

**SACRED SPACE**  
**Presentation to the Manitoba Study Group QCCC**  
**By Bro. Ken Sweet, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1999**

Sacred<sup>1</sup> Space is a sanctuary within where one can retreat and recharge during the changing times; an oasis of peace amidst turmoil; a place of perfection amidst chaos. Angelus Silesius<sup>2</sup> wrote "if that which thou seekest thou find not within thyself, thou wilt surely not find it without." Sacred Space is an environment created where one can re-member<sup>3</sup> who he or she is, their relationship to nature and purpose in this life.

Sacred Space is a place that allows one to understand his spirituality. It is a place that one feels calm, trust, faith, and understands TRUTH.

The third degree in the Craft admonishes us; "to contemplate your inevitable destiny, and guide your reflections to that most important of all human studies, the knowledge of yourself."<sup>4</sup> 'Man Know Thyself' was the injunction inscribed over the portals of Ancient temples of initiation. Sacred Space is created through the use of signs, symbols and invocations. Sacred Space is also created through the use of ritual, the preparation of a physical space, sound and colours.

All religious and spiritual orders use ritual as a preparation prior to the time of worship.

When entering a church or sacred building the spires ring with the sound of bells. The music chosen is not of rock or easy listening but that which will move us to reflective thought. Inside, the spoken word is soft and one sits in silence. This is usually followed by an invocation and song. In some cases bells will be rung and incense will be burnt. There may be stained glass windows depicting the stories in V.O.T.S.L. and perhaps representative paintings on the walls. These same religions have a ritual for birth, life, and death as evidenced by the Christian baptismal, wedding and burial ceremonies. In Christian tradition Christmas and Easter services using communion are a reminder of the life and teaching of Jesus. In other religions or spiritual orders Jesus would be Buddha, Moses, Mohammed and long before that Pythagoras, Mevlana<sup>4</sup> or Shernzi Tabrizi or any number of previous enlightened beings.

In Masonry a G. or the G and P.W. are required to gain entrance. The Lodge is opened in due ritual form with the officers bearing the names and titles of ancient craftsmen with or without song although it is proper form to do so. As the third degree teaches death<sup>5</sup> as the grand leveler so the Craft employs the use of the EA. degree to depict our entrance into the world and representative of birth. The following two degrees; as in the second, representative of a commitment to gaining higher levels of knowledge, and the third is representative of the acquisition of enlightenment so as to become one with the Creator. I have read enlightenment described as being of this world but not of it.

All signs and symbols carry energy. The symbols are not sacred in themselves but the feeling, the deep *re-mem-ber-ing* elicited within us is sacred. Therefore it follows that aprons and jewels belonging to deceased members who gained respect during their various Masonic earthly sojourns carry an energy which help establish Sacred Space. As an example, the cross, a symbol central to all Christianity is not itself sacred, but the deep feeling it creates, the *re-mem-ber-ing* of who we are is sacred. Numerological philosophy employed by Pythagoras

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<sup>1</sup> Sacred- of *sacren* to consecrate, or *sacer* holy, *sancire* to make sacred. 1) Dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of deity. 2) Worthy of religious veneration... 3) Of or relating to religion. 4) Highly valued or important... Excerpt from Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary.

<sup>2</sup> Seventeenth century mystic Johann Scheffler (1624-1677) known as Angelus Silesius.

<sup>3</sup> Re-member- to spiritually reflect upon oneself and connect with the whole.

<sup>4</sup> The Work.

<sup>5</sup> For more information refer to the The Heroes Journey by Joseph Campbell

attempts to invoke within Masons an awareness of the sacred numbers three, five or seven.<sup>6</sup> The letter G, the Star in the East, the circle, the V.O.T.S.L., altars, prayers and invocations all invite the Almighty to preside over our proceedings. Embellishments such as colours and numbers are all designed to assist in the sacredness of space and manifesting ethereal energy. The colour blue for example stimulates one to seek and attain inner truth, it also stimulates spiritual understanding, faith and devotion. The sacred circle signifies the eternal cycle of birth, death and rebirth, and ancient idea of no beginning and no end and that if one knows the end one in turn knows the beginning. The V.O.T.S.L. is placed continually before us (just as the two great pillars were placed at the entrance to the Temple for the children of Israel to remind them of their deliverance of their forefathers) to remind us that we are 'to consider those sacred writings the unerring standard of truth and justice and to regulate our actions by those divine precepts which it contains.'<sup>7</sup> The compass is an instrument used to construct circles and spheres thus symbolically it is linked to the heavens and spirit. The square is a geometrical construct, which has application to surfaces and solids (as in arithmetic and geometry) Symbolically it deals with fixed states: matter and the earth, it represents solidarity, symmetry and proportion.

The placement of all symbols according to ancient tradition; the proper use of all signs *by our own* awareness of their meaning are instrumental in the creation of Sacred Space. We know that the most profound secrets of Freemasonry are not revealed in the Lodge room but must be sought by the individual himself. To interpret their true meaning constitutes the synthesis of science and metaphysical philosophy, the end, aim and design of Freemasonry.

Aboriginal communities have met in circles for centuries to conduct business and make decisions. It is to be noted that an infant must be in the circle prior to any decisions to be made so that all will know whom their decisions will affect. Through this method we now know that making decisions for seven generations ahead is possible and done. The all-powerful healing circle is now being respected as a proven method of healing spirit. The unique design of the aboriginal teepee, a cone shape formed of a circle has numerous ribs each symbolic of a particular meaning. The teepee entrance opens in the way a skirt opens- symbolic of entering into the womb, a place of birth or renewal such as the sweat lodge representative of mother earth. Within the lodge, the heat generated from the stones or 'grandfather rocks' serves to purify the spirit and the circular sweat lodge 'gives birth' to the individual as he exists into the world purified and renewed.

The Masonic Lodge room itself is a parallelepiped<sup>8</sup> not unlike a circle where all participants face to the centre. Properly oriented lodges are designed so that they are situated due east and west for the reasons explained in the J.W's lecture that again brings us back to the beginning.

Sound such as the beating of drums, ringing of chimes and bells, or the use of mantras, song and music will also assist in the creation of Sacred Space. The sound of the Tibetan crystal bowls is a method of focusing. Buddhists will not speak but will sit silently in meditation for hours to reach that point of oneness. Not unlike the Arabic Sufi's who will dance and play the drums to induce a trance like state.

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<sup>6</sup> In Pythagorean philosophy three, the Triad, was symbolic of the union between one, the Monad, or Divine Unity, and two, the Duad, the duality of all things or the separation of the Monad Five or the Pentad represented the marriage of two and three. Seven, or the Heptad, was the result of three, the trinity and four, the manifestation of the four planes or the material world.

<sup>7</sup> The Work

<sup>8</sup> As in *parallelepiped*, a six-faced polyhedron all of whose faces are parallelograms lying in pairs of parallel planes.

The introduction of naturally occurring hallucinogens in ritual ceremony such mushrooms or peyote in ancient South American and North American cultures are used to quieten the intellect and connect the soul to higher planes.

In our Craft Lodge and the ritual of Masonic Concordant bodies the use of song and music is prevalent. Hand clapping will also raise the energy and as the higher rank demands a higher number of claps for Grand Honours so the energy rises accordingly.

The true philosophic or spiritual truth's of Masonry requires that one acknowledge something higher than ritual. To facilitate this requires a space that must be properly prepared. Sacred Space is created to enable each one of us who is unconsciously carrying the TRUTH to reconnect to the spiritual and discover the nature of who he truly is.

Sacred Space is created within our Craft Lodge so that when we enter a Lodge room it is not just an acknowledgment of the other Brethren attending, rather it is an affirmation of the interdependence of all life and our connection with the Creator. Sacred Space is the arena that will allow us to raise our consciousness to a higher level where we will experience a degree of enlightenment which is to be free from ignorance, prejudice and superstition and we are able to understand and comprehend TRUTH.

Sacred Space is created to allow us to move from awareness to consciousness and ultimately to Integration- to be consciously aware. This means that we are not only aware of the philosophical teachings of Masonry; through actively working in the several stations or chairs in a Lodge and performing the memory work; but we have discovered a true understanding, we have gained consciousness- a knowing at the deepest level of our being what Masonry truly is and of integrating this into our lives. Sacred Space properly created provides a means for us to do this, to live in conscious awareness of the TRUTH.

If Sacred Space is what we want to create then as King Solomon built the Temple to prepare a place to worship and acknowledge the Most High we must also, through conscious awareness, copy his example by preparing our Lodges in a like manner. Can you visualize a gourmet six course meal served on chipped plates with mismatched cutlery and served by poorly trained waiters? Can you ever recall entering a Lodge room where the paraphernalia was in need of obvious repair, where officers did not show up and the work was less than good? What did the energy level *feel* like? Now visualize that same Lodge room where the brethren have attended the ritual objects with love and care and carried out their tasks with precision. You feel a sense of awe and reverence. Their intention has already raised the energy level. Ritual properly accomplished in a Church is described as holy. The Lodge represents a Sacred Space and King Solomon created the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem as the most Sacred Space to 'house' the spirit of the Lord.

Sacred Space may be created anywhere. As an example, there are open air degrees accomplished in the United States each year. You and I and every member of the Craft make the Lodge sacred by our understanding, observing and treating all that is accomplished as Sacred.

The aforementioned topic was chosen to show the importance of preparing and performing within a Lodge, according to and connected with ancient traditions, so that all those seeking the truth will be afforded the best possible opportunity and space to do it in. We must bring attention to the need to have all Lodge paraphernalia in optimum condition as everything carries with it unique energy and this energy must be maintained. Most important we must do this to create a sanctuary or Sacred Space where Brethren may inspire the sacred in other men. Where Brethren may learn more of who or what they have represented in the Work which in the end will serve to convey to them divine TRUTH, ultimately, knowledge of self and of the Deity.

## **Bibliography**

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