

spiritual, economical and social development of the society. The main functions of the modern family are economical, reproductive, educational, communicative, regulatory and ethical. Children's education is one of the most important

functions of the family. The parents should provide their children with proper financial, living and pedagogical conditions for their physical, moral and spiritual development; make them the real members of our society.

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THE SYMBOLISM OF FREEMASONRY

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Abstract: The article deals with the problem of the origin and meaning of masonic symbolism. The essences of the concepts “operative and speculative Freemasonry”, “blue and red masonry”, “the Lodge”, “Master”, “Radiant Delta” are given. The author substantiates the idea that Freemasonry has absorbed the symbols of different religions and has its origin from the tools of the masons – the builders of the middle ages.

Key words: operative and speculative Freemasonry, blue and red masonry, the Lodge, Master.

Мельничук О. Символіка масонства.

Анотація: У статті розглядається питання про виникнення та значення масонського символізму. Розкрито сутність понять “оперативне та спекулятивне масонство”, “блакитне та червоне масонство”, “лога”, “майстер”, “Промениста Дельта”. Автор обґрунтовує думку про те, що масонство ввібрало в себе символи різних вірувань та веде свій початок від знарядь праці каменярів – будівельників середньовіччя.

Ключові слова: оперативне та спекулятивне масонство, блакитне та червоне масонство, ложа, майстер.

Problem relevancy. The symbolism and its interpretation reveal the essence of the Masonic organization: its mystery, mythology, inseparable connection of each member with his society, punishment of those who gave away the secrets, the protection of the society and the individual, the struggle for the masonic ideals. Symbols are essential for understanding the activity of masonic organization and its goals. Besides each symbol has not only theoretical basis but also practical applications. One of the common

definitions of Freemasonry is “the system of morality contained in allegories and illustrated by symbols”. Symbolism plays a great role in Freemasonry: in the masonic ideas and in the activity of the masons as a closed, secret corporation.

The purpose of the article is to study the basic masonic symbols, their meaning, practical application and to analyze the history of their origin.

The basic material. Symbols and symbolic system of Freemasonry begins from the labour instruments of masons – the builders of the middle ages, who are called operative masons. Sacred signs and symbols were given to them as the guide to the architectural and technical knowledge, design and construction of religious buildings through a variety of angles, circles and other forms [8, p. 156].

The characters of Egyptian mythology were widely used in masonic symbolism. In particular, Osiris meant “the root cause of each case”. At the end of the eighteenth century Freemasons considered the Egyptian gods Osiris and Isis “the main gods, Higher beings and the Universal nature, the Sun and the Moon”. The main symbol of Osiris Lodge was a hammer. It “made a sign to a free mason to work without noise, secretly and without any vanity...” [1, p. 185].

Each symbol has its own explanation and practical application. Each symbol has a lot of meanings. The higher the degree of the mason, the deeper meaning of masonic symbolism reveals to him. The symbols of different types of Freemasonry are different.

The symbolism of blue Freemasonry is quite formal. It includes the tools of the building trades. In general they all are symbolized the sanctity of labour. Among them were:

a) a pair of compasses opened at 60°. It was the main symbol of blue masonry; the symbol of the higher mind which is necessary to follow; the symbol of sufficiency and the emblem of the unity of all masonic groups and all the members of each group;

b) the angle. It was a symbol of law and conscience, the emblem of the part of the globe lightened by the sun;

c) 24-inch scale line. It is the scale to check whether the acts of the Freemasons correspond to the eternal truth; 24 divisions symbolize 24 hours of the day;

d) a slope. It symbolized the equality of all masons regardless to the titles and social status;

e) a board for sketching. It symbolized regularity in the work, personal good example, ability or skill;

f) a hammer. It was a symbol of a tool for working up with the wild stone which cuts away the unnecessary, harmful parts but in the highest sense it is a symbol of conscience, a glint of God in a human soul and others [4,p.365].

Red masonry is higher stage of the brotherhood and has some more symbols joined to already known ones: a sword – a symbol of the struggle for the idea, a symbol of the leadership; a crown, signifying wisdom; a rose - a symbol of eternal life; a cross – a symbol of suffering and struggle of the spirit and matter, the victory of the spirit, etc.

And finally, the highest stage of Freemasonry - rosy golden - had such symbolic images as: a rose which symbolized love and eternity of matter; a pelican which stood for the law of the highest wisdom, the savior of the world; an eagle – a symbol of steady struggle of Freemasons.

Masonic symbolism included its own symbols of colour which were developed in the 18th century. The most common colours were blue and red, besides them silver (white), golden, black, purple, pink, red were used. The meanings of the colours were the following: blue is the colour of the sky, a symbol of aspirations, spiritual perfection; golden is a symbol of purity, generosity; red is the colour of blood, anger, revenge, war, loyalty; purple is a symbol of power, royalty; white means purity; black symbolizes sadness, death; green is a symbol of victory; pink means love and eternity of life [5].

Numbers also play a great role in masonic symbolism. Each of the first ten numbers has its historical significance. Number “one” represents the beginning and the end of unity, the manifestation of which is the order. Number “two” represents the columns of the masonic temple. “Three” means a triangle with many values. “Seven” is the top of blue Freemasonry, one of the master’ numbers, because the same number of masons went in search of the murderer of Hiram. “Eight” means stability. So numerology combined with other symbolic attributes gives harmony and consistency to the traditional work in the lodge [6, pp. 321 - 322].

The Central symbol of Freemasonry is the Temple or Lodge. The roots of this symbol go to the Bible which tells about the construction of the temple by the king Solomon. One of the definitions of the lodge is given in the lodges’ ritual of the English system. It says that the length of the lodge is from east to west, the width is from north to south, the height is from the ground to the sky, the depth is from the earth’s

surface to its center: such a depth of the lodge means the universality of Freemasonry [2, p. 89].

Every masonic lodge had its own name, its own distinctive characteristics and objective signs, they were not similar, but Freemasons identified their brothers in other lodges and at holiday meetings by these signs. The signs of degrees and positions had the fixed symbolic set; the signs of the lodges consisted of the masonic symbols.

The lodge (temple) has a rectangular shape. According to ancient traditions the rectangle is the symbol of the world. The rectangle with three dots arranged in a triangle shape could be used as an equivalent of the word "Lodge" in the masonic correspondence [9, p. 76]. To the east of the lodge there is a throne of the Master. The sword and other symbolic subjects are near the throne. The eastern wall is decorated with the images of the Sun, the Moon and the Sacred Delta.

Radiant Delta is a triangle with an eye inside it. It is the sign of enlightenment or the principle of consciousness, the all-seeing eye. It is always present at the work of the lodge, it is the symbol of awareness and attention which every brother should show in respect to the world. Radiant Delta reminds us that every mason has his own masonic star that shines for him in his work and guides in his search. Radiant Delta is the main masonic symbol of the first level [7, p. 324].

In the center of the lodge there is a triangular altar with the book of the sacred law, a square and compasses on it. The book of the sacred law is the main book of the religion which is professed by those brothers who are the members of this lodge. If in the lodge there are brothes of other religions, a few books are on the altar. They are the Bible, the Koran and the Torah. The masons give all the oaths on them. At each side of the altar the words "freedom", "equality", "brotherhood" are written. At the foot of the altar there are two stones: one- rough, natural and another-polished, they are the working material of a mason. [3, p. 185]. There are also the statues of Minerva, Hercules and Venus in the temple. Minerva symbolizes knowledge or wisdom, Venus – love and beauty, Hercules – strength and power.

Conclusion and prospects for the further scientific research. In general the symbolism of the Freemasons had the tendency to the mysticism but at the same time it gave the examples of specific historically understandable interpretation of the meaning of the certain religious subjects. While learning the ideas and symbols of Freemasonry we can come to a definite conclusion: the doctrine and symbolism of the Freemasons are the mix of different religions.

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