

## Number 7

Arturo de Hoyos, in the preface of Albert Pike's book "Esoteric, The Symbolism of Blue Degrees of Freemasonry", says that "Pike suspected that the true "secrets" of Freemasonry lay within its symbolism. By careful, prolonged, and analytical study he began to discern and recognize a natural relationship between symbols and things they symbolized." (p. xxiii), later he cites Albert Pike's statement about the use of symbolism in Masonry extracted from his Lecture on Masonic Symbolism, "The true meanings of a few of the symbols are still known in the Lodges. Those of many others are disused; and those of some, I fear, are lost beyond of recovery." (p. xxvi).

Symbolic Lodges and Scottish Rite complement each other. They are not distinct and separate universes. They are connected by symbolism which is the soul of Masonry. A body will die without its soul. Masonry without symbolism will also die! Symbolic Lodges provide Masons with basic literacy in esoteric knowledge while Superior Degrees aim at helping the Mason to master it. From the first degrees of Masonry, the veils that safeguard Hiram's legend are slowly uncovered. That is a gradual process which occurs due to their mystical and philosophical interpretation. Such process takes time and a lot of reflection. Frequently, an insight happens years later after the initiation to a particular degree.

Masonry seeks to launch knowledge from various sources, such as, Egyptian mysteries, Greek mythology, Essenian initiatic rituals, Jewish Kabala, Christian allegories, as well as from other sciences, such as geometry, and astronomy. Our institution is not very old though its teachings are! The influence of this millenary knowledge in our rituals is clear and unquestionable.

The word rite comes from Latin "ritus" and is the set of formulas, rules, and norms to be observed in the practice of a religious work, and in the development of a cult. They are materialized in a document we call "Ritual".

To be a Mason is to be open to knowledge. He should seek knowledge with the thirst of one who lives in the desert. To be a Mason is to recognize his own limitations and to be courageous enough to defeat them, or at least to try to defeat them.

One of the fascinating themes in Masonry is the numbers. This work is a brief discussion about number 7. Number 7 is present in the Menorah\*, the seven-branched candelabrum. In Solomon's Temple that candelabrum was lit by olive oil. In Exodus 25:31-40, there is a detailed explanation of the seven-branched candelabrum. It also appears in other parts of the Bible such as in Zechariah 4:1-6.

Pythagoras considered number 7 as sacred, perfect and powerful. 7 is the sum of number 3 and number 4. Number 3 is symbolized by a triangle. We can relate it to the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, that is, number 3 represents the spirit. Number 4 is characterized by the square. We can say it is the demonstration of the elements of the physical world - water, air, fire and earth, that is, it stands for the matter. Therefore, seven is the living being that consists of spirit and body.

Number seven is present in many cultures and philosophies,

- Seven are the virtues - Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Justice, Strength, and Temperance;

- Seven are the cardinal sins - Lust, Gluttony, Greed, Sloth, Wrath, Envy, and Pride;
- Seven are the Catholic Church Sacraments - Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and Anointing of the Sick;
- Seven are the Musical Notes - Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, and Ti;
- Seven are the colors of the rainbow - violet, indigo, blue, yellow, orange, and red;
- Seven are the chakras in Yogi Philosophy - root, sacral, solar plexus, heart, throat, third eye, and crown;
- Seven are the endocrinal glands - pituitary, thyroid, parathyroid, adrenals, pancreas, testes, and ovaries;
- Seven were the first Christian churches - Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea;
- Seven sentences long are both The Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary;
- Seven were the heavens created by Allah described in the Koran;
- In the Book of Revelation we read, seven Churches, seven Spirits of God, seven golden candlesticks, seven stars, seven angels, seven lamps of fire, seven backside seals, seven horns, seven eyes, seven trumpets, seven thunders, seven heads, seven crowns, seven last plagues, seven golden vials, seven mountains, and seven kings;
- A pyramid base is square, which means it is composed of four equal sides. Its side view is triangular. The Pyramid of Cheops has three chambers linked by four passages.

Perhaps, for us masons, the main portrayal of number seven would be tolerance. When Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Mathew 18:21-22). Therefore my brother, so that your journey is harmonious and full of light, forgive yourself ask for forgiveness when you hurt someone and accept forgiveness when someone has hurt you. Furthermore, psychosomatic medicine associates many diseases to negative repressed feelings in our hearts and minds.

Deep peace in your heart,

\*Hanukah, the nine-branched candelabrum.

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