

Our Ritual - Not How But Why

W.A. Our ritual, not how but why. In Rainbow we strive to perfect our ritual work, especially our initiatory degree. The Grand Officers will now put into words and actions the floor work of our initiation to give each of us a better understanding of the beautiful teachings of Rainbow.

W.A.A. Most of the symbolic actions in our floor work and speeches have been drawn from tradition; Masonic symbolism and, of course, a good deal of the Masonic tradition finds its origin in the Holy Bible. As you sit in an Assembly room and look around you, you should be reminded of the greatest temple that King Solomon built in Israel to honor God. Our present day Assembly rooms are fashioned after Solomon's temple, rectangular in shape - East to West in length and North to South in width. (goes down near Altar and continues) In the time of Solomon and Moses, the centers of Religion and, therefore, knowledge were all located somewhere in the East. Therefore, the placement of the Worthy Advisor is in the East, where she can best reflect that knowledge and power. I am sure you have often wondered why most Assembly rooms are on the second floor. King Solomon's temple was built on a mountain top because it was proven that that location afforded the maximum amount of security and protection from intruders.

W.A. (also goes down to Altar, on opposite side) In the center of our room is the Altar. It is traditionally cubic in shape. Although, today, many variations exist out of necessity, the cubic shape was used because that geometric figure is considered to be perfect, with equal sides, faces, and angles. The Bible, which provides us with the source of all knowledge, therefore is placed in the center of the room where it can pour forth its rays of truth and perfection upon the entire room. The reason that no one should cross between the Bible and the East, except during initiation, is that the Worthy Advisor in the East should be constantly gaining her knowledge and guidance from the Bible and, therefore, no one should break between those boundaries.

D.L. The symbolism of the room also comes from the path of the sun as it travels throughout the Heavens in the course of the day. The East, according to the Bible, denotes Wisdom and holds the powers to direct. The West denotes Strength, thus symbolizing the ability to support. With the support of the Worthy Associate Advisor in the West, the Worthy Advisor in the East can complete her responsibilities. The South represents the noon day when we pause from our labors and refresh ourselves. Thus, W. Mark Sexson placed Hope in the South as a symbol of the fact that Hope is a form of refreshment for the soul. Masonically, there is no light in the North, and for that reason, Masonic Lodges do not have a seat in the North. In placing Charity and the Pot of Gold, holding the mysterious secrets at the end of the Rainbow, in the North, our founder symbolically implied that, with the aid of the knowledge of the East, the support of the West, the Hope and promise of the South, and the guidance of Faith, it is possible to penetrate the darkness of the North and find the treasure that rest therein.

Faith. As the initiation begins, the candidate waits in the preparation room. This door is traditionally intended to be a chamber of reflection. It is the place where the would-be member is able to sit quietly and reflect upon the journey and obligations she is about to undertake. When Faith comes to greet her, it is symbolic not only of the fact that Faith represents guidance, but also of the fact that the prime requisite for membership in the organization is Faith in God. Following the idea that this phase of the degree is concentrating upon preparation of the candidate, you will notice that Faith does not hurry the candidate into the room or rush her in any way. Faith warns the candidate of the seriousness of what she is about to enter and then leaves the candidate to reflect until Faith returns. When Faith brings the candidate into the room, by our standards the candidate is in darkness as a result of her lack of knowledge about our ways and our beliefs. Thus, she stands in the Northwest corner of the room. Faith and the candidate make one complete

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circuit of the room, which allows for the candidate to see, and to be seen by the members. This circuit masonically symbolizes the pilgrimage of life which one soon discovers is often dark and gloomy, but also learns that, through work, there is a road to a glorious destiny. This, of course, is precisely what the initiation is all about, as it guides the candidate from the darkness of the outside world to the true white light of Rainbow's promise.

Recorder Continuing with the preparation and examination of the candidate, Faith leads her to the stations of Hope, Charity, Worthy Associate Advisor, and Worthy Advisor, respectively. It is important to remember that, as Faith and the candidate approach each of these stations during this part of the degree, the officers do not rise until Faith and the candidate are directly in front of them. Historically, Hope, Charity, Worthy Associate Advisor, and Worthy Advisor represent the leaders of the temple, and they are oblivious to her presence in the room because they are absorbed in their own higher thoughts and used to a life that is protected and free from intrusion. When they do rise, they do nothing but question Faith about the validity of her journey and give her permission to continue. During this time they are still preparing and examining the candidate.

W.A. At the Worthy Advisor's station, the same procedure is repeated, but at this station the candidate is required to answer for herself before she is again entrusted into the hands of Faith to proceed.

Chaplain As the candidate travels through the triangular formation to and from the Altar, she is symbolically tracing the most perfect of all figures, the equilateral triangle. It has been used to symbolize many things throughout history, among them the deity, the past, present, and future, and last, but not least, Faith, Hope, and Charity. Her journey along this perfect path stops at the Altar which, of course, holds the symbol of all perfection, the Holy Bible. Here she is prepared for the obligation, and here is the point at which her preparation and examination come to an end and her instruction begins.

Love When the obligation is over, Faith and the new sister complete the triangle.

Religion In the next step of instruction, Faith takes the new sister and begins their new trip through the seven mileposts of the journey.

Nature The number seven is masonically significant because it is used to symbolize the creation of the world in seven days.

Immortality It is also significant to us because the Rainbow appeared to Noah after seven months in the ark.

Fidelity Faith's role as a guide and conductress for the new sister is also explained in masonic history.

Patriotism Faith is the foundation of justice, the bond of amity, and the chief support of society.

Service We live by Faith; we walk by Faith; by Faith, we have a continual hope in the knowledge of the Supreme Being, by faith we are justified, accepted, and finally saved.

Faith (Faith and the new sister make three circuits of the room between the time they leave the color stations and finally arrive in the East. These three circuits are emblematic of the circles of the Altar made in all ancient religions. Even with the aid of the Sister of Faith, the journey to the end of the Rainbow and the mysteries that lie therein are sometime difficult. Sister of Faith looks upward as she walks, symbolically

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looking for assistance, which she receives. On her way to the West, the book of Ezekiel supplies her with help. She begins to recall the time Ezekiel, held captive, began to see visions of God and the Angels. Finally, amidst a blazing light, the Lord appeared to Ezekiel and spoke. Ezekiel was so shocked that he immediately fell prostrate to the ground. It is at this point that Faith is interrupted in her journey by the Worthy Associate Advisor.

W.A.A. The West represents knowledge, old age, the time of reflection upon what has been learned, and thus, wisdom. With this wisdom and age comes caution. The Worthy Associate Advisor's duty is to be cautious and to be sure that the journey of Faith and the new sister is worthwhile and laudable. As the support officer of the Worthy Advisor, she must be completely satisfied that the new sister's motives are good. After Faith vouches for the new sister, the Worthy Associate Advisor is much more accepting.

Faith. After leaving the West and starting toward the South, Faith again looks up to God for inspiration and guiding words to aid the journey. This time, her inspiration comes from the book of Revelations, where the new world is being predicted. There is no need for a temple to worship or a sun or a moon in the new world, as God will be present, and His presence will provide all these things naturally. At this point, Faith and the new sister arrive at the station of Hope.

Hope. It is symbolically the noon day when the sun's rays are the brightest and the weary traveler stops to refresh herself. Masonically, Hope is described as being the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. Faith and the new sister are greeted warmly by the Sister of Hope, who encourages them to refresh themselves in the sunlight and take courage in the fact that hope always awaits them as they travel on.

Faith. After leaving the Station of Hope, Faith and the new Sister start out refreshed, and this feeling is encouraged when they stop at the station of the W.A.A. As they approach Charity in the North, Faith recalls the Biblical message of Paul in his letter to the Corinthians, pointing out that even greater than Faith and Hope is Charity.

Charity Masonic tradition supports this idea by stating that charity is the brightest gem that can adorn our Masonic profession. It is the keystone of our institution. It also states that Faith may be lost in sight. Hope in the accomplishment of goals, but Charity extends beyond the grave. Charity is placed in the North, the place of darkness, because darkness represents ignorance, engulfs the mind of the uninitiated, and is removed with the brightest light of knowledge. The new sister, having traveled this far in the journey and having gained knowledge, is now entitled to see into the darkness and discover the mysteries that lie at the end of the Rainbow. Among these items that Charity produces from the Pot of Gold and probably the least understood is the miniature lambskin apron. Traditionally the lambskin apron is the badge of the Mason and is the first gift bestowed by the Master of a lodge upon the new member. Actually, the apron was used by real stone masons to protect their clothing as they worked. In the Masonic order its white color and the animal from which it comes are used to remind us to preserve the innocence of life and conduct, unstained by sin and violence. The apron presented to each new Mason is used by him throughout his life and is buried with him upon his death. The other contents of the Pot of Gold are obvious in their meaning and are well explained by the Sister of Charity.

W.A. After the new sister has seen and understood the mysteries of the North, she approaches the East, symbolic of all knowledge, to receive the secret work of our Order. This is the final step in the instruction phase of the initiation. After she has been carefully instructed in the lessons of the bow, the warnings of the West, the Hope of the South, and the mysteries of the North, she is then, and only then, entitled to know the secrets of the East. Following the welcome of the Mother Advisor, she faces the members of the assembly

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and they greet her with the sign of Rainbow, indicating that she is now one of them and will understand its meaning. Thus, we hope that this explanation of how the work is done, as well as why it is done, will be beneficial to all as we try to make our Rainbow more beautiful. We hope that you can now see that, behind even the smallest detail of our ritual, even the floor work, there is a deeper significance for its being. As you watch or participate in any of the degree work of our Order, keep in mind these explanations. May they aid your understanding, and may your knowledge increase in your journey to the end of the Rainbow.

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