

## The Chain of Transmission 3

### The Dionysian Architects and King Solomon's Temple

In the previous lecture we learned of an ancient group of initiated builders known under the title of ***Dionysian Artificers***. Woven about this group is a tantalizing mix of history and legend, with no clearcut line of demarcation separating them.

I quoted the **Illustrated History and Cyclopedia of Freemasonry** by Robert Macoy, 33° under the entry for Dionysian Architects, wherein the author presents a very succinct abbreviation of the likely route of transmission of the ancient sacred sciences of geometry, astronomy, architecture, and symbolism.

“Becoming skilled in the science of architecture they founded the order of Sidonian Builders, a considerable period before the time of David, King of Israel. From this society—which built the Temple of Solomon—sprung the Roman Colleges of Architects, and these, in their turn, gave birth to the building corporations of the middle ages, from which the present order of Freemasonry is derived. Thus the society of Dionysian Builders is the connecting link between Modern Masonry and the Ancient Mysteries.”

This lineage is considerably abridged, with many gaps and missing links. That a direct transmission of knowledge occurred over a period of 3000 years will probably never be susceptible to final proof. However, that there was a stream of influence and a recovery of traditions previously lost over the course of the centuries is beyond doubt, even as we, of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are in the process of recovering that which has been lost, suppressed, or simply forgotten.

Were the Dionysian Architects responsible for the construction of King Solomon's renowned Temple? It seems highly probable, given that they are known to have existed at the time of the Temple's building, that they plied their craft throughout Asia Minor and that they were recognized as the master builders of their age.

In the **Illustrated History and Cyclopedia of Freemasonry**, under the heading of *General History of Freemasonry* the author describes the ancient builders as the

“architects of Tyre, who, under the name of the ‘Dionysiac Fraternity’ constituted an association of builders, exclusively engaged in the construction of temples and other prominent edifices in Asia Minor, and who were distinguished by the use of secret signs and other modes of mutual recognition. Without adopting any untenable opinions, we are justified in avowing that the institution must have been framed by a people who had made considerable advance in science.”

That the ancient building fraternities “had made considerable advance in science” was apparent to the author of the *Illustrated History* in 1908 and more than a century later we can abundantly confirm the veracity of Robert Macoy's insight, however, we are then faced with an intractable paradox. The case for the existence, in ancient times, of a sophisticated, scientific

understanding of the world and nature is overwhelming. Yet, the implications of this admission are being entirely disregarded, or ignored, by the institutions of power, whether they be political, academic, scientific, or corporate, while the majority of people of the world remain utterly unaware and uninformed regarding either the challenges or the opportunities presented by this growing awareness of a human past that is proving far deeper and more complicated than ever suspected by the adherents of orthodox theories of ancient history. That the fragments of an archaic scientific heritage exist is apparent to anyone with an open mind who cares to investigate the matter for themselves, and further, it is becoming apparent that sufficient fragments of this heritage still exist to restore the ancient system to operational status.

Manly Palmer Hall in his classic *Secret Teachings of All Ages* relates details regarding the latter phases of the existence of the Dionysiac Architects as an operative fraternity, before their final dissolution and absorption into the monastic seclusion of the Dark Ages.

“While stigmatized as pagans by reason of their philosophic principles, it is noteworthy that these Dionysiac craftsmen were almost universally employed in the erection of early Christian abbeys and cathedrals, whose stones even to this very day bear distinguishing marks and symbols cut into their surfaces by these illustrious builders. Among the ornate carvings upon the fronts of great churches of the Old World are frequently found representations of compasses, squares, rules, mallets, and clusters of builders’ tools skillfully incorporated into mural decorations and even placed in the hands of the effigies of saints and prophets standing in exalted niches.”

But, going back to the founding days of the organization brings us back to King Solomon’s Temple.

We are introduced to Solomon in *First Kings*, wherein we are informed how King David, because of his participation in continual warfare, was rendered ineligible to build the great temple of the Lord, and, how therefore, it fell to his son, Solomon to undertake the great work. That Solomon was endowed with the requisite character traits necessary for the task is made clear in Chapter 4:

“And god gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore.

And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.

For he was wiser than all men . . . and his fame was in all nations round about.

And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five.

And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.”

It is clear from this that Solomon was learned in natural sciences such as zoology and botany. However, the children of Israel had been primarily a pastoral and agricultural people and lacked

the necessary technical skills for the undertaking of a such a immense building enterprise. As it turns out King David had an exceedingly friendly relationship with Hiram, the King of Tyre, an ancient city of Phoenicia, the fabled birthplace of Europa, and a center of activity for the Dionysians. According to Herodotus the city was founded as a great maritime center around 2750 BC off the west coast of what is now Lebanon. It was from the city of Tyre that the Phoenicians sailed out into the Meditaranean to establish numerous colonies as far as Cadiz, outside the pillars of Hercules.

The 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of *1 Kings* describes the formation of the alliance between Jews and Phoenicians that made possible the construction of Solomon's great temple. In the opening verses of the chapter Hiram, the king of Tyre, sends a contingent of personnel to King Solomon.

“And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David. And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side . . . But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name. Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.”

It should be mentioned that the Greeks called the Phoenicians Sidonians, after a seaport town in Lebanon about 22 miles south of Tyre. Historically the Sidonians were recognized for their skill as loggers and woodworkers. Several of Solomon's many wives were Sidonian as well. First Kings continues:

“And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir; my servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea, and I will convey them by sea in floats, unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and I will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.” (1 Kings, v. 8, 9).

So in exchange for the supply of workmen and building materials Solomon sends to Hiram 20,000 measures of wheat, and pure oil in abundance, for many years. As a result of this

partnership “the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.”

In the *Book of 1st Chronicles*, chapter 22, King Davids preconstruction preparation and material acquisition are described:

“And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God.  
And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gate, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight.  
Also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David, . . .  
And David said to Solomon . . .

Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.  
Moreover there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.  
Of gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee.”

So David, even though prohibited from actually building the temple was responsible for gathering together the bulk of the raw materials of construction, the labor force, and the necessary financing.

The manpower employed in the building of the temple was enormous. According to Masonic tradition, which varies slightly from the biblical accounts, there were employed a total of 150,000 apprentices and craftsmen, which were overseen and supervised by 3,300 master masons, a truly prodigious workforce.

Over all of these were the three Grand Masters, Solomon, king of Israel, Hiram, king of Tyre, and Hiram Abiff, a Phoenician by birth, but of Israeli descent, who was the chief architect of the work. In First Kings and 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles Hiram Abiff is described as a skilled and cunning workman who was filled with wisdom and understanding, and a master of the building arts. Sent by King Hiram “he came to King Solomon and wrought all his work.” In Masonic tradition Hiram Abiff is cruelly murdered on the eve of the completion of the temple by disaffected workmen who demand of him the secret word which is the master key of all the sacred science embodied in the Temple. The story of Hiram Abiff concerns the universal themes of death and resurrection and the search for something of immense value which has been lost and whose recovery will initiate a general restoration and redemption of the world. According to both biblical and Masonic accounts the the construction of the temple took seven years to complete.

The dimensions of the temple are given in chapter 6 of First Kings.

“And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits.”

Now the exact value of the cubit used in the construction of the temple is not known. The standard Hebrew cubit is usually taken as 18 inches or 1.5 feet. That would have made the temple 90 feet long x 30 feet wide x 45 feet high. In plan view the Temple was laid out as a three to one rectangle, or triple square.

The porch positioned in front of the temple proper is described as being twenty cubits long x 10 cubits in width, or a two to one rectangle. Now this particular rectangle, it turns out, conceals within itself, through its' diagonal, the proportions that yield the famous 'golden section' or 'divine proportion' as it has been called. This extraordinary mathematical proportion will be explored in detail in Level Two classes. Positioned at the front of the outer porch of the temple were two great columns, Jachin and Boaz. The profound symbolism of these two 'pillars of the porch' as they are usually called, again, will be explored in level two classes.

Finally the innermost chamber within the temple, the Sanctum Sanctorum, or Holy of Holies, the oracular center which is to house the **Ark of the Covenant** is described as a perfect cube 20 cubits on each side. In terms of the two dimensional ground plan of the temple notice that the progression I just described proceeds from a triple square, to a double square finally to a single square, which is the form of the base of the Holy of Holies.

So, the most sacred space in Judaic tradition is represented as a cube. It should be noted that the most sacred space in Islam, the Ka'aba in Mecca, is also a cube. In Freemasonry the 'perfect ashlar' is represented as a cube. The ashlar is a special stone prepared for inclusion in a sacred building. It is always depicted in two forms. *The Royal Masonic Encyclopedia* by Kenneth Mackenzie (1877) describes the Ashlar thusly: “Masonry adopts the ashlar as a symbol in two forms: in its rude, unhewn state, in which it is called the rough ashlar—referring to the uncultivated, ignorant condition of mankind, yet a mere mass of material blindness and moral confusion; and also as the perfect ashlar, where the mind has assumed its harmonic proportions and symbolic form.” The rough and perfect ashlars are also considered as symbols the uncompleted and the completed temple of civilization

Perhaps the grandest of cubical forms depicted symbolically is the figure of the New Jerusalem, or Holy City, described in the Apocalypse of St. John or Book of Revelation, as descending out of heaven. The relevant verses read:

“And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious . . . And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates . . . And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city . . . and the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and height of it are equal.”

The figure of the Holy City is incredibly rich in symbolical connotations which will be explored in depth in an upcoming class. We will again encounter the cube when we delve into the legend of

Enoch, wherein a cubical alter serves as the repository of the ancient science and wisdom of the antediluvian world, that was otherwise about to be lost in the great destruction to come. This legend links us back to the symbolism of the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, flanking the entrance to Solomon's temple.

As geometricians we should note that the cube contains within its proportions the progression that leads us into the realm of dynamic symmetry, or Eurhythmy as the Greeks called it, the secret of geometrical harmony of which the Dionysian Architects were the custodians. The principles of dynamic symmetry form the core of Level Two instruction.

Despite being one of the truly great building enterprises of the ages, nary a trace of Solomon's magnificent structure remains, having been obliterated through the course of the centuries by deliberate campaigns of destruction. In fact, the scarcity of any identifiable remains has led some to conclude that it never actually existed in anything other than symbolic form.

We will conclude this session by once again calling upon Manly Palmer Hall in the Secret Teachings of All Ages.

“The supreme ambition of the Dionysiac Architects was the construction of buildings which would create distinct impressions consistent with the purpose for which the structure itself was designed. In common with the Pythagoreans, they believed it possible by combinations of straight lines and curves to induce any desired mental attitude or emotion. They labored, therefore, to the end of producing a building perfectly harmonious with the structure of the universe itself. They may have even believed that an edifice so constructed—would not be subject to dissolution but would endure throughout the span of mortal time. As a logical deduction from their philosophic trend of thought, such a building—en rapport with Cosmos—would also have become an oracle.” MPH, p. 571

This is precisely the function of King Solomon's Temple and all sacred structures the worldover, that it is oracular in nature, that it serves as both a transmitter and receiver of cosmic power by resonating harmoniously with the structure of the universe itself. Herein lies the great secret of the lost sacred technology of the gods and the preeminent application of the superlative art and science of Sacred Geometry.