

Short Talk # 6

TRIPLE TAU & TRIANGLE

The Triple Tau and Triangle are common insignia for Royal Arch Masons on jewels, letterhead, emblems, aprons, and other items. But how many of its companions, those initiated into the rites and rituals of a Royal Arch Chapter could do more than identify the two? Ignorance of symbolism in Masonry at any level is not bliss. This type of ignorance is a sign that such a companion has not fully received their wages from their membership. We will explore what the Triple Tau and Triangle are as symbols and see how they remind your connection with Ancient Truths of Life.

I will begin with the Triple Tau because it lies at the center of our most popularly used symbol. If you need a picture of the emblem I am referring to just look down at your Royal Arch apron or your latest dues card. A version of the Scottish ritual describes the Triple Tau as "the compound character known as the Triple Tau one of the Royal Arch mason's emblems." Calling it a compound character helps to explain it and better define it.

A Triple Tau is literally "three Tau's," the tau being the nineteenth letter in the Greek Alphabet. The Tau is not our English letter " T ". The Triple Tau of Royal Arch Masonry actually consists of 3 T's linked in the center joined at their based.

Now that we see as it really is - in parts, this mystical character can be signified in a few different ways. First, the names Hiram of Tyre, and Hiram Abif, appear in the Phoenician language with the same letters "H" and "T" as they do in English. Therefore, the Triple Tau takes on the interpretation of the initial letters in Hiram Abif's name, similar to a brand in the Ole West or a Mark Master Mark.

Second, it signifies also T. H., *Templum Hierosolym*, the Temple of Jerusalem, and when used as the Royal Arch symbol, some jurisdictions teach that the wearer acknowledges himself a servant of the true God; who had there established His worship, and to whose service that glorious Temple was erected. *Templum Hierosolym* is a Latin term.

Thirdly, Christians in Greek or Roman influence anciently used a "Tau Cross." So, the basis of a Triple Tau in early church history

would mean the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This Royal Arch symbol therefore aptly recalls to our minds our constant duty to offer worship to The Great Elohim; The Most High: The Everlasting: The Almighty God.

A Triangle is a simple shape in Geometry that has taken on great spiritual significance and symbolism. An Equilateral Triangle is the type we use as Royal Arch Masons. The Scottish ritual teaches that "the equilateral triangle was much revered by ancient nations as containing the greatest and most abstruse mysteries, and as a symbol of God, denoting a Triad of Intelligence, a Triad of Deity, a Triune God." The first book of the Bible supports multiple facets of the same God. In Genesis 1, verse 26 it reads " Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, ". The equilateral triangle shows equality with its three angles of the same degrees. In one way, it best represents Deity by its equality or perfection in design and proportion.

The Triangle is a symbol of divine union, and an emblem of the mysterious Triune, equally representing the attributes of Deity, and His Triune essence. The ONE TRUE GOD is known by His Attributes:

-Omnipotent(All Powerful)

-Omnipresence(Eternal)

-Omniscience(All Knowing)

So, now what do you see when you look at the Royal Arch symbols of The Triple Tau and Triangle?

I personally see 3 Figures joined together on a triangular pavement...do you?

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways does the number "3" appear in the ritual and symbolism of Royal Arch Masonry?
2. What content about the Triple Tau that you just read were you unaware of? What impact does this new knowledge or awareness have upon you?
3. How can Royal Arch Masons use the Triple Tau to encourage Master Masons to petition our chapters?