatory dramas of the Craft were formulated or inspired by the ancient Pagan Mysteries. Our early brethren fashioned our ritual to impress upon the neophyte morals or doctrines that would serve to inform and elevate the human spirit and hence improve society². Thus I am not speaking of Freemasonry in terms of its suspected evolution³ but its potential as a vehicle for self-improvement.⁴ I look upon Freemasonry's

¹ Increased pressures dominate Freemasonry in making it more appealing to younger ('X' or 'Y' for example) generations although the rulers of the Craft fail to acknowledge whole scale post industrial societal and cultural changes that makes our society increasing irrelevant; The increasing pervasive qualities of 'service organization' oriented mentality pervading the Craft (Masonry never was a service club); The severance of The Noble Shrine from the Masonic family (where finance, membership and the functioning of hospitals becomes more important than its original raison d'être).

² Mahatma Gandhi enlightened statement "inner reform must precede outer or civic reform" reflects the need for self improvement before society may be the beneficiary thus Freemasonry as an initiatory society rooted in morals improving its membership can only result in an improved community.

³ Who truly knows where Freemasonry comes from? The most common answer is that it is an outgrowth of the operative building guilds and societies. It was certainly influenced by the general openness that characterized the 18th century Age of Enlightenment when the intelligentsia of society sought to explore ideas and expand the realms of science and politics (for more on this read *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment* by scholar Dame Francis Yates). Certainly remnants of ancient and underground Hermetic philosophies popular in the Italian Renaissance passed to the 'Christian Unions' of Germany and the Rosicrucian movements entered into the Craft. Another influence was certainly the politics of England and Scotland (a great source *The Origins of Freemasonry* by Prof. David Stevenson). Another, the ruin of the Order of Knights Templars. And what of alternative Johannean Church teachings which sought to keep alive more Gnostic spiritual teachings? I believe it is a combination of many sources. What is seriously needed in Freemasonry today is akin to the sought after unified theory of physics, a *collective* mosaic that embraces the several streams of influence. This no doubt challenges even the most serious researcher of Freemasonry.

⁴ Self-improvement as opposed to self-aggrandizement- an unfortunate feature within the Craft today characterized by a desire for titles, offices and decorations. Two prominent

original essence, as being one that promoted self-discovery and perhaps it was this very quality that attracted the intelligentsia of former millennia.⁵ What does making a good man better mean? Is that philosophy a central tenet of our Lodges and organization? If it were then I would think that there would be a much higher emphasis on education and the allotment of resources to a supportive infrastructure⁶ than there currently is. Again, I believe that a whole scale 'service club' mentality has become pervasive within our Craft and it is time that emphasis be made to our Craft as being a Society with secrets that is elegant, with a particular mystique devoted to self-improvement in its most classical sense.

The idea of self-knowledge is central to the purpose of the ancient Mysteries. The Temple of Apollo at Delphi had inscribed '*Gnothi Seauton*' or 'Know thy self.' The Gnosis⁷ or

quotations, which I employ: One, from prominent Masonic scholar and Quatuor Coronati member VW Bro. Rev. Neville Cryer from *Speculation*, "*What Freemasonry is all About!*" (1995 North American Lecture Tour collected papers). He wrote that Freemasonry was not about charity, though it was an activity; not about fraternity, that is dinners, guests, and socializing, though that too was prevalent and important. It was not a 'code of life,' a religion or a replacement for religion, though that morality is certainly pervasive through its ritual. Bro. Cryer described "Freemasonry as a heartfelt sharing, by men who have their own personal religious and moral convictions, of certain insights into the nature of existence. It can only be communicated by ancient and agreed formulae, that require careful memorization and constant meditation." He further commented that Freemasonry was designed to "form and stimulate the minds and hearts of men." And two, from the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, R.W.Bro. Michael W. Walker, in *Freemasonry in Society- Today and Tomorrow* (AQC Vol. 110, 1997, pp.107) wrote: "the purpose of Masonry is 'self-improvement'- not in the material sense, but in the intellectual, moral and philosophic sense of developing the whole persona and psyche so as, in the beautiful and emotive language of the ritual, 'to fit ourselves to take our places, as living stones, in that great spiritual building, not made by hands, eternal in the Heavens."

⁵ The connection between Freemasonry, various societies and disciplines like Rosicrucianism, Hermeticism and alchemy have become clearer thanks to the research by Prof. of Renaissance studies Francis Yates (*The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*) and a recent book published in 1984 by author Joy Hancox. Titled the *Byrom Collection* the book details a study of a collection of over 500 papers and geometrical representations by John Byrom (1691-1763). The importance of the Byrom collection is the noted relationship between subjects like sacred geometry and architecture, the Kabbalah, Masonic, Hermetic, and alchemical symbolism and individuals- the cream of the scientific and intellectual establishment of the period- who were preoccupied with the aforementioned subject matter. Byrom was a leading figure in the Jacobite movement, a fellow of the Royal Society and a Freemason. He was also a member of the 'Cabala Club,' known as the Sun Club which met at a building in St. Paul's Churchyard, interestingly the home to one of the four founding Lodges of the Grand Lodge of London. Byrom's work draws from all subjects mentioned above and from individuals including Rosicrucians John Dee (whom Byrom was related to by marriage), Robert Fludd, and scientist Robert Boyle.

⁶ How much of the actual budget of any Canadian provincial Grand Lodge goes to 'value adding activities' with respect to: Facilities renovation (to contemporise our library facilities); Book, periodical purchase and subscription; communication and relations; products (lapel pin, CD & videotape sale and rental, papers), service generation (book ordering and sales, speakers- both Masonic and non-Masonic authors and essayists, presenters); or archival enhancement (protecting our past). Instead Grand Lodges and Lodges typically spend time and energy *externally*, on charitable efforts to the expense of their own internal facilities improvement and services.

⁷ Gnosis- The goal of Gnostic spirituality is Gnosis or Knowledge of Truth. The word 'Gnostic' or 'Knower' was used in different languages, cultures and individuals who have realized Gnosis or achieved *enlightenment* and are often referred to as Knowers: *Gnostikoi* (Pagan/Christian), *Arifs* (Muslim), *Gnanis* (Hindu), or *Buddhas* (Buddhist).

Gnostics interpreted stories and teachings of their spiritual tradition as signposts beyond words altogether to the mystical experience of the ineffable mystery as opposed to literalists who believed that their scriptures were actually the words of God and take the moral teachings and initiation myths as factual history. Gnostics saw themselves as being on a

knowledge which initiates of the Mysteries sought and taught was knowledge of self. The Gnostic *Book of Thomas* stated:

“Whoever has not known himself has known nothing, but he who has known himself has at the same time already achieved Gnosis about the depth of all things.”

This idea is extremely ancient and we may find interesting connections between our own ritual and that of the ancient Pagan⁸ Mysteries of Greece, Egypt, and Persia. The ancient Mysteries existed for the purpose of satisfying the desire of those who wished to know the nature of themselves and of their creator, their purpose in life, and what might come after life. Plato said that the object of the Mysteries was to re-establish the soul in its primitive purity, and to that state which it had lost. Clement of Alexandria stated that “what was taught in the Mysteries concerned the universe, and was the completion and perfection of all instruction; wherein things were seen as they were, and nature and her works were made known.” Albert Pike wrote of the Mysteries in *Morals and Dogmas* : “Nature is as free from dogmatism as from tyranny; and the earliest instructors of mankind not only adopted her lessons, but as far possible adhered to her method of imparting them. They attempted to reach understanding through the eye; and the greater part of all religious teaching was conveyed through this ancient and most impressive mode of ‘exhibition’ or demonstration. The Mysteries were sacred drama [not unlike those dramas of Craft Lodge, Scottish Rite, and the Holy Royal Arch] and exhibiting some legend significant of nature’s change, of the visible Universe in

spiritual journey of personal transformation as opposed to literalists who saw themselves as fulfilling a divine obligation to practice particular religious custom as part of their national or cultural identity. Gnostics wished to free themselves from the limitations of their personal and cultural identity and experience the oneness of things.

⁸ “Pagan was originally a derogatory term meaning country dweller, used by Christians to imply that the spirituality of the ancients was some primitive rural superstition. But this was not true. Paganism was the spirituality which inspired the unequalled magnificence of the Giza pyramids, the exquisite architecture of the Parthenon, the legendary sculptures of Phideas, the powerful plays of Euripides and Sophocles, and the sublime philosophy of Socrates and Plato. Pagan civilization built vast libraries to house hundreds of thousands of works of literary and scientific genius. It’s natural philosophers speculated that human beings had evolved from animals. Its astronomers knew the earth was a sphere, which, along with the planets, revolves around the sun. They had even estimated its circumference to within one degree of accuracy. The ancient Pagan world sustained a population not matched again in Europe until the eighteenth century. In Greece, Pagan culture gave birth to the concepts of democracy, rational philosophy, public theatres, theatre and the Olympic Games, creating a blueprint for the modern world. What was the spirituality that inspired these momentous cultural achievements?

Most people associate Paganism with either rustic witchcraft or the myths of the gods of Olympus as recorded by Hesiod and Homer. Pagan spirituality did indeed embrace both. The country people practised their traditional shamanic nature worship to maintain the fertility of the land and the city authorities propped up formal state religions, such as the worship of the Olympian gods, to maintain the power of the status quo.

It was, however, a third, more mystical, expression of the Pagan spirit that inspired the great minds of the ancient world. The thinkers, artists, and innovators of antiquity were initiates of various religions known as the Mysteries. These remarkable men and women held the Mysteries to be the heart and soul of their culture. The Greek historian Zosimos writes that without the Mysteries “life for the Greeks would be unliveable” for the “sacred Mysteries hold the whole human race together.” The eminent Roman statesman Cicero enthuses: “These Mysteries have brought us from rustic savagery to a cultivated and refined civilization. The rites of the Mysteries are called ‘initiations’ and in truth we have learned from them the first principles of life. We have gained the understanding not only to live happily [sounds strikingly similar to Freemasonic doctrine] but also to die with better hope.” *The Jesus Mysteries*, pp.15-16.

which the divinity is revealed, and whose import was in many respects as open to the Pagan, as to the Christian.”⁹

The Mysteries demanded complete adherence to silence among its adherents. This demand was taken seriously in the Eleusinian Mysteries as failure to keep vows resulted in death. For this reason very little direct information exists concerning details of the Mysteries- the ritual, passwords, symbols and text. However a few clues do exist. Initiate into the Mysteries of Isis, Lucius Apuleius of Madaura stated: “...listen, and believe that what you hear is true. I approached the very edge of death and stood upon Proserpine’s doorstep, I returned home travelling through all the elements; in the middle of the night I saw the sun, a bright shining and glittering light; I entered the presence of the gods of the lower-world and the gods of the upper-world and adored them from close by.”¹⁰ “His request for us to listen has a deeper meaning. The Latin word *audi*, translated as ‘listen’ has the further meaning of ‘to learn’ or ‘understand.’ Apuleius is challenging us to listen behind the words and symbolism to know the true meaning of this short ‘exposure.’ He traveled to the gates of death- Proserpine (in Greek, Persephone) was the wife of Hades, king of the Underworld. There in the middle of the night, he experienced the bright mystical light; he was humble in the presence of Divinity. Born again, he celebrated the next day as his birthday by a banquet with his friends.”¹¹

“Blest is the happy man
Who knows the Mysteries the gods ordain,
And sanctifies his life,
Joins soul with soul in mystic unity,
And, by due ritual made pure,
Enters the ecstasy of mountain solitudes,
Who observes the mystic rites,
Made lawful by the Great Mother;
Who crowns his head with ivy,
And shakes his wand in worship of Dionysus.”

Euripides

A building unearthed in Pompeii, an initiatory temple called *Villa des Mysteres* is described as having: “two columns in front, and the walls were decorated with interlaced triangles, the constant badge of the Masons. Upon a pedestal in the room was found a tracing board of inlaid mosaic. In the center is a skull with a level and plumbline and other symbolic designs”.¹² Masonic Scholar and Past Master of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge of research in London, the late Bro. C. N. Batham, makes mention of this temple and the initiatory rights and practices of the time: “Candidates were required to identify themselves with the Divine by means of signs and mystical ceremonies, of which the last was the death, rebirth and spiritual renovation in intimate communion with the Divine. The Initiate became one with the Almighty and with Him passed from sadness to joy, from death to resurrection, the eternal drama of the traditional initiation ceremony.”¹³

“Many of the ideas of the Christians have been expressed better- and earlier – by the Greeks, behind these views is an ancient doctrine that has existed from the beginning.”

Celsus

It is also interesting to note that the Mysteries had their influence upon early Christianity as we find there were teachings which were both exoteric for the masses and esoteric for those

⁹ *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, by Albert Pike, pp. 355

¹⁰ *Metamorphoses* translated by Michael Baigent.

¹¹ *The Mysteries* by Michael Baigent, *Freemasonry Today*, Issue 8, Spring 1999, pp.34-35.

¹² *The Builder*, pages 240-241, August 1927

¹³ *More About The Compagnonnage* by C.N. Batham, *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* Vol.19, pages 242-246.

who had become initiated. The Apostolic Constitutions attributed to Clemens, Bishop of Rome describes the early church and said: “These regulations must on no account be communicated to all sorts of persons, because of the Mysteries contained in them.” St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine speak of initiation quite frequently and St. Ambrose writes: “to those who are initiated; and initiation was not merely baptism, or admission into the church, but referred to initiation into the Mysteries.” St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, born 347 and died in 430 wrote: “Having dismissed the Catechumens, we have retained you only to be our hearers; because, besides those things which belong to all Christians in common, we are now to discourse to you of sublime Mysteries, which none are qualified to hear, but those who, by the Master’s favour, are made partakers of them....To have taught them openly, would have been to betray them.” And he refers to the Ark of the Covenant and said it signified a Mystery, or secret of God. Theodoret, Bishop of Cyropolis in Syria, born in 393 writes: “Answer me, if you please, in mystical or obscure terms: for perhaps there are some persons present who are not initiated into the Mysteries.” We find Jesus the Nazarene himself indicating that esoteric¹⁴ knowledge must be withheld from the masses who are not initiated. “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables; so that they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand;...” (Mark 4:11,12). Matthew too speaks that when Jesus spoke in public, he spoke only in parables; when his disciples asked the reason, he replied: “To you it has been given to know the secrets (*mysteria*, literally, mysteries) of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.” And very much like speculative Freemasons we find that the early Christians had means by which to recognize themselves in public. Minucius Felix, an eminent lawyer of Rome, c. 212 wrote of Christianity: “Many of them [the Christians] know each other by tokens and signs and they form a friendship with each other¹⁵, almost before they become acquainted.” Clearly, the so called Pagan [ancient Egyptian, Greek, Persian] and Hebrew¹⁶ Mysteries gave form to early Christianity much the same as it influenced the much later generations of secret societies which sprang up throughout Western Europe.

St. Paul speaks of God speaking “divine Mysteries in the Spirit.” Baptism and Eucharist are referred to as “Mysteries.” The Christian philosopher Origen calls Christianity the *telete*, meaning “the initiation.” The writings of the early Church father Clement of Alexandria are full of terminology taken directly from the language of the Pagan Mysteries. He writes of the

¹⁴ Esoteric- based on ‘Eso’ meaning ‘inside.’

¹⁵ The Christian sentiment of brotherly love was also a feature of the ancient Mysteries six centuries before there were any Christians. Initiates at Eleusis were called *adelphoi* meaning brothers. A *philadelphian* was someone who practised “brotherly love.” The followers of Mithras were called brothers. Adherents to the Mysteries of Jupiter Dolichenus were *fratres carissimi*, or “most loving brothers” *The Jesus Mysteries* pp.67.

¹⁶ Philo (20 BCE-40 CE) a respected Jewish leader and famous Jewish philosopher. Devoted to his own native Judaism he was also Hellenized and ‘obsessed with Pagan philosophy.’ Among the ancients he revered Pythagoras and his follower Plato whom he called “the great” and “the most sacred.” The Christian philosopher Clement of Alexandria refers to Philo as “the Pythagoras.” Like all followers of Pythagoras Philo was well-versed in music, geometry and astrology as well as Greek literature from every age. As well, like all Pythagoreans he was immersed in the mysticism of the Pagan Mysteries.

“Philo uses what he calls ‘the method of the mysteries’ to reveal Jewish scriptures as allegories encoding secret spiritual teachings. He interprets the ‘historical’ story of Moses and the Exodus as a mystical metaphor for the path that leads through this world to God.”

“Philo did not only adopt the philosophy of the Mysteries, but claimed to be an initiate himself– but not of the Pagan Mysteries, however. He encouraged Jews not to participate in Pagan initiations, as they had their own specifically Jewish Mysteries: The Mysteries of Moses! According to Philo, Moses was the great initiator, a ‘hierophant of the ritual and teacher of divine things.’ Philo also calls himself a hierophant and initiator in the Jewish Mysteries. He writes of ‘teaching initiation to those initiates worthy of the most sacred initiations.’ As in the Pagan Mysteries, his initiates formed a secret mystical sect and were required to be morally pure. “As in the Pagan Mysteries, they were sworn to never reveal the ‘veritably sacred Mysteries’ to the uninitiated, lest the ignorant should misrepresent what they did not understand and in so doing expose the Mysteries to the ridicule of the vulgar.” Ibid pp. 182-184.

Christian revelation as “the holy Mysteries.” , the ‘divine secrets’, ‘the secret Logos,’ ‘the mysteries of the Logos.’ For Clement Jesus was the “teacher of the divine mysteries.” Clement further states “I am become holy while I am being initiated.” Clement tells us that in early Christianity there were likewise Lesser Mysteries for beginners on the spiritual path and Greater Mysteries which were a secret higher knowledge, which led to full ‘initiation.’ ‘The secret traditions of true Gnosis,’ he explains, had been transmitted “to a small number, by a succession of masters, and not in writing.” “According to Clement [of Alexandria-b.150-d.215 CE, regarded as a literalist Christian and beatified by the Roman Church], Mark did not preach only the familiar gospel in the New Testament, but three different gospels suitable for three different levels of initiation. *The New Testament Gospel of Mark* contains ‘thoughts suitable for those who were being perfected or ‘initiated.’ Clement records that Mark had written both of these gospels in Alexandria, where they were still kept. The teachings of *The Secret Gospel of Mark* were regarded as so secret that Clement advises one of his students that its existence should be denied, ‘even under oath,’ for ‘not all true things are to be said to all men’ and ‘the light of the truth should be hidden from those who are mentally blind.’ According to Clement, *The Secret Gospel* recorded ‘things suitable to whatever makes progress towards Gnosis.’ The fragments that remain of *The Secret Gospel of Mark* illuminate the meaning of some otherwise bizarre passages in the *New Testament*. They include an account of Jesus raising a young man from the dead. Scholars have speculated that this is an early version of the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead in the *Gospel of John*. In the *Secret Gospel* this story is immediately followed by the initiation of the risen young man. For the Gnostics being raised from the dead is clearly an allegory for spiritual rebirth through initiation [sound familiar brethren?] This would explain the curious passage in the Gospel of John in which Thomas, rather than offering to go and help Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead as one might expect, instead suggests to the disciples, ‘Let us also go and die with him!’ In the *Secret Gospel of Mark*, the youth about to be initiated comes to Jesus wearing only a linen cloth over his naked body. That night, we are told, ‘Jesus taught him the Mystery of the Kingdom of God.’ This illuminates another bizarre incident in the Gospel of Mark. After the betrayal and arrest of Jesus at night in the Garden of Gethsemane Mark records: “Among those who followed Jesus was a young man with nothing on but a linen cloth. They tried to seize him, but he slipped out of the linen cloth and ran away naked.” This strange character appears nowhere else in the New Testament. Many readers down the centuries must have wondered about the identity of this naked young man and what he was doing with Jesus and the disciples. The *Secret Gospel* [of Mark] suggests that he was a candidate for initiation.”¹⁷

I believe some elements of our rituals have direct connection to what was represented by the ancient Mysteries. “A common phrase in the ancient Mysteries, often quoted by Plato, was *Soma sema*, “the body is a tomb.” Thus importance on the physical body and the senses were to be subsumed by contemplation of the unseen- the spiritual nature of human beings. The Pagan sage Proclus explained that the “most secret of all initiations” reveals “the spirit in us” as “a veritable image of Dionysus.” A Pagan initiate who achieved Gnosis or self-knowledge realized their identity as an expression of Osiris-Dionysus, the Universal Daemon¹⁸.” “Such an initiate was known as an Osiris or Dionysus.”¹⁹ I am reminded of a common feature in German third degree ritual in which the initiate is asked to gaze upon the Volume of Sacred Law, for there he will find all his answers, it is then that the neophyte finds a mirror placed upon the VSL and he sees an image of himself.

“Let the e...s of m..., which lie before you,
lead you to contemplate your inevitable
destiny, and guide your reflections to that

¹⁷ Ibid pp. 97-98.

¹⁸ “The Pagan Sages taught that every human being has a lower self called the *Eidolon* and an immortal higher-self called the *Daemon*. The *Eidolon* is the embodied self, the physical body, and personality. The *Daemon* is the spirit, the true self, but as a spirit-guide whose job it is to lead them to their spiritual destination. Plato teaches, “We should think of the most authoritative part of the soul as a guardian spirit given by God which lifts us to our heavenly home.” Ibid pp. 101.

¹⁹ Ibid pp. 126.

most interesting of all human studies, the inner meaning of life, the knowledge of yourself.”

*Third Degree, Ceremony of Raising
The Modern Ritual, Scottish Jurisdiction.*

“Observe the dormer window, emblematically admitting the revelation of divine truth; but it is one of the most beautiful, and at the same time one of the most mysterious, doctrines of Masonic symbolism, that the Freemason, whilst always in search of the truth, is destined Never to find it in its entirety. That teaches him the humiliating, But necessary, lesson that the knowledge of the nature of God, and of man’s relations to Him, which knowledge constitutes divine truth, can never be acquired in this life. Such consummation only comes to him, when he has passed through the gateway of death and stands in the court of life, with the full light of revelation upon him.”

*Third Degree, The Modern Ritual,
Scottish Jurisdiction.*

Conclusion

My own view is that Freemasonry, in its current form about 800 years old,²⁰ was inspired by a very much older, indeed spiritual philosophy that sought to improve the individual and hence impact society in a beneficial manner²¹. It is indeed a tragedy that the majority of Masons today have little or no knowledge, or perhaps even interest of the commonalities the Craft has to the ancient rites of the Mysteries.²² It is little wonder that many find Freemasonry simply one organization similar to many others- “a philanthropic organization spending an enormous amount of time and resources on efforts that focus on recruitment and raising funds to give away in order to receive recognition.”²³ But this is a misnomer; Masonry harbours a philosophical doctrine which entrenches past centuries of esoteric wisdom.

²⁰ Harry Carr, *Five Hundred Years of the Craft*.

²¹ As well Operative Masons building with speculative knowledge sought to inspire people by the building of great edifices. Throughout the world from one culture to the next architecture integrated with sacred geometry imbedded with astronomical characteristics provided the world with structures that may have served to inspire transcendence. One may find numerous examples: the Parthenon in Athens or the King’s Chamber of the Giza pyramid whose dimensions reveal the use of the formula phi, to the Kabbalistic ground properties of King’s College Chapel in Cambridge, to the dimensional properties and ratios of William St. Clair’s brilliant Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland and the Notre Dame cathedrals throughout France- the use of sacred geometry and sacred geography is global. The ultimate goal of the understanding and promulgation of Freemasonry is connected to the symbolic treatment of number with its application in structures or geographical features- for the benefit of uplifting the individual and society. As an example, modern historians attribute the unprecedented building program of Cambodian god-King Jayavarman VII (ruled 1181-1219 AD) to megalomania yet his intent may have been more altruistic. “Temple inscriptions tell us that the King was ‘full of deep sympathy for the good of the world’ and that his temples were part of a grand scheme to win the ‘ambrosia of existence’ for ‘all of those who were struggling in the ocean of existence.’ So in fact the temples of Ankor Wat or Ankor Thom may not have been monuments an ego-centric King but rather sacred instruments used to direct the human spirit.”

²² The Mysteries were eventually extinguished as the rise of institutionalized religion requiring belief asserted itself.

²³ MW Bro. Thomas Jackson, Past Grand Master & Grand Secretary of the GL of Pennsylvania and Secretary of the World Masonic Conferences. He recently visited the Manitoba jurisdiction (Sept, 2000) and impressed upon the brethren of the Manitoba Study Group that “Freemasonry was never designed to be a philanthropy.”

Freemasonry may welcome anyone seeking an authentic spiritual experience. To say that Masonry has no secrets is a misunderstanding of its heritage and influences. Freemasonry's metaphorical symbology speaks directly to the inner spirit and it is this quality that is sought in an age of spiritual resurgence. There is a mystique associated with our Craft and it is this –a progressive initiatory revelation that improves the heart, the mind and the spirit that aligns us with our community and with our Creator. This is its great secret and this is its legacy, we cannot and must not disenfranchise ourselves from that.
Thank You Brethren.

God Bless those who seek- Lux E Tenebris IX

Bibliography & Suggested Reading

Access to Western Esotericism by Antoine Faivre
Ancient Mystery Cults by Walter Burkert.
Heavens Mirror by Graham Hancock & Santha Faiia
Jesus and the Lost Goddess –The Secret Teachings of the Original Christians by Timothy Freke & Peter Gandy.
Sacred Geometry by Robert Lawlor
The Byrom Collection-Renaissance Thought, the Royal Society and the Building of the Globe Theatre by Joy Hancox
The Jesus Mysteries- Was the Original Jesus a Pagan God? by Timothy Freke & Peter Gandy
The Nag Hammadi Scrolls Library
The Secret Gospel, the discovery and interpretation of the secret gospel according to Mark by Morton Smith.