



# **THE MEANING OF MASONRY**

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MASONRY**

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herself by eating of the fruit of the lower world, but having done so her restoration can only be partial and temporary. This alludes to the soul's still further self-soilure and degradation by lusting after the inferior pleasures of this lower plane, which, as the pomegranate symbolizes, is many-seeded with illusions and vanities. Until these false tendencies are eradicated, until the desires of the heart are utterly weaned from external delights, there can be no permanent restoration of the soul to its source, but merely the periodic respite and refreshment that death brings when it withdraws the soul from Pluto's realm to the heaven-world, to be followed again and again by periodic descents into material limitations and reascents into discarnate conditions, until it becomes finally purged and perfected.

By this great myth, therefore, instruction was imparted as to the history of the soul, its destiny and prospects, and the doctrine of reincarnation<sup>4</sup> was emphasized.

Now Masonry follows this traditional method of instruction by myths. Its canon of teaching in the Craft degrees contains two myths. One is that of the building of King Solomon's Temple. The other is that of the death and burial of Hiram Abiff narrated in the traditional history. The Royal Arch contains a third myth in the story of the return from captivity after the destruction of the first temple, the commencement to build the second, and the discovery then made. This third myth has already been expounded in our paper on the Royal Arch degree, so that we need now speak only of the Craft Myths.

To the literal-minded the building of Solomon's temple at Jerusalem (which is of course largely but not entirely based upon the Hebrew Scriptures) appears to be the history of an actual stone and mortar structure erected by three Asiatic notables, one of whom conceived the idea, another supplying the building material, whilst the third was the practical architect and chief of works. The two former are said to have been kings of adjacent small nations; the third was not a royalty, but apparently a person of no social dignity and a "widow's son."

<sup>4</sup> As this doctrine is not popularly inculcated in the West as it is in the East, and will be novel and probably unacceptable to some readers, its acceptance is not pressed here. We are merely recording what the secret doctrine teaches.































