

## THE TEMPLE

Given in the unfinished Temple Building in August 1923 by Ernest Harrison

Read by Marti Fast on July 21, 2024

### Introduction

This talk was presented by one of the original Templars, Ernest “Harry” Harrison. Dr. Dower considered Harry an “old-time Theosophist,” who had joined the original Blavatsky lodge in London in 1891. Harry moved to Halcyone with his wife Aileen in 1906, where they worked a 20-acre walnut and apricot orchard and built the two-story house that James and Sherry live in today. The Harrisons managed the Post Office, store, and gas pump for the community for years, and Harry served as Temple Scribe, contributing regularly to the *Pacific Theosophist* and *The Temple Artisan*. Their son, George Russell Harrison, a research physicist and peer of the Varian Brothers, wrote *Atoms in Action*, one of the first popular books on practical physics and contributed a correspondence course for Temple members on the basic principles of science.

This article was published in *The Temple Artisan*, June-July-August 1923 issue. For context, let us imagine the partly-constructed interior of the Temple during the August Convention of 1923. Remember that Francia LaDue, Blue Star, had died the previous July, leaving a bequest for the construction of a sacred space for services and meetings. Dr. Dower actively built up the building fund and worked with Temple member and Los Angeles architect Theodore A. Eisen, who drew up the plans for the unusual convex triangular shape of the building. The center stone was laid on January 19, 1923, LaDue’s birthday, and construction commenced in April, proceeding well enough that the group planned for meetings to be held in the partly finished space for the 1923 Convention.

Unfortunately, forward movement was delayed after architect Eisen died in March 1924. Because the complex construction of the roof had not yet been determined, Dr. Dower traveled to Los Angeles to meet with another architect who suggested using railroad rails for the three steel girders welded together at the apex to hold up the roof. In July the doors and windows (which were originally designed with nine square panes) could be installed, and in short order the steps were poured, walls plastered, floors oiled, and chairs and other furnishings brought in. One hundred years ago this October, we will celebrate the centennial of the 1924 completion of the Blue Star Memorial Temple.

When Harry Harrison gave this particular talk in August of 1923, convention-goers sat in this very space, walls built up to seven feet and festooned with palm leaves for the occasion, completely open to the sky. I hope you will hold that mental picture in mind as we hear his thoughtful approach to the symbolism of the Temple.

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As the time has at last come when the Temple is almost ready to become a material fact, it may be well to try to put into words, as far as may be possible, a description of it, and what it stands for; always bearing in mind the fact that the real Temple is something which Humanity has been building throughout the ages, and is made of such fine material and of such high Spiritual Essences that it were vain indeed to expect or endeavor to put into words more than the very barest limits of its true significance.

The Real Temple is Humanity, and to the extent that one is interested in and identified with the welfare of Humanity as a whole, to that extent, and that only, will one be recognized by the Masters as a builder of the Temple and a worker in the Great Work.

Let us throw into the discard now and forever, any conception that the Temple is an organization of chosen people (the Lord’s anointed) who are selected to do a certain work and afterwards to reap a great reward, and that all the rest of the unfortunate Human Race is on the other side of the fence, and does not belong in our set.

If the Temple as an organization is to accomplish anything, it must always be as broad as Humanity and as wide as the world is wide; absolutely without creed or dogma, and based on a religious philosophy which will at any time bear the scrutiny of Science and be open at all times to stand unshielded before the searchlight of Truth. It must always be ready to relinquish any teaching which may be proved to be erroneous; and to hold fast only to that which is *true* and therefore capable of bearing the scrutiny of all, or any test that may be put upon it.

Let us realize here that each member of the Human Race is a member of the Great Temple; that each must in turn pass through the Temple Gates; undergo all the tests, joys and sorrows of the Neophyte; and in time be initiated into the Inner Degrees as their Soul Development may demand, until each at last becomes a “Master Mason.”

And now, as regards the Temple Building, which will be built, so far as possible, in such shape and proportion as will symbolize the degrees of the Temple and the basic truth upon which it is founded:

The shape is triangular. The triangle has been used through the ages and in practically all religions, as a symbol of Deity. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva — Atma, Buddhi, Manas — Matter, Force, and Consciousness: call it what we may, it is always triple in nature, the Father, the Mother, and the Son, resulting from the union of these two.

The building will measure Forty-nine feet from angle to angle on the outside. The Order of the Forty-nine is Humanity as a whole, and the ability to become identified with the Inner or Esoteric Degrees of the Great Temple is dependent entirely upon the evolutionary status of the individual. As each develops in their Consciousness the qualifications which entitle them to a position in the Order of the Thirty-six, or any of the Inner Orders, they automatically, karmically, and perhaps unconsciously, step into that Order and become an integral part of it. In the Real Temple, the first Inner Order is that of the Thirty-six.

This is a protective group of souls which stands around the walls of the Inner Temple and guards the treasures therein. In our building, this Order is symbolized by Thirty-six pillars, ranged round the outside, Thirteen on each of the three sides. These Pillars support the Porch, which is Seven feet wide. They are each Seven feet high and Thirteen inches in diameter.

The Pillars standing around the outside of the Temple are deeply significant. They are the Souls, the units of Humanity who have arrived at a realization of the Spiritual Truths which lie hidden within the Temple. While they do not yet realize in their entirety the fullness of these truths, yet they have breathed in something of their essence; they know that the Heart of the Temple contains them and they are willing and anxious to make it their life's work to guard these truths and help the human race to grow into realization of them, and to help bear the burden of supporting the building which contains them. Each pillar will be Seven feet high and Thirteen inches in diameter.

The number Seven is referred to in Occultism far more frequently than any other number, for it is the key number to everything in the universe, both Spiritual and Material. We have the seven metals, seven tones in the musical scale, seven colors in the solar spectrum, seven states of matter from the solid ice up to the Etheric state; seven planets in the Solar System; seven Kingdoms of Nature; in Occultism, three Elemental Kingdoms, Mineral, Vegetable, Animal, and Spiritual. Seven Principles of Man; Seven Planetary Spirits ruling their corresponding Hierarchies; the seven Plexuses or centers of action of the body, ruled by their seven corresponding Chakras or centers in the head (seven orifices in the head). The seven Tattwas, or basic forces on which all the Manifested Universe is builded up; the seven primary divisions of the great Father Force which called, or rather is now and always calling the Universe into Being. Let us think for a moment of the beginning when there was no material world; then a point from which rayed out seven beautiful glowing colors. Gradually these colors took on sound, and the sound became form; and each unit as it rayed out from the parent stem

divided into seven parts; seven colors, seven notes, seven great forces — electricity, magnetism, sound, light, heat, cohesion, gravity — and then around these great primary forces was gradually builded up, and is still building, this beautiful world with its minerals, and vegetation, its animals and humans, and Gods and Archangels; all built up in strict mathematical order, following the law of the Creator as expressed always in groups of seven impulse. It is like a wonderful tree (and indeed has been symbolized in the Ancient Norse mythology as a tree, Yggdrasil, the Tree of Life) having its roots in the Central Spiritual Sun from which it draws all of its sap and nourishment, raying out into innumerable branches, twigs, and leaves, always in groups of seven. In the spring the tree sends forth its branches and gradually a new Universe unfolds into manifestation, a Manvantara, or Period of External Expression. In the fall it draws back into its roots the sap and sustenance for its branches and sinks back into Pralaya, the sleep of a Universe.

And so we see that the number Seven, as symbolized in the height of the Temple Pillars, and in many other ways in the Temple Plan, is a very important number indeed.

Now these pillars are thirteen inches in diameter. Thirteen is the number of the Christos — the One, Christ, surrounded by the twelve Apostles. Each of these, of course, represented a distinct force, a state of Consciousness; and each apostle was necessary to the full expression of the work for which the Christ descended to the Earth.

You will note that the Temple is supported on these pillars, and that each pillar is seven feet high and thirteen inches in diameter.

Here we have the Buddhic force the Christ consciousness, surrounded by the twelve apostolic building forces which exist in the consciousness of Humanity, holding up the roof of the Temple, and thus providing a shelter under which all Humanity may find a refuge. Of course, we are trying to put into words Spiritual Truths which are far too elusive and immaterial to be imprisoned in language; and all we can hope to accomplish is to awaken the interest and arouse the attention to a degree where each student will throw on the matter the light of his or her own intuition, thus awakening in their own consciousness a realization of the essential correspondences which exist in his own self and in the Universe around him.

The Christ always means sacrifice. Jesus gave up his life that all might live. The ray of Christ-force left its state of Bliss and plunged down into Matter, sacrificed itself that it might illuminate the Lower Mind of Man; and it is upon this Principle of sacrifice that the Temple of Humanity is being built today and all the time.

Above our porch will be ten windows on each side with nine panes in each window. Ten is the perfect number; nine is the number of manifestation — the nine manifest are contained in the One manifest. This ten is the Whole, manifested and unmanifested, and nine is perfection in manifestation and is contained in the One. The ten would be the beginning of a new cycle of evolution. [The window design was changed after this was written.]

The light comes from above. There are no windows lower than the apex of the Pillars, and the Pillars stand on the outside of the Temple, all of which is deeply symbolical.

On each of the three sides there will be two doors, making six opening in all, the interior being the synthesis of all the openings, the seventh. Here we have the number seven again, with its correspondences on all the planes of being. [Note that a seventh door was added behind the Apex Altar.]

In the exact center of the Temple is placed the Central Altar. First is laid a base, underground, one foot thick and four feet square. This might symbolize the Four Masters whose particular work is the building of the Temple of Humanity. On the base is built a solid cube, composed of thirteen stones of equal dimensions, in the center of which are placed various Temple records and relics. Again the thirteen, the number of the Christ, the Symbol of Sacrifice.

Resting on this Cube is a solid Tetrad, three feet in height. This symbolizes the Upper Triad, the Higher Self, resting on and dominating the lower quaternary or Animal Man. This is the sacrificial Altar, the process of conquering the lower animal self and transmuting its forces into the higher self. The neophyte prostrates himself upon the altar, is burned by the fires of renunciation and the anguish of self-restraint and abnegation; and out of the flames arises the glorified Christ — the Divine Essence — which returns again to its Father-Mother in Heaven. Of course, we realize that this is purely symbolic, that it corresponds to a process of Transmutation which is going on constantly in the consciousness of all human beings, whether they have intentionally taken up the task of gaining Conscious Unity with their Inner Selves or not.

A point is reached, however, by everyone, where they are confronted with this almost superhuman task, and at that time the Knight is presented with His armor. He must wear the Helmet of Truth, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Sword of the Spirit of God.

Now let us take stock for a moment and see what is our equipment for this task. What exactly have we to do, and how shall we go about doing it? There is only one weapon

which will serve in this fight — “The Sword of the Spirit” (“the Spiritual Will”) — “The Warrior Eternal and Sure, whose Hour shall never strike.” It is there in the Heart of every one of us, and though most of the time is but a tiny flame flickering in the Center of our being, yet it can at will be called into action and used in the Great Fight with Self. The Self of Matter and the Self of the Spirit can never meet. One of the twain must disappear. There is no room for both! This lower animal man must be subdued and ruled by the Spiritual Will; and it must be done again and again until it becomes subservient to its master at all times, a willing and useful servant, instead of an obsessing evil force.

The will is a colorless attribute of the Mind. It may be used for any purpose and in any direction. It may be ruled and directed by the lower mind — the Kama-Manas — when it will draw the Ego down into Matter, or it may be directed and guided by the Higher Self, the Buddhi-Manas, or Christ-Consciousness, when it will draw our Consciousness upwards out of the lower self and toward Conscious Union with the Higher Triad.

The impulses to action come to us constantly through the day. There is usually a choice of Motive. Shall I do this? Or that? Sometimes we are impelled to do a little kindness, sometimes to do or say an unkind act or word; and as we select either the good or bad, we build into our Soul Substance a Stone which will either help us to climb upwards or draw us down into Matter.

So each of us is a Temple Builder, whether we will it or no, and each is an integral part of the Great Temple of Humanity, which is constantly becoming and in which each in turn must become a conscious builder someday.

The Animal Man craves sensation. Kama, the Desire Principle in each human being and in all things, calls to us to seek gratification in the objects of sense, to satisfy our craving (not always necessarily in low sensual life) but in any of the feelings which come to us through the sense of sight, touch, taste, etc. The Divine Side of us calls to us to seek satisfaction in Spiritual Things; in anything *outside* of our sense nature.

In the very center of the roof of the Temple is an eye — the eye of Shiva. This is the Watcher, the Messenger from above, who guides and directs the Neophyte. The messages from the Watcher come into the Mind of the Student through the Pineal Gland, and must be connected with the Heart and sent out from it in actual pulsating waves of effort toward the uplifting and advancement of Human Progress.

As the Mind is concentrated on the Inner Things, gradually there is a growth of Self-Conscious Union with the greater Eternal Forces back of our Sense Life. The Path from

the Outer Gates of the Temple, in through the Pillars and the Outer Porch, through the Altar of Sacrifice, and thence up the Antaskarana or channel which connects the Outer with the Unmanifest-side of things, consists really in the gradual awakening of the Powers of Intuition, obedience to the Voice of Conscience, and a strict and unremitting reigning in and governing of the Animal which is in each of us.

In conclusion, I cannot do better than read the "Call to Arms" which was given to the few people who were originally drawn together by the Master, to form the nucleus of the Temple of the People.

"Warriors of Light, Warriors of Truth, I salute you, in the name of the Great White Brotherhood. Go forth to battle, with the Powers of Darkness, armed with the Sword of the Spirit of God, the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Helmet of Eternal Truth. See to it, then, that no stain rest on that armor, no rust on that sword, that you may become one with us, on that Great Day: 'Be With Us. Be With Us.'"

— Ernest Harrison  
August 1923