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Between The Pillars The Membership “Decline”

By R. Theron Dunn

There are those that claim that Regular Freemasonry’s membership is in a freefall decline. Those of us that are regular masons have denied that, and noted that the decline is due, primarily, to the passing of our older brothers as the Great Architect of the Universe calls them to that lodge which never closes.

The Grand Lodge of California has seen the decline slow, and begin, in fact, to reverse itself as we continue the upward trend in degree conferrals which started over seven years ago. For example, in the fiscal year:

2006 our lodges conferred 4,260 degrees, 1,840 Entered Apprentices, 1,223 Fellowcrafts, and 1,197 Masters.

2007 our lodges conferred 4,405 degrees, 1,951 Entered Apprentices, 1,236 Fellowcrafts, and 1,218 Masters. As a matter of note, 2007 had more entered apprentices initiated than any other year since 1988, and more total degrees since 1991. In this year alone, we received 1,968 petitions for membership

The membership is growing again, with more and more petitions and more and more masters being raised. Its great to see, and puts the lie to the predictions (actually

hopes) of those opposed to regular Masonry and their claims of doom and gloom for Freemasonry.

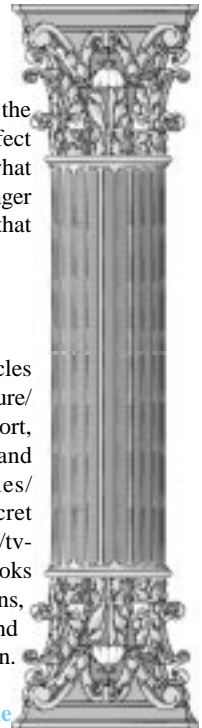
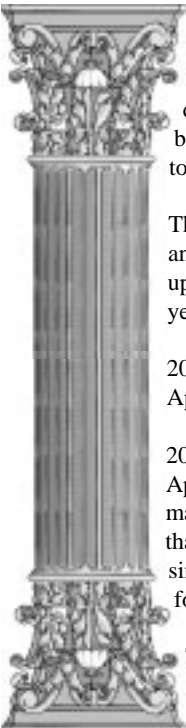
Why is the fraternity growing?

Well, the honest answer to that has little to do with the Fraternity’s efforts per se. The change is due to a perfect storm of public awareness, offering the candidates what they are seeking, giving them value for their time, a younger membership, and filling the vacancy in their hearts that our modern society is creating.

Public Awareness

Due to movies like National Treasure, magazine articles like Inside the Masons (www.usnews.com/usnews/culture/articles/050905/5masons.htm) in News and World Report, episodes of The Discovery Channel Conspiracies and Myths (www.discoverychannel.co.uk/conspiracies/organisations/freemasons/index.shtml) and The Secret History of the Freemasons (<http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-schedules/series.html?paid=1.403.30553.31418.2>), books like Dan Brown’s The DaVinci Code, Angels and Demons, Brad Meltzer’s Book of Fate and numerous articles and press articles, Freemasonry has attracted a lot of attention.

Continued on Page 17 - Decline



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Of This Take Due Notice, and Govern Yourselves Accordingly:

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Featured Articles

Catechism Corner:

The Significance of the Sacred Triad Catechism By Dr. John Nagy	3
Gods in Lodge By Br. Piero Vitellaro Zuccarello	8
Four Faces of Freemasonry By R. Theron Dunn	8
The Tracing Board By Giorgio Rocchi	9
The Three Columns or Pillars By Bro. Jean-Michel David	9
Initiation by Br. Bruce Nevin	10
A Refection on the Symbolism of the Point Within a Circle By P. Todd Decker ...	10
The Outer Portico by Theron Dunn	11

Letters to the Editor



The staff at the Lodgeroom International would like to invite you to send your comments in for inclusion in the magazine. This magazine is for you, and we would like to hear what you think about the

articles and about the magazine. If you have any questions about the articles, or would like to ask the author a question, please feel free to send them in as well.

Send your comments to:

editor@lodgeroominternational.com

We will run your letters in the magazine and on the Lodgeroom US Lodgeroom International Magazine forum. We look forward to hearing from you!

Regular Features

Between The Pillars	2
Tim Bryce On...	
The Necessity of Lodge Audits	4
Writing A Press Release	5
Other Masonic Publications	7
Masonic Blogs Worth Visiting	12
Masonic Humor	26
The Last Word	28

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Catechism Corner

By Br. John S. Nagy

An Occasional Contribution of Light from a Not So Occasional Contributor.

MASONIC WARNING: Although all of what is written below is openly available to everyone with access to archaic books, if you're on a Masonic track, it's wise that you save reading this until after you're raised a Master Mason.

The Significance of the Sacred Triad Catechism

It is impossible to give the Master's Word save in the presence of the Three. Equally, it's impossible not to give the Master's Word if the Three are present! – Dr. John S. Nagy

Summary:

There's a lot of speculation about what the Master's Word might be. Ritual tells us that it was lost due to the untimely death of one of three Grand Masters. Upon further inspection, *one can clearly see that all three Grand Masters still exist* and that the Master's Word is not as lost as has been reported.

It was about 5 years into my Masonic Raising when I began to understand what was most important in giving my Word. I thought that being my Word was just a matter of making sure that I followed through on what I promised. From what I believed, this was just a matter of will power and not overcommitted myself in any one direction. What I didn't realize is that ritual speaks to us on this topic in many wonderful and unexpected ways.

The most wonderful way I found though is what Ritual has to say about the support required for giving the Master's Word. *Hidden in plain view for all who can see are three conditions that a Master Mason must be both aware of and act on should he ever give his Word to God, himself or another human being.*

Interestingly enough, *should these conditions not exist, it is a good indication that a Master Mason will fail to manifest his Word as he states it. Conversely, knowing what these conditions are helps a Master Mason know when other people will fail in manifesting their Words when given.* Having this piece of knowledge available allows for far better choices when both giving and receiving any Words exchanged.

What I put forth to you is catechism derived from historical documents where these conditions are

clearly expressed. As before, I found that simply asking obvious questions and searching for answers started the unfolding of a wonder filled catechism that others and I have found quite informative, very interesting and most enjoyable.

Here now for your perusal, enjoyment and possible further enlightenment is the Catechism that I provide on this subject during Masonic Education spots in Lodges around my area.

One final note or two: The greatest challenge many Masons have is to make sure one honors their Obligation and the laws of their Jurisdiction. Keeping this in mind, I made sure to the best of my ability that this specific catechism came from historical documents and not from current day ritual. It may not match your Jurisdiction's ritual exactly but the Light it has to offer is as significant today as it was then.

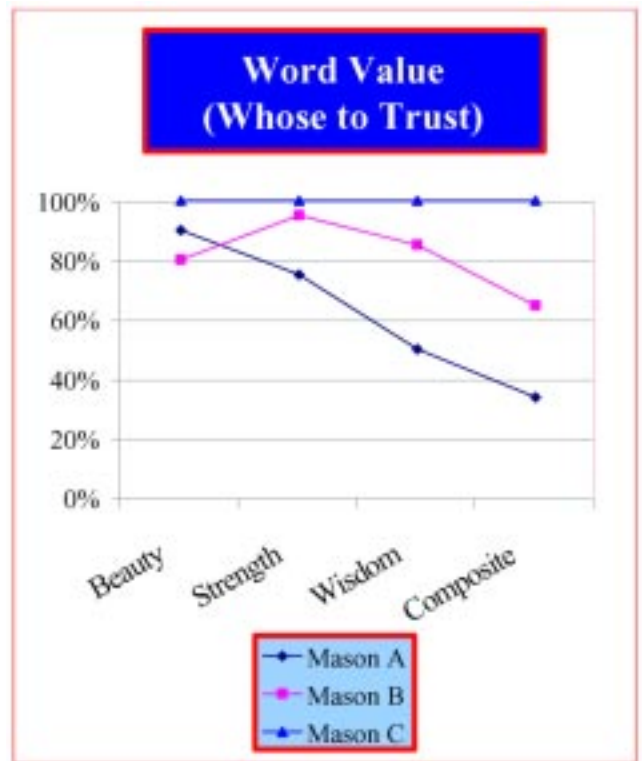
In addition, I've purposefully not footnoted this catechism in the hopes that you will use its hints as a road map to find much valuable treasure. To aid you in this I've provided the references used to create this herein.

- § Duncan's Monitor and Ritual
- § Webb's Masonic Monitor By Thomas Smith Webb, Edition 1865
- § The Volume of Sacred Law

May this Catechism shine a bright Light on your current day ritual and your life as well!

Enjoy!

Brother Dr. John S. Nagy
<http://www.coach.net>



PS – Everything herein can be found within Blue Lodge Masonry. What you're about to read will make sense to you. It will make even more sense to you should you know the True Master's Word.

The Significance of the Sacred Triad Catechism

- I: Are you a Mason?
- R: That I am.
- I: How do I know you to be such?
- R: By certain outward displays that denote my character?
- I: What is your character?
- R: It is revealed in all I say and do.
- I: What is character?
- R: It is the mark I make upon all that is movable and immovable under the canopy of Heaven.
- I: How do I know that your mark has value?
- R: You have my Word that it is.

Continued on Page 14 - Catechism



Tim Bryce On...

By Wr. Tim Bryce, PM, MPS

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Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

"A Foot Soldier for Freemasonry"

The Necessity Of Lodge Audits

"The audit is an essential part of the checks and balances in the Lodge." - Bryce's Law

Like any organization, be it a public corporation or a nonprofit institution, it is necessary to periodically review the financial status of the entity which is typically performed on an annual basis (such as at the end of the financial year). Such analysis is essential in order to verify that accounting is being properly performed and that the powers that be are competently and correctly discharging their fiduciary responsibilities. It is also invaluable to assure no improprieties are being performed on the institution's finances. I cannot image any institution, large or small, profit or nonprofit, not performing such a function.

In accounting there are fundamentally three levels of review: a "compilation" to check if the numbers add up correctly; a "financial review" which checks the numbers and comments accordingly, and; an "audit" which is an extensive review of numbers and procedures (and a costly undertaking I might add). In Freemasonry, we tend to avoid examinations of any kind from outside parties, preferring instead to analyze the Lodge's finances internally. In my neck of the woods, the

Lodge Audit is the responsibility of the Lodge's Finance Committee to perform which is chaired by the Senior Warden and two other committeemen appointed by the Worshipful Master. These two other committeemen specifically do not include the Secretary, the Treasurer, or the Worshipful Master, since they are part of the process under review. Hopefully, the two other committeemen have some experience in accounting but quite often they do not and usually consist of Brothers who are experienced businessmen or Past Masters.

Remarkably, I have seen Lodges who haven't a

clue as to how to perform a Lodge Audit and, as a result, shy away from performing it or do a superficial job. Either way, this does a disservice to the Lodge which depends on accurate financial records. Actually, the process is not that difficult and can be performed in a reasonably short period of time assuming you know what to look for.

There are basically two things to examine in performing a Lodge Audit: procedures and data. Procedurally, all income and expenses typically begin with the Secretary who records both in a ledger of some kind, either a cash book or using



computer software (although cash books are fine, electronic spreadsheets and financial software offers the ability to automatically total accounts, thus simplifying the audit as well as for budgeting purposes). For every expense, large or small, the Secretary is to write a voucher which is to be countersigned by the Worshipful Master and passed on to the Treasurer for payment. Some Lodges have their bills paid automatically each month electronically, such as for utilities and telephones for example. Regardless how the bill is to be paid, either electronically or manually, all expenses require an authorized voucher.

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Money is collected by the Secretary (and recorded as mentioned), before being transferred to the Treasurer for deposit in a financial institution. The Treasurer should then record all transactions (both debits and credits) either using a register (check book) or using an electronic banking system (such as Quicken, MS Money, or Quick Books).

<http://www.quicken.com/>
<http://www.microsoft.com/money/>
<http://www.QuickBooks.com/>

The benefit of these electronic banking systems is that they are very reliable in calculating balances and provides a convenient means to audit transactions (as well as monitoring budgets).

The Treasurer should also have on hand an organized set of bank statements which the Finance Committee should examine carefully and compare to the transactions as recorded by both the Treasurer and Secretary.

To summarize the items to be reviewed by the Finance Committee:

- * Secretary's ledger.
- * Vouchers as issue by the Secretary.
- * Lodge minutes (optional) - should contain some insight about financial transactions.
- * Treasurer's register (check book or electronic banking system).
- * Statements with all financial institutions the Lodge does business with, should be filed chronologically.
- * Canceled checks - this may be optional as many banks no longer return canceled checks.
- * Paid bills.
- * A Chart of Accounts (if the Lodge has one) denoting how finances are to categorized and recorded. <http://www.freemasoninformation.com/bryce/establishingachartofaccounts.htm>
- * A copy of the current Budget (if the Lodge has one).

The Finance Committee should now be in a position to write the Lodge Audit. This should be done fairly and impartially with no malice or favoritism. The audit should address the following considerations:

1. Are all expenses being properly recorded by the Secretary? (Are they being posted to a standard Chart of Accounts?)
2. For each individual expense, was an authorized voucher properly issued (and signed by both the Secretary and the



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- Worshipful Master)?
3. Are all moneys received being properly recorded by the Secretary? (Are they being posted to a standard Chart of Accounts?)
 4. Are there any incompatibilities between the transactions recorded by the Secretary and the Lodge minutes?
 5. Are all financial transactions being properly recorded by the Treasurer? (Are they being posted to a standard Chart of Accounts?)
 6. Does the income and expenses recorded by both the Secretary and the Treasurer match? Are there any inconsistencies?
 7. Does the Treasurer maintain organized copies of all bank statements?
 8. Does the income and expenses recorded by both the Treasurer and the bank statements match? Are there any inconsistencies?
 9. Does the Treasurer maintain organized copies of all paid bills?
 10. How well do the financial transactions match the operating Budget of the Lodge?



Writing A Press Release

"We write to communicate, not to put people to sleep." - Bryce's Law

Press releases are used to disseminate information to a variety of news organizations that can broadcast your message to your members, neighbors, friends, and potential members in the community. The three steps include:

1. **DEVELOP A CONTACT LIST** - prior to releasing your press release, develop a data base of people who may be interested in receiving news about your Lodge. This should include:
 - * Members of the press - including the major newspapers and community publications, and local web sites that distribute news
 - * Local television, radio, and cable operators (cable systems like to broadcast local announcements).
 - * Web Masters of web sites specializing

in local news.

- * Neighboring Lodges - those typically in your Masonic District.
- * The District Deputy Grand Master and District Instructor.
- * Grand Lodge.
- * Lodge members - although you will normally want to broadcast such news to your membership via the Trestleboard newsletter, you may also want to broadcast a press release to the membership for the broadest possible coverage.
- * Other Masonic affiliates, e.g., Order of Eastern Star, Job's Daughters, DeMolay, Rainbow Girls, the Shrine, Scottish Rite and York Rite bodies, Knights Templar, Grottos, etc.
- * State, Zone & District Chairmen of Public Relations and Publicity - who may be instrumental in getting you additional press.
- * The Editor of your Grand Lodge magazine.
- * The Editor of various Masonic eZines, such as "The Lodgeroom International," "The Working Tools," and "Rising Point."

The final report should mention what was examined and itemize any problems that require correction. Bottom-line, the Finance Committee should determine if the Lodge's finances are being properly recorded and managed. Keep the report short and to the point. Do not be vindictive or complimentary, keep it all "matter of fact" and professional. If necessary, recommendations for improving the management of finances should also be noted. All members of the Finance Committee should sign the Lodge Audit. There may be other elements and formal reports required by your Grand Jurisdiction to complete, what I have mentioned here represents the basics.

The Lodge Audit represents an essential part of the "checks and balances" in managing the financial resources of the Lodge. It is a serious responsibility to perform, one that should not be taken lightly. We may not like what the audit has to say, but it is an invaluable safety valve which all Lodge officers should take to heart.

Keep the Faith!



Tim Bryce On...

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<http://www.lodgeroominternational.com/library/LRINTMAG.html>
<http://www.hawthornefortitude200.com/theworkingtools.htm>
http://www.bonisteelm1.org/MASONIC_REVIEW.htm

A good mailing list and e-mail address book can be very useful for developing a contact list. One last note in this regard, please remember e-mail is not infallible. To assure your e-mail goes through to the designated receiver, you should use the "Return Receipt" option which electronically acknowledges receipt of your message.

Free Internet Press Release Distribution Outlets

In addition to the press contacts mentioned above, there are many venues on the Internet to distribute press releases, some requiring a processing or membership fee. However, there are some free ones on the web you should definitely check out:

- * Free-Press-Release.com <http://www.free-press-release.com/submit/free-press-release.php>
- * Pressbox.Co.UK
<http://www.pressbox.co.uk/cgi-bin/links/add.cgi>

- * PR Leap is free, but you must sign-up to become a free member to use it. When registered, you can submit news accordingly.
<http://www.prleap.com/>
<http://www.prleap.com/membership.html>
http://www.prleap.com/press/press_release_add.html

2. **COMPOSITION** - Compose the text for your press release carefully. Remember, most editors will simply copy your text and print it as you gave it to them. Therefore, write it as if you were the editor.

There are three parts for composing the press release:

1. **Headline** - keep it snappy or catchy. Always print it in upper case letters.
2. **Body** - begin the body with a dateline; e.g., TAMPA, FL (May 1, 2007). Write your text tightly (do not ramble, get to the point and move on). It is very important your text convey the 5-W's (Who, did What, When, Where, and Why). Avoid jargon

an Editor would find confusing, particularly Masonic titles, e.g., "Most Worshipful", "Worshipful," etc. Also, do not include any HTML code unless your contact specifically requests it. And by all means, make it newsworthy.

3. For further info - be sure to clearly define who should be contacted for additional information. If you have a web site, be sure to include the URL web address (e.g., [http://www...\).](http://www...)

In all likelihood you will be preparing the press release with a word processor; in this event, be sure to check the spelling and grammar. There is nothing more embarrassing than sending out a press release with typographical errors in it.

For more tips on how to write a press release, see: <http://www.press-release-writing.com/>

USE OF PHOTOS



Whenever possible, the press release should be accompanied with a photo, either printed or digitized (JPG is the preferred format, although GIF and TIF are still widely used). When using digital photography, provide the photograph as is (with color) and allow the Editor to crop and touchup the photo (including converting it to black and white). In other words, leave it to the professionals to handle.

DISTRIBUTION - Although press releases distributed on paper are certainly accepted by the press, the preferred format today is by e-mail, hence the need to have an effective e-mail address

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book. It is easier to copy and edit text from an e-mail than to transcribe a paper press release. In fact, your chances of having the press release printed are better if you use e-mail instead of paper. E-mail is simply faster and more convenient to use.

If you want to attach a text file to your e-mail, be sure it is in a plain text format (ASCII) as opposed to a specific format for a word processor, e.g., MS Word. Not everyone will have the same word processor you have, but everyone will be able to read a plain ASCII text file.

Press releases can also be distributed by fax packages but this is becoming rare as e-mail has become the distribution channel of choice.

Try to personalize each press release by including a friendly note to the Editor; for example: "Bob - I thought you would find the enclosed press release of particular interest to your readers. Let me know. Regards, Jim." Developing a rapport with your

press contacts is important and improves your chances for having your news published.

CONCLUSION

Although writing the content of a press release hasn't really changed in many years, the method for distributing them is radically different than years past. In fact, you now have a better chance of having your release published if you send it electronically than through the post office. With a little imagination, a good word processor and the Internet, you can work miracles for the fraternity.

Keep the Faith!



Other Masonic Publications of Interest



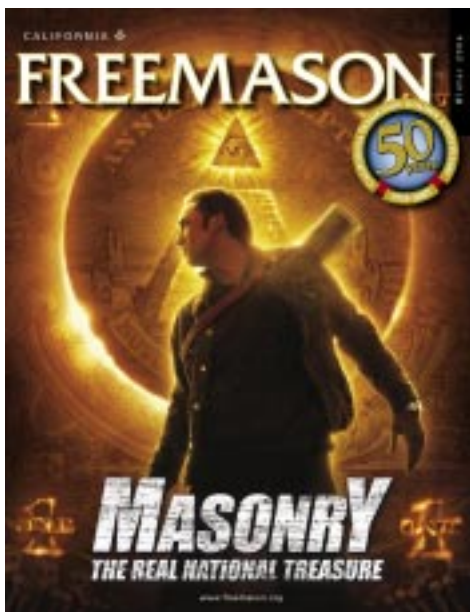
Man of the Year
Solomon Wallace
The Honorable Solomon Wallace

Phylaxis Magazine

Phylaxis magazine is published quarterly by the Phylaxis society. The First Quarter issue covers diverse issues, including the Man of the Year.

In this issue, we feature an article about two Texas Masons, one of whom marries a woman of color, and the other who struggled for purity of the blood of the white race. We have an excellent review of the recognition process in Ontario, Canada.

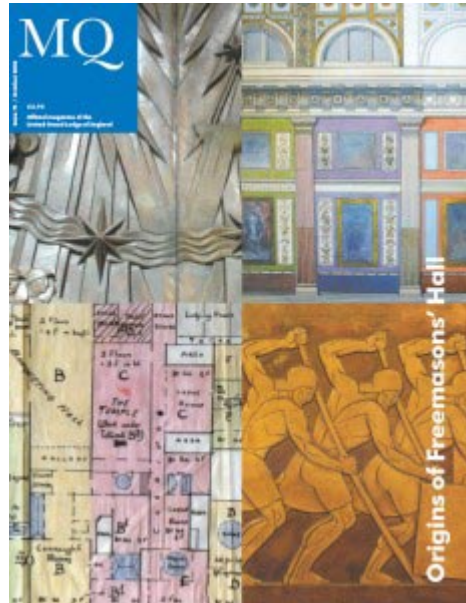
We have a heated debate about the actual date the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was established, and the new president of the Phylaxis Society urges Prince Hall Masons to correct the errors in their history perpetuated by those who may not have our interests at heart.



The California Freemason is published six times

annually by the Grand Lodge of California. It may be downloaded free by going to:

www.cafreemason.com/

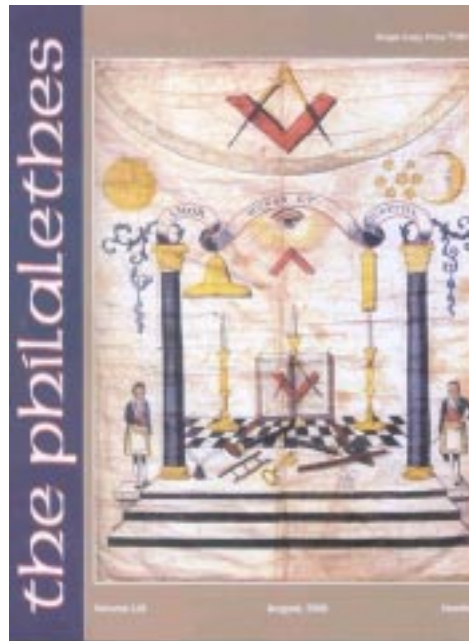


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THE PHILAETHES

The International Masonic Research Society

The name of the Society is pronounced fill a [as in a-bate] lay thess with the accent on the third syllable - lay. It is derived from two Greek words, philos and alethes. It means lover of truth. The Philaethes Society was founded on October 1, 1928, by a group of Masonic Students. It was designed for Freemasons desirous of seeking and spreading Masonic light. In 1946 The Philaethes Magazine was established to publish articles by and for its members. And to this day publishes 6 times a year. The sole purpose of this Research Society is to act as a clearing house for Masonic knowledge. It exchanges ideas, researches problems confronting Freemasonry, and passes them along to the Masonic world.

Its membership consists of Members and 40 Fellows who are Master Masons in good standing in a Regular Masonic Lodge anywhere in the world. Today the Society has members within 185 Regular Grand Lodges. More information about the Society can be found at <http://freemasonry.org>

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http://www.lodgeroomuk.net/phplists/public_html/lists/

Gods In Lodge

By Bro. Piero Vitellaro Zuccarello

The masonic temple, as a whole, is a symbol of the cosmos. The word "lodge" stems from Sanskrit "loka", which means place, world, community, common practice: it is the place *par excellence*, the length of which is comprised between West and East, its width between North to South, its height between Nadir and Zenith".¹ The starred sky lays over the lodge; together with the sun, the moon and the zodiac, it completes the temple's astral symbolism.

Gods are still in it. Although the external Greek-roman polytheistic cult came to an end in as a result of Emperor Theodosius's edict, in 380 C. E., the intellectual principles, symbolized by the gods are still present in the Masonic temple. The esoteric researcher compares them with the monotheistic exotericism's angels and, going beyond the apparent duality, perceives various aspects of the unique divinity; nothing exterior to oneself, but rather interior states to be realized within.

On this subject, René Guénon wrote: "Actually, the states we are talking about differ from the human state more than any western philosopher could ever imagine, nevertheless, and regardless the beings who actually occupy them, they can be realized by any other, even by a human being in another state of the manifestation... We have already noticed that what man theologically says about angels can be repeated for the superior states of the being; likewise, in Middle-ages' astrological symbolism "heavens", that is planetary spheres and stars, not only represent those states, but also the initiatic degrees to which their realization corresponds; even more, in the Hindu tradition, Deva and Asuras symbolize the superior and inferior states, respectively, *vis-à-vis* the human state".²

The Supreme Principle, which in Masonic terms man calls The Great Architect of the Universe and also Universal Man, is found in the equilateral triangle which is suspended over the Worshipful Master's chair. Inside it there is the Jewish *Tetragrammaton*, a *yod* or an "all seeing eye".

"The *Tetragrammaton* always occupies a central position, being expressly placed between the sun and the moon. From this it follows that the eye within this triangle should not be represented in the form of an ordinary left or right eye, since these are really the sun and the moon, corresponding respectively to the right and left eyes of 'Universal Man' insofar as the latter is identified with the 'macrocosm'. For the symbolism to be entirely correct, this eye must be a 'frontal' or 'central' eye, that is, a 'third eye', whose likeness to the *yod* is still more striking; and it is indeed this 'third eye' that 'sees all' in the perfect simultaneity of the eternal present."³

Various symbols represent as many principal

attributes which are tied to the Greek-Roman myth, either directly or indirectly and to other traditions. Out of them, only three refer to the classic myth. They are the statues of Pallas, Venus and Heracles (or even Junos, as discussed below); and the other three, the sun, the moon and the starry heaven, refer to gods. Last, but not the least, let me recall another important god-symbol, Janus Bifrons (double-faced), which is not in the lodge but is in the Masonic calendar, Christianized as the two Saints John.

Janus

The Masonic feast of Saint John Evangelist fall on the 27th December, near to Winter Solstice, and that of Saint John Baptist on 24th June, the Summer Solstice. In those same periods *Collegia Fabrorum*, the Roman crafts, celebrated Janus.¹

Janus is properly the *Door Man* who opens and closes the doors (*januæ*); with reference to the annual astronomical cycle these doors correspond to the Solstices. Indeed, Janus was the god of initiation; to him Romans dedicated the first month: *Januarius* (*January*).

Janus is double-faced. On the one side, he looks

at the past, on the other one, to the future. He holds a scepter in the right hand and a key in the left one, symbols, respectively, of "greater mysteries" and "lesser mysteries".² Worthy of note is his association with coins, since most Roman coins reproduced his picture. In ancient times monetization was a sacred art.³ Janus is eventually believed to have introduced men to navigation's art, hence the nautical symbolism.

The Sun

In lodge, the sun's symbol is placed in correspondence with the Orator's chair. The sun's immutability makes it reflect the main cosmic immutability. While the moon changes itself through its phases, the sun arises, culminates and sets, being always equal to itself. It does not die at sun-set but "descends into the netherworld", with a salvation's function, and resurrects the subsequent day.⁴

Among the various solar deities which man finds in different traditions, the Greek-Roman god Apollo is quite important for Freemasonry. "Apollo, in the Greeks' classic theology, represents the

Continued on Page 16 -- Gods

The Four Faces of Freemasonry

By R. Theron Dunn

Freemasonry has stood the test of time, and as we move toward the end of the first decade, admittedly two years off, things are getting better for our ancient and honorable craft. The decline in numbers is slowing or turning into growth, Masonic Education is again being implemented in lodge, and changes are being implemented in most jurisdictions to keep Masonry fresh and relevant to today's masons.

So today, I wanted to take a look at the four faces of Freemasonry and what they mean to our craft.

The First Face of Freemasonry: Younger Masons

More than ever before in the history of the craft, the fraternity is appealing to younger men, so the first, and most hopeful of the faces is the "youthening" of the craft. Movies, books, educational specials, newspapers, magazines, and word of mouth have raised the visibility of the craft. Couple that with the social vacuity, the internet, increased work and family demands, and you have a population of men seeking... more.

Young men today are seeking more value, more real and sincere fellowship, more social relevance, a sense of belonging to something more important than themselves. Politics is vacuous and worse, its backbiting, self aggrandizing politics of personal destruction, with no side seeming to offer anything of great value but more bloviation, and the work environment isn't much better.

Job security is non existent, and friendships and connections made through work are tenuous and fluid. Men want and need something stable in their lives, something with meaning, something unchanging, timeless and yes, spiritual All of these factors, and many more have young men are flocking to the craft seeking the meaning and the sense of belonging that is missing in today's increasingly isolated "society".

The Grand Lodge of California noted at a recent Junior Warden's Retreat that since the formation of the Grand Lodge of California in 1850, the average age at which a man joins a lodge has been 47. This was unchanged for 155 years. However, in 2005, the Masonic code was changed to allow men of at least 18 years to join, and since then, the average age has dropped to 37.

Freemasonry recognizes that change and is making adjustments which are overdue, to address the needs of these, in most cases, well educated members. These are men which have researched the craft before joining, have often read books about it, and made an informed decision and are truly seeking to better themselves and society through freemasonry.

These men want the education, philosophy, history, and in many cases, the esotericism which Freemasonry holds out and lays claim to providing. They want more than their father's and

Continued on Page 18 -- Faces

The Tracing Board¹

By Giorgio Rocchi

Some Brethren think that that the Tracing Board, or the Trestle Board, is superfluous, because it repeats architectonic and decorative elements which are already in the Temple.

In their opinion the Tracing Board was useful in ancient times, when Freemasons met in private houses or in taverns, so it remind them the tools of each degree; nowadays, however, it is completely useless. They think so because they are unaware of the main law which rules any symbol, be it sonorous, visual or otherwise figurative, that is, the relationship between the symbol and the relevant symbolized object, the latter being always superior to the former.

A symbol lies always at a lower stage in respect of the reality which it symbolizes, for it has to be perceived through human senses, while the same

cannot happen for a metaphysical idea. Therefore, the Tracing Board's symbols allude to a super-human reality.

The manifold meanings of the same symbol have not to cheat the interpreter: each symbol has various meanings because it can be considered at various levels; this difference, however, is always reflecting an analogy's relationship.

We can therefore say that the Tracing Board does never reproduce the Temple's architectonic elements; if ever, the contrary is true, that is, man took elements out of the Tracing Board to decorate the Temple, as it has happened with regard to other traditional arts, whereby symbols became ornaments so to survive even if man does not understand them any longer.

Even admitting that the Tracing Board does not symbolize the Temple, but metaphysical realities,

man could then wonder whether these realities can be illustrated by the Temple's structures, so to make the Tracing Board superfluous. On this subject man can elaborate further considerations which however lead us to the same conclusion, that is, the need of the Tracing Board which cannot be substituted by anything else.

With regard to visual or figurative symbols we notice that some of them are traced when the rite starts and are deleted at the end. This is not only a precaution against profanes' curiosity, but rather the consequence of the close link existing between symbol and rite, so that the former has no ground to exist outside the latter.

This happens for many *yantras*, in Hindu tradition, and also for the Tracing Board, which was drawn on the sand or on the earth and then erased, in ancient times, while today man lays a picture on the floor and then withdraws it, when the Masonic works are over. Man cannot proceed in the same way with the whole Temple's furniture, at least easily and quickly.

Taking an example from magic ceremonies, man can say that the Tracing Board works like a condenser of subtle energies which, once attuned and amplified, should attract the *Shekina*, the spiritual influence.

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence"² means also that man can attract spiritual influences by means of certain techniques which are of essence in certain rituals.

In some magic ceremonies the sorcerer traces a circle which represents his will and acts as a condenser of subtle energies which shall protect him against the forces he will later evoke.

By tracing and erasing the circle, from time to time, the sorcerer expresses his will and makes the circle valuable and meaningful. Should he trace the circle once for ever, it would soon be "discharged", deprived of any effectiveness.

The Tracing Board works in the same manner. The Brethren's energies flow together in it. For this reason the Tracing Board will not be lain immediately, but only after the works have ritually started, so to have enough time to attune energies.

There is another aspect to examine, that is, "the relationship of inversed analogy's law".

According to this law, the first in the principal order is the last and the smallest in the manifestation: "but many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first".³

The main feature of this relationship consists in that, that the perspectives is actually upset when man moves from the physical plan to the

The Three Columns or Pillars

By Bro. Jean-Michel David

Many of our brethren on the continent of Europe may be puzzled even by the title: *three* columns or pillars? Certainly *two*, as pillars, is pretty much universally understood in Freemasonry, but three is something that is more peculiar - but not exclusive - to Freemasonic forms as developed, especially in the Anglophonic world.

For those of us in that world, the inverse may very well be the case, with a sense of perplexity that a fellow Freemason seems confused at the mention of the three pillars.

So firstly, let's make a clear distinction between the *two* pillars and the three: they are not related in the minds of many, and in various descriptions found in both ritual and documents. Having said this, there are of course many ways they can be found to be closely tied by both historical development and, perhaps more importantly for exegesis, by the active thinking imagination. I shall present one such perspective in this paper.

For the sake of those brethren who are not familiar with the three pillars, they are found *within* the Temple or

Lodge room (I shall henceforth use the latter term by personal preference). In contradistinction, the *two* pillars are those that the Torah (the Pentateuch) tells us are placed at the porchway or entrance to King Solomon's Temple: they remain outside.

The three pillars, inside the Lodge room, also formerly provided the minimal amount of lighting required, upon which each bears a candle (or its modern equivalent: an electric bulb in too many

Continued on Page x - Pillars



Floor Plan "A"

Floor Plan "B"

Continued on Page 19 - Tracing

Initiation

By Br. Bruce Nevin

An initiation is a beginning.

Every initiation has an outward aspect carried out by particular people, with you, at a certain time and place. At the same time, there is always an interior aspect taking place within you. The inner initiation is the true significance of the outer events, and is their purpose or aim.

The outward ritual is almost always imperfect. One person may fumble some words or even omit whole paragraphs. Floorwork may stumble, ritual actions may be malformed, jogged out of place, or forgotten. And even if the officers perform flawlessly, your perception of the ritual as the initiate is incomplete. The very meanings of the words are not immediately available to you, much less the symbolism.

Later, as you witness from the sidelines the ritual being performed with new initiates, the significance of different aspects opens to you more and more. Each such witnessing furthers your inward initiation.

The more you involve yourself as a participant, the more light is opened to you; or, more truly, the more you open to the light.

The purpose of initiation is to change people—to make good men better, as we say. Ritual works within you because your subconscious mind is always amenable to suggestion. Since it is your subconscious mind that builds and daily reconstitutes what you are as a person, that little word “always” is worthy of your careful consideration. Your subconscious mind may take absolutely anything that you experience or do or say or think as a suggestion, on the basis of which she changes the way you are constituted as a person. Feelings make thoughts, thoughts form words, words lead to actions, actions form into habits, habits congeal as character. And there you are.

The philosopher Søren Kierkegaard wrote a small book titled *Purity of Heart is to Will One Thing*. What is it to purify the heart, and so to will one thing? Surely, it is to know what you want. What is your heart’s desire? But that simple question “what do you want?” is much easier to ask than to answer.

We all have so many desires for and against this and that, jostling and competing with one another. We are like young Al Addin, who found an old lamp from which, when he rubbed to clean it, emerged a powerful Jinn. Only when we make a wish, a suggestion to our subconscious, and the spirit turns to do our bidding, another voice within cries “No, wait!” and substitutes a different wish. No sooner does the Jinn turned to the task than there is another wish, and then another, and so that mighty servant can only spin around like a whirlwind, doing nothing productive and maybe

even knocking things over by accident.

All these competing voices, where do they come from? All our lives we have collected should's and shouldn't's, musts and cannots, like barnacles. Advertising and media suggest that we will feel happy and fulfilled if we have this or that possession to represent ourselves to others with the trappings of style and success. That smiling man, that smooth-skinned, poised woman, they cannot possibly suffer the frustrations and petty conflicts that I have to deal with, and if I were successful like them it would all be smooth sailing for me too!

We know all about these tricks of the PR game consciously, intellectually, but our subconscious mind is naïve, like a child within us. We have to stop letting just every suggestion in willy-nilly. To do that requires a working relationship with your subconscious.

That’s not quite like rubbing dirt off an old lamp. It’s more like a courtship. It takes time, and persistence, and you have to care. This is how the fox put it to the little prince:

“Please—tame me!” *he said.*

“I want to, very much,” *the little prince replied.* “But I have not much time. I have friends to discover, and a great many things to understand.”

“One only understands the things that one tames,” *said the fox.* “Men have no time to understand anything. They buy things all ready made at the shops. But there is no shop anywhere where one can buy friendship, and so men have no friends any more. If you want a friend, tame me . . .”

What does that mean—’tame’?”

“It is an act too often neglected,” *said the fox.* “It means to establish ties.”

...

“What must I do, to tame you?” *asked the little prince.*

“You must be very patient,” *replied the fox.* “First you will sit down at a little distance from me—like that—in the grass. I shall look at you out of the corner of my eye, and you will say nothing. Words

Continued on Page 23 - Initiation

A Reflection on the Symbolism of the Point Within a Circle



By Brother P. Todd Decker
KT

Prepared for presentation on January 6, 2008, at the Masonic Breakfast group.

Brother Carl Claudy says in his introduction to Freemasonry for the Entered Apprentice, “No man may say when, where, or how the symbol began. From the earliest dawn of history a simple closed figure has been man’s symbol for Deity—the circle for some peoples, the triangle for others, and a circle or a triangle with a central point for still others.” Despite this wise disclaimer, I will outline some of the esoteric interpretations of this central Masonic symbol.

We are told in our lectures that the point represents an individual brother, the circle the boundary line of his duty to God and man, the two parallel lines the two Saint Johns, with a holy book at the top. In both ancient and modern symbology, the dot within a circle is a traditional symbol for the sun. But, I believe that the meaning of the symbologies much deeper than our exoteric teachings and basic symbology.

Albert Mackey takes us a little deeper from solar worship to a phallic interpretation—not the surface sexual phallus, but into the deeper aspect of generation. Under this structure, the point within the circle represents the union of the masculine



and feminine principles with the point indicating the sun and the circle the universe which is “invigorated and fertilized by his generative rays.”

Pike echos the same ideas but with further rigor in *Morals and Dogma*. Pike writes, “In the East of the Lodge [. . .] is the letter Yod. In the English and American Lodges the letter ‘G’ is substituted [. . .]. Yod is, in the Kabalah, the symbol of Unity, of the Supreme Deity, the first letter of the Holy Name; and also a symbol of the Great Kabalistic Triads. To understand its mystic meanings, you must open the pages of the [Zohar] and the Siphra de Zeniuth, and other kabalistic books, and ponder deeply on their meaning. It must suffice to say,

Continued on Page 25 - Circle

The Outer Portico

By R. Theron Dunn

Masonry is divided, as we all know, into three degrees, each revealing as much as it conceals to the candidate. Masonry is a progressive science, taught by degrees alone, with the candidate lead, over time, closer to the true secrets of Freemasonry.

The degrees serve multiple purposes, and in fact, are part of the guardians of the way to the true secrets of Freemasonry. Men join Masonry for many purposes, some, craven, others, social, and others, to truly become better men.

By craven, I refer to those who simply want to obtain the secrets of Freemasonry, having no interest in anything more. These men are confused by the initiatic experience, and extremely disappointed to find they have, by their time, obtained no secrets but a grip, a word, a due guard and a sign.

These rarely come back for the second degree, thinking that there are no secrets to obtain. Some, however, come back for the second degree, and seeing only a few more grips, words and signs, drop the fraternity, and go through lives having missed the greatest opportunity ever presented to them.



Those who join for social reasons are much like the craven ones who join, though these men, discovering that there is actually work required of them, also often drop out before or after their second degree. It is the rare craven or social animal that actually make it through the third degree, though, of course, we all know a few who do so.

The degrees, therefore, act as a kind of filter against the occasional mistake of the investigation committee.

Those who become Freemasons only for the sake of finding out the secret of the order, run a very great risk of growing old under the trowel without ever realizing their purpose. Yet there is a secret, but it is so inviolable that it has never been confided or whispered to anyone.

Those who stop at the outward crust of things imagine that the secret consists in words, in signs, or that the main point of it is to be found only in reaching the highest degree. This is a mistaken view: the man who guesses the secret of Freemasonry, and to know it you must guess it, reaches that point only through long attendance in the lodges, through deep thinking, comparison, and deduction. He would not trust that secret to his best friend in Freemasonry, because he is aware that if his friend has not found it out, he could not make any use of it

after it had been whispered in his ear. No, he keeps his peace, and the secret remains a secret.[1]

In the Entered Apprentice degree, the true seeker is reborn, from the profane outside, to the outer portico of the temple. Like an infant, through struggle and challenge, he opens his eyes to the new light of Freemasonry, and sees for the first time with new eyes.

Like a newborn, everything presented to him is new; he is the student of life. Like all students, knowledge comes to him in stages, in degrees. Each degree of Masonry grants new insights, new ways of seeing, and new ways of applying old knowledge.

When we were young, we were taught to add and subtract. Then we

were taught to multiply, then to divide. All along the way, the skills we mastered are expanded upon until we can find the area under an arc or the cosign of a tangent.

The same is true of Freemasonry, what we learn as an Entered Apprentice is expanded upon as Fellows of the Craft, and we look back on the lessons of the first degree and chuckle at how simple those lessons were... sometimes forgetting that the profound often seems simple in retrospect.

As we progress in the degrees, our eyes are opened further to the light, until as masters of the craft, we are told that we are now in possession of all the light that can be conferred upon us in a lodge of Master Masons. We possess the light, but we are now searchers, traveling men.

And what are we traveling in search of? More light in Masonry, of course. Our studies of the craft only begin when we are raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason. The foundation has been laid, the tools explained, the fundamentals mastered. It is then time to go out, measure our work and use the tools to erect a spiritual house with perfected stones.

As Entered Apprentices, we are on the outer portico of our journey in masonry, having taken the first steps. This is the allegory of the first degree. Yet, as Masters, we are told that we are always Entered Apprentices in the ritual.

When I was the Junior Warden, I studied to sit as Master in the first degree conferrals. One of the first things I noticed in opening the lodge was my question to the Senior Warden in opening the lodge:

Brother Senior Warden, Satisfy yourself that all present are Entered Apprentice Masons.

Worshipful Master, all present are Entered Apprentice Masons.

Now, looking at the brethren in the lodge, all were Master Masons, but the ritual, and the Senior Warden, all assured me they were Entered Apprentice Masons. We all proved it by giving the due guard and sign of Entered Apprentice Masons.

It occurred to me then that we are all still Entered Apprentices, on a certain level, and though as Masters, we symbolically worked in the Sanctum Sanctorum, we were all still on the outer portico, learning, and searching for more light.

May the blessings of heaven rest upon us and all regular masons, may brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue, cement us.

[1] Giovanni Giacomo Casanova, Memoirs, Volume 2a, Paris, p. 33

<http://romance-books.classic-literature.co.uk/memoirs-of-jacques-casanova/volume-2>

Masonic Blogs Worth Visiting



MASONIC TRAVELER
<http://masonictraveler.blogspot.com/>

THE ON-LINE FREEMASON
 AN IDEPTH LOOK AT THE INTERNET AND WHATS AVAILABLE FOR FREEMASONS AND THOSE INTERESTED IN FREEMASONRY ON LINE. AS WELL AS ARTICLES OF INTEREST.
<http://freemasonbondi.blogspot.com/>

<http://BeaconOfMasonicLight.blogspot.com>

A Beacon of Masonic Light



Freemasonry: Its not about *me* changing *them*, its about *me* changing *me!*

WARNING: This Blog Does NOT have Heretical Tendencies



FREEMASONS FOR DUMMIES
<http://freemasonsfordummies.blogspot.com/>

The Relevant Mason

Relevant Masonic Philosophies in a Post Modern World

<http://www.therelevantmason.com/>

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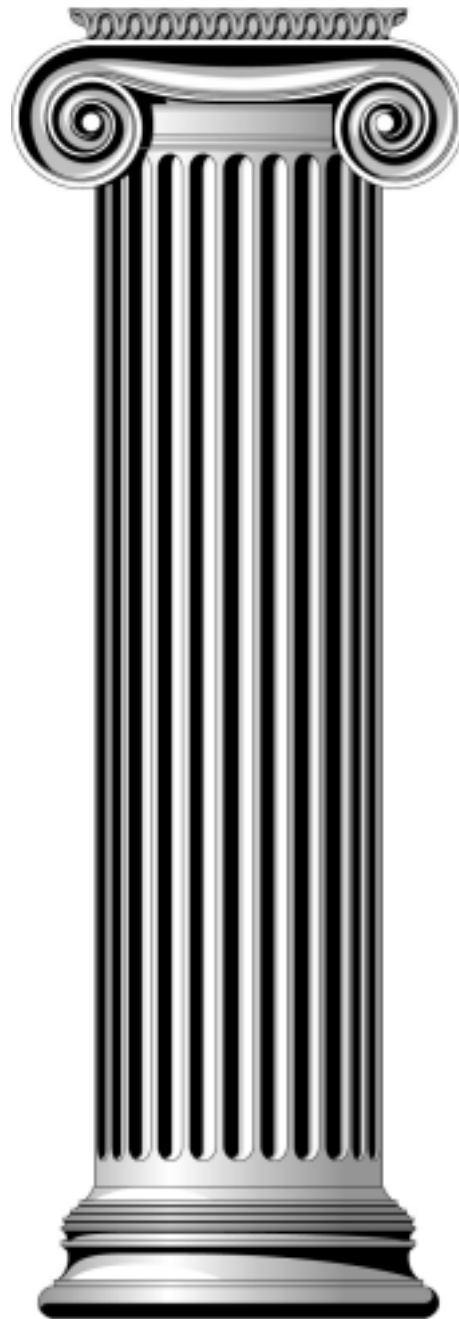
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Catechism

Continue from Page 3

- I: What value is your Word?
 R: It is the Word of a Master Mason.
 I: What gives the Word of a Master Mason Value?
 R: It has value only when given under specific conditions.
 I: How many conditions are there?
 R: They are three in number.
 I: What conditions are these?
 R: The first condition is that there is Wisdom present to both give and receive such a Master's Word.
 I: What's more?
 R: The second condition is that there is Resource present to both give and receive such a Master's Word.
 I: What's further?
 R: The third and final condition is that there is Mastery present to both give and receive such a Master's Word.
 I: What significance does the presence of Wisdom have in giving your Word as a Master Mason?
 R: Wisdom is the composite of Authority, Discernment and Accountability.
 I: How does Wisdom exist?
 R: Wisdom exists only when there is a governing Authority that can appropriately Discern and hold a man to Account for his actions.
 I: Where does such Authority, Discernment and Accountability exist?
 R: In the Volume of Sacred Law placed upon the Altar of all Masonic Lodges
 I: Where else does it exist?
 R: In any and every word and action put forth by a Master Mason.
 I: What does the Volume of Sacred Law symbolize?
 R: The Law a Mason adheres to that is written and carried within his Chest.
 I: Who does so exemplify such Wisdom within the Lodge?
 R: The Worshipful Master.
 I: Where be his place?
 R: In the East.
 I: What pillar is he?
 R: The Doric.
 I: Whom does this represent also?
 R: King Solomon; the Grand Master who contrived the mighty fabric of the first Temple.
 I: Who else?
 R: Masons who contrive and build that which is worthy of such.
 I: What significance does the presence of Resource have in giving your Word as a Master Mason?
 R: Resource is the legitimate obtaining and use of raw or refined material for building purposes. It is true Strength.
 I: How does it exist?
 R: Resource exists as tangible and intangible



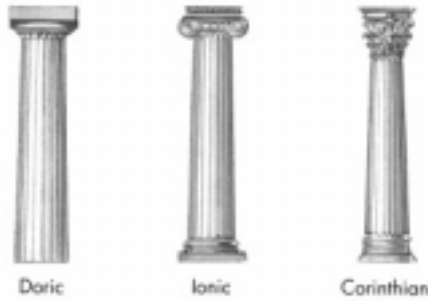
materials, including knowledge, money and time, and is anything determined for the builder's use.

- I: Where does such Resource exist?
 R: All that is freely found under the canopy

of Heaven.

- I: Who does so exemplify such Resource within the lodge?
 R: The Senior Warden.
 I: Where be his place?
 R: In the West.
 I: What pillar is he?
 R: The Ionic.
 I: Whom does this represent also?
 R: Hiram, king of Tyre; the Grand Master who strengthened King Solomon in his grand undertaking.
 I: Who else?
 R: Masons who give Strength to their Wisdom and therefore are the Resource to which their Wisdom — and craft as a whole — draws upon to assure just support and due payment.
 I: What significance does the presence of Mastery have in giving your Word as a Master Mason?
 R: Mastery is cunning craft and curious workmanship. It is Beauty.
 I: How does it exist?
 R: The knowledgeable ability to do well that which must be done.
 I: How is it applied?
 R: A Master Mason only initiates work when he possesses the skill and knowledge to do so or when guided by those who do.
 I: Where does Mastery exist?
 R: In all that adorns the Temple.
 I: Who does so exemplify such Beauty within the Lodge?
 R: The Junior Warden.
 I: Where be his place?
 R: In the South.
 I: What pillar is he?
 R: The Corinthian.
 I: Who else does this represent?
 R: Hiram Abiff; the widow's son and the Grand Master whose cunning craft and curious workmanship beautified and adorned the Temple.
 I: Who else?
 R: Masons who apply their knowledge to Beautify and adorn all they build.
 I: What do these three specific Pillars represent?
 R: The *Three Grand Masonic Pillars*.
 I: What are these three collectively?
 R: They are the "Sacred Triad" and the Composite of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.
 I: Why so?
 R: They imply the reason *why the Master's Word cannot be given, save in the presence of the Three*.
 I: What do they refer to?
 R: The Relationship between King Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre and Hiram Abiff as denoted by *Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty* in the form of these three specific pillars.
 I: What does this relationship convey?
 R: The Three Key Concepts required to manifest the Master's Word.

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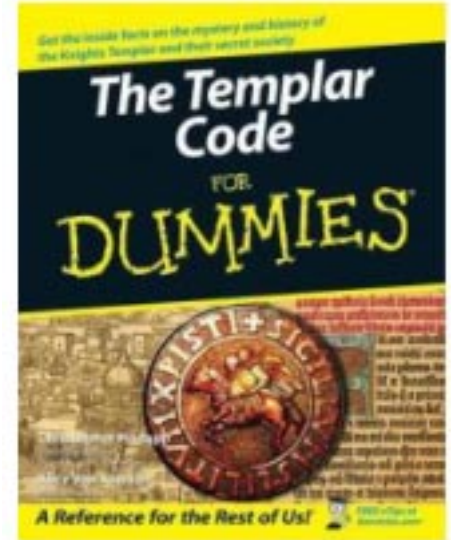


I: What be the first Key Concept?
 R: Wisdom can only serve a purpose when supported by Resource and Mastery.
 I: Why is this statement a Key Concept?
 R: Wisdom serves no purpose without Resource and Mastery.
 I: What be the second Key Concept?
 R: Resource can only have value when supported by Mastery and Wisdom.
 I: Why is this statement a Key Concept?
 R: Resource is wasted without Mastery and Wisdom.
 I: What be the third and last Key Concept?
 R: Mastery can only create value when supported by Wisdom and Resource.
 I: Why is this statement a Key Concept?
 R: Mastery creates nothing of value without Wisdom and Resource.
 I: What must a Master Mason employ in giving his Word?
 R: His Wisdom to contrive well a Word worthy of statement; his Resource to completely support that which is being stated; and his Mastery to enable his manifested Word to adorn all great and important undertakings.
 I: What does Ritual tell us of this?
 R: It was conveyed as a Promise between the three Grand Masters.
 I: What was promised by all three Grand Masters?
 R: That no Grand Master would give the Master's Word unless in the presence of the three.
 I: What occurred that gave the impression that the Word was lost?
 R: One of the three Grand Masters died.
 I: Which one died?
 R: Beauty, the Corinthian "Hiram Abif."
 I: Does a Master Mason possess Beauty?
 R: Yes.
 I: Does a Master Mason possess also Wisdom and Strength?
 R: Yes
 I: Should a Master Mason possess Wisdom, Strength and Beauty can he give the Master's Word while not in the presence of all three?
 R: No.
 I: Why not?
 R: He must not only possess all three but he must be in the presence of them too should he give his Word.
 I: If he possesses and is in the presence of all three, could he then so give the Master's Word?

R: Yes, should these conditions exist and he discovers and hence possesses the Master's Word, he could indeed do so and with full authority.
 I: What else does Ritual tell us?
 R: Anyone lacking Wisdom, Resource and Mastery shall be denied the Master's Word.
 I: What more does Ritual tell us?
 R: Should a person uncover the Master's Word, it would have no value to that person without Wisdom, Strength and Beauty to manifest it.
 I: What further does Ritual tell us?
 R: To give the Master's Word, one is required to have Wisdom, Strength and Beauty present for it to have any value whatsoever.
 I: Why is the Triad "Sacred"?
 R: Possession of the three enables a Master Mason to manifest Word as Flesh.
 I: What clues lead Master Masons to understand this?
 R: They are found in the Volume of Sacred Law.
 I: What is the Hebrew word for "Wisdom"?
 R: We are told it is "Dabar" and that it is most often associated with the "Logos" or "Divine word" and the "Door of Life."
 I: What is the Hebrew word for "Strength"?
 R: We are told it is "Oz" and that it is associated at times with plants and the circle of the eye.
 I: What is the Hebrew word for "Beauty"?
 R: We are told it is "Gomer" and that it is associated with the Latin word "magnus" or mighty.
 I: What do the Hebrew words for Wisdom, Beauty and Strength have to do with giving the Master's Word?
 R: Both Hebrew words and Hebrew letters have great significance and importance.
 I: What can a Master Mason do with this knowledge?
 R: By taking the first letter of the Hebrew words for "Beauty, Strength and Wisdom," Master Masons can construct the Word of the Grand Architect Of The Universe, "GOD"
 I: What significance does this Word have to a Master Mason?
 R: "GOD" is symbolic of the Sacred Triad a Master Mason should depend on in any undertaking – especially when giving his Word.
 I: What more significance does this Word have to a Master Mason?
 R: The Composite of GOD present in the Word of a Master Mason determines its Value to himself and others.
 I: What further significance does this Word have to a Master Mason?
 R: Should the Word of another not have the presence of GOD, a Master Mason should not value it nor should he invest in it.
 I: How do I know all this to be true?
 R: Am I not a Master Mason?
 I: I know you to be as such.
 R: Then you have the Word of a Master Mason that this is all true.

The Templar Code for Dummies

By Wr. Chris Hodapp



Templar Code For Dummies was just released in June. It is an introductory book to the Templars, that comes at the subject from a slightly different angle than most such books. We introduce the Crusades and the circumstances that gave birth to the Templar Order. We cover their rise and fall, and look with detail at the charges against them after their arrest, in light of what evidence has survived - or been discovered since. We look into the many theories of their flight and survival after the French trials.

Then, the book shifts gears and looks at the alleged Masonic connections to the Templars, especially the many Scottish tales linking them together, along with some of the patently ridiculous claims made over the years. Finally, the last 20% of the book specifically looks at the Templar references made or alleged in The Da Vinci Code, along with where some of those claims originated.

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Gods

Continue from Page 8

'shining' sun, *fóibos*, which by its rays' power can treat and heal (*asclépios*); by his gleaming eye the god scans the occult and is, therefore, the divination's father, the oracles' god, manifest by his ministrations."⁵ These features, together with those of legislator and interpreter of the law – according to the myth he is at origin of Sparta's legislation, besides Lycurgus⁶ – explain the tight connections of Apollo to the lodge's orator: this one is the custodian of both the Sacred Law and its relevant connection with the 'greater mysteries'.

Apollo-Sun symbolizes the immanent intellect: he orders chaos by killing Python, the monstrous cosmic serpent, then, at Delphi, he sets up the most important spiritual center in Greece. Before doing so, Apollo rode on the back of a swan – or on a swan-shaped chariot – to the land of the Hyperboreans, for the siege on the supreme spiritual center, after which he came back to found the Delphic spiritual center.

Apollo was sacred to the Pythagoreans, the initiatory organization which constitutes the oldest root of Freemasonry: the Pythagorean Abaris, Apollo's Hyperborean priest, traveled around the world sitting on a golden arrow, symbol of the immanent intellect.⁷

The Moon

If the Sun reflects the cosmic immutability, the Moon is surely symbol of the becoming and changing, given its continuous changes through its various phases.

We find this symbol associated with the Secretary's seat. The Secretary's initiatory function is tied to the Lodge's collective memory, which he has to create by writing the relevant minutes. Starting from this memory's cast man has to get at a new phase of business; the memory, the relevant cast and the "passage" to a new shape refer to the lunar symbolism which exists, with a few of differences, in all traditions, symbolized by various lunar deities, be they either male or female, such as Persephone, Artemis-Seléné and the Vedic Chandra.

Mircea Eliade notes that "the oldest Indo-Aryan root connected with heavenly bodies is the one that means "moon": it is the root *me*, which in Sanskrit becomes *mami*, "I measure". The moon, by its regularity of appearance through its various phases becomes the universal measuring gauge. All the words relating to the moon in the Indo-European languages come from that root.

Time as governed and measured by the phases of the moon might be called 'living' time. It is bound up with the reality of life and nature, rain and the tides, the time of sowing, the menstrual cycle. A whole series of phenomena belonging to

totally different 'cosmic levels' are ordered according to the rhythms of the moon or are under its their influence.⁸

The root *me* further expands into the Sanskrit 'man', the main meaning of which is "to think" and from which stem the English and German terms "moon" and "Mond", respectively.

From the same root stem both the Latin *mens* and the Sanskrit *manas*, which refer to mind. This etymological research lets us establish a relationship between the measure, to be intended mainly as measure of time, and the mental activity, comprising the discursive and analytical thought,



on the one hand, and the moon, which is seemingly set against the sun, symbol of the intuitive and integrative mind. Actually, man solves such an opposition through the triangle. The ternary triangle-sun-moon is tightly linked to Kabbalah's Sefirot Kether, Hokmah and Binah.

The moon is a symbol intimately linked to individual functions: to the thought which goes through temporality, imaginative forms and memory. Other symbols are linked to the moon: the spiral, the serpent, the "inferior waters" of any formal potentialities. They are all symbols of the cyclic manifestation.

According to Hindu tradition, after his earthly death, a man can walk two paths: the ignorants, once arrived at the moon, which is the deposit of the cosmic memory, will stop there and therefore will fall again into the formal status, taking a new individual form. They walk on "the fathers' way" (*pitriyana*). Conversely, the initiates will go beyond the moon's sphere, arriving at the supra-formal

states and therefore will walk on "the gods' way" (*devayana*). In this last case the moon appears as "immortality's door"; the moon's Vedic god Chandra - closely linked to *Soma*, the immortality's beverage - is the relevant symbol.⁹

*"As to the death we die, one death reduces man from three factors to two and another reduces him from two to one; and the former takes place in the earth that belongs to Demeter (wherefore "to make an end" is called "to render one's life to her" and Athenians used in olden times to call the dead "Demetrians"), the latter in the moon that belongs to Persephone, and associated with the former is Hermes the terrestrial, with the latter Hermes the celestial. While the goddess here dissociates the soul from the body swiftly and violently, Persephone gently and by slow degrees detaches the mind from the soul and has therefore been called "single-born" because the best part of man is "born single" when separated off by her. Each of the two separations naturally occurs in this fashion: All soul, whether without mind or with it, when it has issued from the body is destined to wander in the region between earth and moon but not for an equal time."*¹⁰

While ambitious and egotistical men run toward Earth, initiates are attracted by the Sun, to the essence which corresponds the intellect. Birth happens in the inverted manner: "earth furnishes the body, the moon the soul, and the sun furnishes mind to man for the purpose of his generation even as it furnishes light to the moon herself."¹¹

The Starry Heaven

A picture of the starry heaven is on the lodge's ceiling. Both the Greek god Ouranos and – even better – his Vedic equivalent Varuna, are

lords of the starry heaven. Their names stem from the same Indo-European root; *var*, to cover. In Masonic rituals the Tyler represent these two gods by acting to separate the sacred space from the profane one.

The *Atharvaveda* portrays Varuna as omniscient, catching liars in his snares. The stars are his thousand-eyed spies, watching every movement of men. He his omniscient and omnipotent, able to tie men to himself through subtle and mysterious bonds: "and Varuna's nets are to be feared for they are bonds which paralyze and exhaust".¹²

"Varuna is king, not by himself (svarâj, like Indra) but samrâj, universal king. That is to say, power is his by right because his very nature; this power enables him to act through 'magic', through the 'power of the mind', through 'knowledge'".¹³ Varuna is also god of the sky and rain, therefore he is associated

Continued on Next Page

to waters which, in this case, are not symbol of formal possibilities, as in the lunar symbolism, but of supra-formal manifestation, since they convey to earth heavenly spiritual influences.¹⁴

Pallas, Venus, and Heracles

The General Statutes of Scottish Freemasonry, released at Naples in 1820, declare that: “*The statues of Pallas, Heracles and Venus, symbolizing wisdom, strength and beauty, respectively, are to be seen in the Masonic temple.*”

According to Bro. René Guénon: “... the ‘Divine Aspects’ are each regarded as being endowed with a power or energy of their own, called Shakti, which is represented symbolically under a feminine form: the Shakti of Brahma is Saraswati, that of Vishnu is Lakshmi, and that of Shiva is Parvati.”¹⁵

Much to our surprise, we find out that Sarasvati, Vedas’ mother, creator of Sanskrit language, patroness of arts and sciences, owns the same wisdom’s attributes as goddess Pallas.¹⁶ Lakshmi is the Hindu Aphrodite who is born out of the sea, as well as Venus.¹⁷

With regard to Heracles, we note that his name means ‘Hera’s glory’; actually under Hera’s persecution Heracles fulfills his tasks till his sacrificial death and transfiguration. Giovanni de Castro replaces Heracles with Junos, thus obtaining a triad which is compound by Junos, or power; Pallas, or wisdom and Venus, or beauty.¹⁸ It is the same triad as the one of the ‘Judgment of Paris’, which provoked the war of Troy.

Junos-Hera is the goddess of weddings and births who also displays destructive aspects, by driving Heracles to madness.¹⁹ Shiva’s shakti, Parvati, has lovely and motherly attributes, but she is also Durga, the warrior, who cannot be approached, as well as Kali, “the Black”, who wears a chain of skulls.²⁰

On the other hand, Shiva, husband of Shiva, creates and destroys the manifestation, transforming it, that is, going beyond the form. These features link him to the highest and most delicate aspects of any initiatic realization and associate him to Dionysus, the Greek-Asian god who presides over the overwhelming of human limits. Dionysus, as god of any transcending action, is seemingly opposite to Apollo, god of the limit, but both gods complete each other at a superior unitarian level. For this reason they are present at Delphi.

Conclusions

Freemasonry maintained many elements of a symbolic heritage, which is ancient and noble, indeed. We therefore conclude by saying that, notwithstanding the present decadence, Freemasonry is still an initiatic experience very close to the Unique Tradition of the Origins.

References

- 1 Boucher J, *La Simbologia Massonica*, Atanòr, p. 81
- 2 René Guénon, *Gli stati molteplici dell’essere*, Adelphi, p. 102-103
- 3 From the point of view of ‘triple time’, the moon and the left eye correspond to the past, the sun and the right eye to the future, and the ‘third eye’ to the present, that is, to the invisible ‘instant’ between past and future that is a reflection of eternity in time. R. Guénon, “The all-seeing eye”, in “Symbols of Sacred Science”, *Sophia Perennis*, Hillsdale NY. p. 422
- 4 R. Guénon, *ibidem*, p. 235
- 5 Nicola Turchi, *La religione di Roma Antica*, Cappelli
- 6 The Latin word *moneta*, coin, stems from *Junos Moneta*, from the Latin verb *moneo*, to admonish. The goddess admonished goldsmiths to work with a spiritual intent. [ED]. On this subject cf. R. Guénon, *The reign of quantity and the signs of the times*. Chap. 16 *The Degeneration of Coinage*
- 7 Mircea Eliade, *Trattato di Storia delle Religioni*, Boringhieri, p. 139
- 8 Nicola Turchi, *La religione di Roma Antica*, Cappelli
- 9 W. Guthrie, *I Greci e i loro dei*, Il Mulino, pp. 222-223
- 10 W. Guthrie, *ibidem*, p. 93 ss.
- 11 M. Eliade, *Patterns in comparative religions*, University of Nebraska Press, p. 154
- 12 R. Guénon, *L’uomo ed il suo divenire secondo il Vedanta*, cap. 2
- 13 Plutarch, *De facie in orbe lunæ*, chap. 28 p199-p201
- 14 *ibidem*, p.199
- 15 M. Eliade, *ibidem*, p. 69
- 16 M. Eliade, *ibidem*, p. 71
- 17 R. Guénon, *Symbols of Sacred Science*, chap 60 p. 353. Cf. also *Idem, L’uomo ed il suo divenire secondo il Vedanta*, and *The multiple states of Being*.
- 18 *L’uomo ed il suo divenire secondo il Vedanta*, Adelphi, p. 158
- 19 A. Morretta, *Miti indiani*, p. 216
- 17 *ibidem*, p. 219
- 20 A. Reghini, *Il manuale dell’apprendista libero muratore*, p. 49
- 21 R. Graves, *I miti greci*,
- 22 A. Morretta, *ibidem* p. 232-234

morality, taught by allegory and illustrated by symbols. Freemasonry offers something greater, something timeless and valuable, and as a result, men are flocking to the craft.

Offering them what they seek

One item that can be missed in the numbers offered above is the number of Entered Apprentices that are coming back for their Fellowcraft degree, and the number of Fellowcrafts that are being raised as master masons. This has always been an issue, as we have always seemed to initiate 8 for every 5 that come back for their Fellowcraft degree. The Grand Lodge has looked for the reason for this, and I suspect the reason is disappointment.

We will always have men disappointed in what they find, due to inaccurate expectations. I know a man in Oregon that joined the fraternity, expecting to see child sacrifice, black magic and a secret cabal bent on taking over the world. Needless to say, he did not find it, and never came back for his Fellowcraft.

Time is valuable

There are some, I am sure, who were not impressed with the level of knowledge they found in their lodge, nor in the quality of their degrees. It would be foolish to assume otherwise. There are a hundred reasons a man does not come back for his Fellowcraft, or Master Mason degree, but they all pretty much boil down to a lack of value for their time.

In Robert Putnam’s *Bowling Alone*, one of the issues he raises is that men are busy, they have endless distractions available to them in the time they have left over from work and commuting. The time a man spends with anything is an investment, and most want a return for their investment, and if they don’t see one, seek something else.

Freemasonry promises a timeless ritual, fellowship, morality, philosophy and knowledge. We all know that they find most of this, though sometimes not enough. The Grand Lodge of California has created a Masonic Formation process, one that teaches the lodges how to give the candidates what they are seeking, to form them into masons.

The lodge membership is getting younger

Another change that we are seeing in the lodges is a declining average age. Historically, since the formation of the Grand Lodge of California, the average age of joining has been 45... for over 150 years. Today, the average age of new masons is approaching the late 30’s. This is due, in part, to lowering the minimum age for joining from 21 to 18, and the other reasons noted above.

Today, they are finding the craft to be younger,

Continued on Next Page

Decline

Continue from Page 2

Men are looking for meaning in their lives, and they are seeing Freemasonry for the first time, and in it, are seeing the answer to their need.

Society is increasingly void and vacuous of morality, of a sense of right and wrong. Freemasonry is offering what it always has... a Peculiar system of

more vibrant, more responsive. Its no longer an old man's coffee club, not that it ever was... however, there was a time not so long ago that a young man, knocking at our doors, found himself in the company of his grandfather and great grandfather, and its always difficult for a young man to see someone fifty years his senior as a brother and fellow.

Today, many lodges are visibly becoming younger, and with a younger lodge comes greater vibrancy and activity, and like a reverse "Catch-22", the lodge cycles up into greater and greater life and excitement as more and more young men join. This is also in part what is happening in California.

Finding what is missing from society

Another reason for the change is that young men are finding society to be... uncaring, cold, and solitary. Some see a lack of moral value, and a lack of perceived value in the individual. We have a president who recently received oral sex in the Oval Office and claimed it wasn't sex. We have politicians of every stripe saying and doing whatever they think they need to do to get them elected. We see our leaders being arrested, indicted, and resigning their offices and high stations in disgrace.

These young men want guidance, they want a firm line, they want tradition, history and fraternity, things that society is not offering them. They see these movies, read the books and articles, and come to the doors of our ancient and honorable craft seeking that which society is not offering them.

It would be nice if the Grand Lodge could take credit for all the positive changes. Truthfully, the Grand Lodge has been responsive to the needs of the members all along and has a concerned and dedicated staff that has served the craft well. Our Grand Masters have been good masons who have carefully tended to the current and future needs of the craft, and our Grand Secretary, V.W. John Cooper has been a visionary who has worked tirelessly for the benefit of the craft.

Freemasonry is on the correct path in California.



Tracing

Continue from Page 9

metaphysical one.

So, at a material level the centre matches the inner point and is contained in the whole: centre of a circumference, a circle, a sphere. Pascal moved from this perspective when he stated that the space is like a sphere, the centre of which is everywhere while the circumference is nowhere.

At a metaphysical level, however, such a perspective is void, for the Centre, the Principle,

wraps everything.

In Dante's Paradise the Empire, the central heaven, embraces all other heavens.

According to this viewpoint, man has to upset Pascal's statement, for the "centre" is nowhere, it being an a-temporal and dimensionless entity, transcendent any physical reality.

Masonically, the same thought is valid for the geometric centre, from which a Master Mason cannot err.

In conclusion, the metaphysical realities that are envisaged in the Tracing Board contain the physical ones. Conversely, passing from the spiritual order to the material one, the lodge – which is symbol of the cosmos – wraps the Tracing Board, which symbolizes the centre, in its spatial dimension, though.

References

- 1 Rivista Massonica n. 1 Gennaio 1973 – vol. LXIV – VIII della nuova serie – pp. 39-43
- 2 Matthew 11:12
- 3 Matthew 19:29-30



Four

Continue from Page 8

grandfather's social and moral club, they want it all. Morality, belonging, brotherhood, spirituality, personal growth, social value, and philosophy... which brings us to Masonic Education.

The Second Face of Freemasonry: The Esoterics and Education

Freemasonry in the 17th century was a philosophical/social/moral support society. Freethinkers of the day gathered to discuss the issues of the day, to share their successes and failures, and to aid and support each other. There have been esoterics in Freemasonry from the beginning, though in recent decades, they have taken a much smaller seat in the lodge in favor of simple brotherhood.

To a certain extent, the current "flavor" of freemasonry is more exoteric than esoteric, to the point where the esoterically oriented mason can find himself alone in lodge in his search for more light. We all search for light in different ways, and for some brothers, exoteric Masonry, fellowship, morality fulfills all their needs. This type of Masonry is often referred to derogatorily as "Fish Fry" Masonry, which is unfair to our exoteric brothers.

Freemasonry is about balance in all things. Too much esoteric or too much exoteric and the purpose of Freemasonry is lost. Regardless, Freemasonry teaches us tolerance, and of late,

esotericism in Freemasonry is once more growing and receiving the respect that it is due as a vital part of the craft.

A part of education is ritual, tradition, contemplation, majesty... in a word stateliness. We learn in a number of different ways, reading, watching, listening, and participation. There are few teaching methodologies that reach a man on all four levels, that reaches right into his psyche like ritual. Some lodges treat ritual as a time for play, some for letter-of-the-law, and some for an approach that is at once serious and overwhelming in its grandeur.

The experience by the candidate in his degrees is a matter of how the ritual is enacted, the mien that the officers and brethren bring to the lodge, how the candidate is prepared, the education process after the degree, how the candidate is treated by the brethren. It is the gestalt of the degrees and education afterward.

In part, a response to this growing interest in esoteric and more "traditional" style Masonry are the European Style Lodges being formed across the United States. Though these European Style Lodges are not exclusively esoteric in nature, they are given over to the philosophical contemplation, study and discussions of issues Masonic.

This type of lodge is also called Traditional Observance Lodges. Whatever they are called, these lodges are a growing phenomena, spreading across the United States like a grass fire. More Grand Lodges not only allow, but encourage it with each passing year. Currently, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, Arizona, Louisiana, Virginia, Washington D.C., Maine, New York, and California have a growing population of these European Style/Traditional Observance lodges.

Parallel to these European Style Lodges are many grand lodges re-engineering Masonic Formation, that is, holistic Masonic formation programs. They are gathering together existing materials, expanding on them, creating program and methodologies that lodges can use. Masonic Formation is a resource to the lodges, providing materials, ideas, and resources to assist them in educating and forming masons.

Yet, in all good, there is an admixture of bad. As young men are joining freemasonry to receive the benefits and responsibilities of our ancient and honorable craft, we have a few, vocal, internet savvy brothers who may not have clearly understood the lessons they received in the first degree.

The Third Face of Freemasonry: Masonic Impatience

Freemasonry teaches us that Time, Patience and

Continued on Next Page

Perseverance will accomplish all things, and that as masons we should act with justice and temper our actions with prudent judgment. There is a small problem however, and in large part, I suspect this is due to the internet.

Some few men, and its really a small number, have lost track of the lessons of Freemasonry... a less just opinion would be that they did not learn the lesson in the first place... and set themselves up as judge, jury and executioner of the fraternity they claim as their own. Instead of working within the system, they decide that their obligations do not obtain except where they decide.

Of course, these men are not always wrong. There are serious issues that need to be addressed by the brethren. There are cases where, for example, a grand master summarily ejects brothers from Freemasonry entirely, without a trial, and a case recently where a grand master set aside the legal vote of the brethren at the grand communication, and then ejects brethren for objecting to that action.

We all know Freemasons aren't saints... we are men, good men for the most part, working hard for the benefit of the craft. If you are reading these words, its likely you have an internet connection, and have followed the antics of certain brethren who have decided that they know better what is good for Freemasonry.

These are brothers who violate Masonic tradition by agitating for political candidates as masons, who defame every grand lodge officer at every turn, who defame any mason who likes, admires and enjoys his Freemasonry. Every group has them, malcontents and agitators who do not work for the best interests of the group, but only for their own selfish wants and needs.

These men do nothing to help, and are content to do nothing but complain. They most often do this complaining from behind shadowy aliases, then scream like scaled cats when a brother dares to draw back the sable curtain they hide behind, claiming the protection of the obligation they revile at every turn.

The good news is this face of Freemasonry is only internet based... and their words are read by less than 1,000 men WORLDWIDE. They do no damage to Freemasonry, and for the most part, are harmless brothers with delusions of grandeur and power that is, fortunately, well out of their reach.

The Fourth Face of Freemasonry is the Non-Regular Masons

There are some who would argue that non regular Masonic obediences AREN'T Masonry at all. The reality is that, as the saying goes, "if it acts like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, chances are, it's a duck.

The problem is, because these other obediences are not regular, that is, part of the Grand Lodges

in Amity with each other, it is difficult to for the average mason to separate the wheat from the chaff. Also, frankly, there is little interest by more regular masons TO take the time to separate the wheat from the chaff. Most regular masons, and that is the majority by far of all masons in the world, are satisfied to leave the whole issue to their respective Grand Lodges.

Most regular masons "know" who the non regular masons are. First of all, they are referred to officially by all regular Grand Lodges as "Clandestine" and "Irregular". Primarily, they are the female only lodges, co-ed lodges, and other "Grand Lodges", like the Grand Orient of the United States, the United Grand Lodge of America, and the American Masonic Federation.

Yet, these non regular masons are ALSO a face of Freemasonry. The state of California alone has over 50 organizations that style themselves as Masonic, though only two, the Grand Lodge of California F&AM and the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge of California, Inc are considered regular. The others vary in their practice from regular, other than that they admit women, to wildly non Masonic.

This is not, however, a new phenomena. Breakaway lodges without a warrant or charter and self forming "Grand Lodges" open, and often as not, as quickly close, and have done so ever since June 1717 when the first regular grand lodge was formed at the Goose and Gridiron by four extent lodges.

Regardless of the official position of any grand lodge, and here is a good time to remind my readers that I am NOT an official spokesman for any grand lodge, I speak only for myself, there are women only, male and female joint lodges, and of course male only lodges. Most of these lodges can be found only in very large cities.

The numbers I have indicate there are about 100,000 women masons worldwide, and perhaps that many again that belong to co-ed Masonic lodges. Throughout the world, there are about 3.5 million regular masons, and perhaps another 1 million total masons from the various other male only orients and non regular grand lodges around the world. This means there are about 5 million masons of all kinds, who can be found in every country in the world.

Conclusion

Masonry is a wide and varied initiatic society that, far from declining, is actually restoring itself, as it always has done. Time, patience and perseverance are the watchwords of our ancient and honorable fraternity. Like any mature organization that is spread all over the world, Freemasonry presents a number of faces, all of which reflect a part of the whole.

It's an awesome time to be a mason! May the

blessing of heaven rest upon us and all regular masons. May brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue, cement us.



Pillars

Continue from Page 9

parts of the world, inevitably losing the obvious sense that fire, or *passion*, gives rise to light). They thus provide the 'lesser lights'¹ to the room - the *greater* lights being symbolically provided by the VSL (or sacred writing), the Square, and the Compasses. Here we already see that the *symbolic* and *internal* light is deemed of greater value than the external physical light, despite the fact that such physical light is also to be taken with its full symbolic sense of a triune of light over darkness.

So perhaps questions can be asked as to why one form of Freemasonry has these three, the other form does not. The answer appears to lie in historical developments of the various Lodge room arrangement and layout.² Below are typical general floor plans. I say 'typical' even though it should be pointed out that variations occur on the basic theme. In fact, chances are that the reader's own Lodge will differ somewhat from either of these. A third relatively common floor plan is for either the two or three pillars to be placed adjacent the tessellated pavement (when this does not occupy the *whole* floor space). Forget the green arrows in the floor plan diagram's that follow for now - I'll refer to these in short enough time.

Diagram A is more or less typical of many 'Continental' European Lodge rooms, and B more or less typical of Anglo-Saxon ones. But remember, variations and cross-usage occur.

I'll be referring to these in the discussion that follows. In each case, it should be noted that brethren are (with some exceptions) seated in the north and south sides.

Naming the pillars

On Floor plan A, it should be obvious to any brother who has been passed that the two pillars refer to Boaz [z(wB)] and Jachin [ayKy] (this latter transliterated from the Hebrew in various ways), and have further allusion to the pillars of fire and cloud that guided the Jews fleeing from their Egyptian bondage. Much more can be said of these, and reflection on 1 Kings 7 13-22 is encouraged.

¹³And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. ¹⁴He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

¹⁵For he cast two pillars of brass, of eighteen

Continued on Next Page

cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about. ¹⁶And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapiter was five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter was five cubits: ¹⁷And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which were upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other chapiter. ¹⁸And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapiter. ¹⁹And the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits. ²⁰And the chapiters upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapiter. ²¹And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz. ²²And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

On Floorplan B, the three pillars, presented with lit candle atop each, refer to three orders of architecture: the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian (with the Tuscan and what is called the 'composite' therefore omitted). Which column or pillar is placed adjacent the Master and the Wardens varies, though it has become commonplace to have the Ionic with the Master representing *Wisdom* (and hence easily associated with King Solomon); the Doric with the Senior Warden representing *Strength* (or *Fortitude*); and the Corinthian with the Junior Warden representing *Beauty*.

A symbolic distinction that can be gleaned between the two and three pillars, despite their otherwise possible reconciliation, is from observing the frontispiece from the *Scottish Constitution* of 1848:



Here we can not only see the three columns (as they are more generally referred to than 'pillars') in the foreground and similarly presented to the Harris standardised first degree tracing board (to which we shall return in a minute), as well as the two pillars (on the left of the image, deeper in perspective) referring to Boaz and Jachin.

It should be noted that the image has the Corinthian on the right-hand side, the Doric in the centre (and further set from the viewer's perspective), and the Ionic to the left. This is also, in fact, an example of the variation that I mentioned a couple of paragraphs above, for hereon the Master is presented with the Doric.

Compare this to the 1st degree tracing board that has become the standard (though definitely not the sole version) used in Lodges set according to Floor plan B - the basic design painted by John Harris circa 1845. Comparing here not only the three pillars in their respective positions, but also the location of Sun, Moon (with and without stars, and All-Seeing Eye or, in this case, the heptagram (which is sometimes instead a pentalpha, ie, a pentagram).

With both these images, what is also clear is that the working tools associated with the Master and

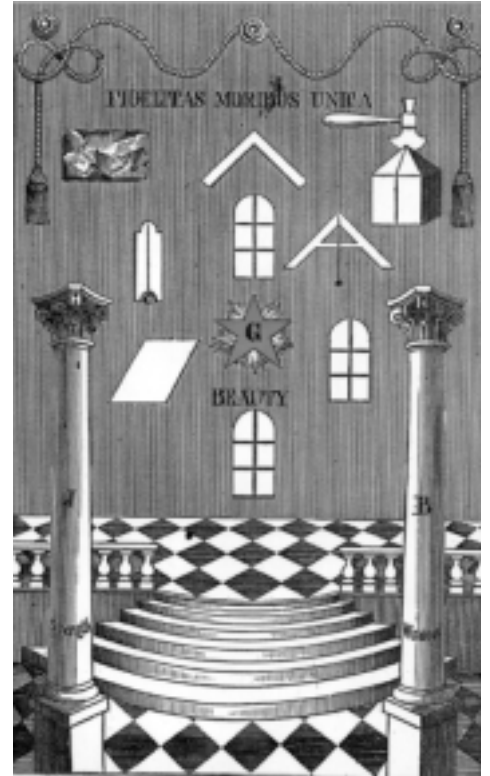


the two Wardens are clearly placed at their respective base. The perspective is therefore presented without confusion: the viewer's position is from the deep South-West, in the place I have marked Floor plan B with an eye, and the arrow the direction of view.

If nothing else, the tracing board presents to the imaginative faculty a means to enter in meditative light the Lodge room, here presented too with altar

and stairway or ladder towards the spiritual realms.

The overall pattern, however, is not closely connected to an 18th C. tracing board depicting more closely our Floor plan A. Observe, however, that the *three* virtues of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty are also preserved, and those with clearly Jachin and Boaz. In this case, the *Master* is allocated Beauty:



I have taken a little space to present these variations on both floor design, pillar variations, and the position of what can only be called three Masonic Virtues (on which a little more to come) in great part to show that any discussions at times presupposes a single viewpoint, rather than the variety that actually finds expression within the Craft. If Freemasonry encourages the meeting of people with vastly different religious and political views, then we should also give due consideration to the variety that presents itself within Freemasonry Universal.

Virtues

There appears to be three sets of virtues commonly propounded within the Craft. Two sets, which are perhaps more common in writings, are, on the one hand, Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, each having, at least according to some, a direct relation with, on the other, the second set of Fraternity, Equality, and Liberty.

Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, however, appear more frequently in one form or another in *visual* form. In other words, these allegories are illustrated with symbols, and through their further exegesis

Continued on Next Page

we may come to slowly unveil their multi-layered, but also precise, meanings.

Specifically as *pillars* of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, they also hearken to Kabbalistic works, and it is to this we shall now turn our attention to, at first without consideration of Freemasonic concern, and only later shall we begin to take steps to posit ways to reconcile the two in harmonious ways.

Kabbalah

Kabbalistic considerations have been influential within European culture since before the 15th century. Indeed, it was in part adopted and adapted by some in an attempt to convert Jews to Christianity, using the trinitarian imagery found in some version of the Tree of Life to argue for the validity of a trinitarian theology.

Here we are of course not concerned with this aspect, nor with the numerous forms the pattern of the Tree of Life takes (many of which non-pillar related). For the sake of liberating considerations to be more fluid rather than fixed, consider for a moment the emanations that make the Tree of Life as concentric circles, each enclosing and giving rise to ever denser manifestation *within* its own onion-like layer.

Such was a common enough rendition. What is here important as a first consideration is that there are ten successive emanation from the 'unmanifest', or, rather, to give it its Hebrew name, from the *Ein Sof* - without limit.

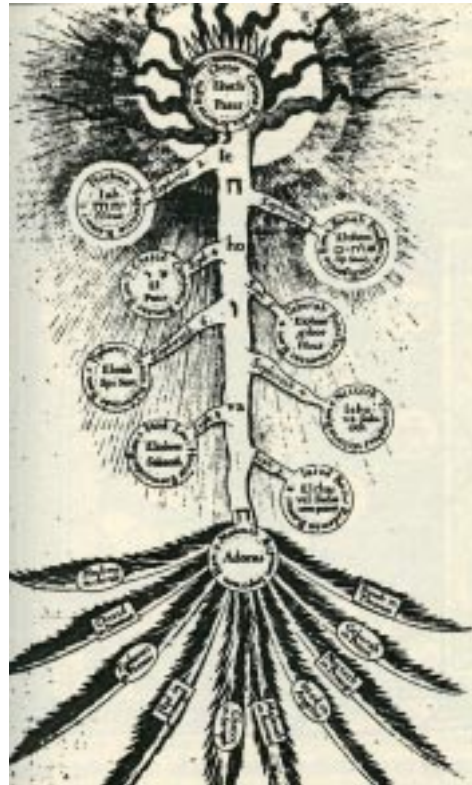


Whether this is equivalent to Aristotle's unmoved mover³ is something that needs much further exploration. For our purposes, let's just take it that there is some parity between the concepts.

From this *Ein Sof* emanates ten successive contractions. It is also relatively simply to here imagine how this model reflects also the ancient view of the universe, with the Kingdom of the Earth at its very centre.

These successive emanations or *Sefirot* were at times also represented as fruits at the end of a

Tree having its roots embedded within the spiritual domain:



It is but by a short series of variations that we arrive at some of the most common and popular versions of the Tree of Life. In each case, what is of unalterable significance is, on the one hand, that there are ten Sefirot (ie, emanations)⁴; and on the other that these have their precise ordering, even when arranged in a manner that lacks apparent sequentially.

Of direct significance for our purposes are three specific *Sefirot*: the second, *Hockmah*; the fifth, *Geburah*; and the sixth *Tifaret*. These have meanings that are of course embedded very much within Hebrew, and their translated meanings do not have precisely the same scope or terrain as their English translations. In the case of *Geburah* and *Tifaret*, there are also different translations possible. Significantly, however, these can (and often are) rendered as, respectively, *Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty*.

Let's see how these are placed on the more common base of the Tree of Life diagrams, that of Kircher:

I have highlighted in red the pertinent *Sefirot*, each situated, instructively, upon one of three (hereon blued) columns or pillars. The green arrow indicates the same direction of view that one needs to assume to mimic the Harris tracing board earlier presented. The other tracing board would be viewed from exactly *below*, 'projecting' the lowest central *Sefirot* of Beauty to its pinnacle.

Let's have a closer look at all these things and begin to fuse them into a coherent syncretic whole.

Entering the Lodge room

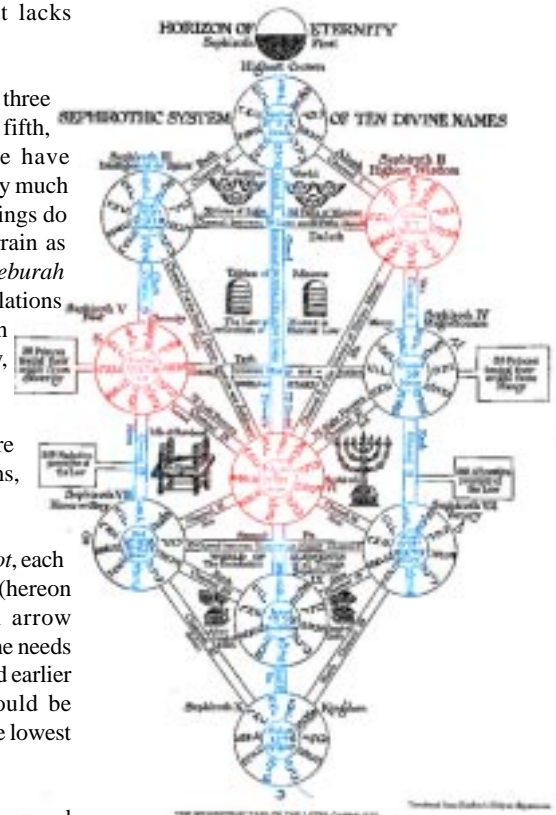
When we penetrate within the doors of the Lodge opened in the first degree, amidst all the other emblems, symbols and furnishings, we are faced with inner stillness and silence except by instruction of the Master or the two Wardens.

These, in turn, have pillars and lights associated with them.

Reflecting on their combined responsibilities, they represent Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, bringing to mind that, as each also reflects the first⁵ three degrees, we are lead to consider that the work consists in beautifying, strengthening, and the getting of wisdom.

Looking at the tracing board⁶, we note that the pillars, associated with the principal officers, have distinct working tools, and the Sun, Moon and Sacred Star (or all-seeing Eye) surmounts the pillars. As with the stair or ladder upon which are the three virtues of *Faith, Hope and Charity*, the luminaries in the sky are not physically within the Lodge room, reminding us that in active work, we transcend the limitations of the walls in which we may consider ourselves to otherwise be.

Observing the Tree of Life, we note that each pillar has not only one *Sefirot*, but others. It is each united with the others that form pillars, and so we ascend, with the aid of the plumb-rule, level and square, and the assistance of Faith, Hope, and Charity, towards building those pillars not built by hand. And on these we now turn, taking into consideration each pillar in turn, yet mindful that

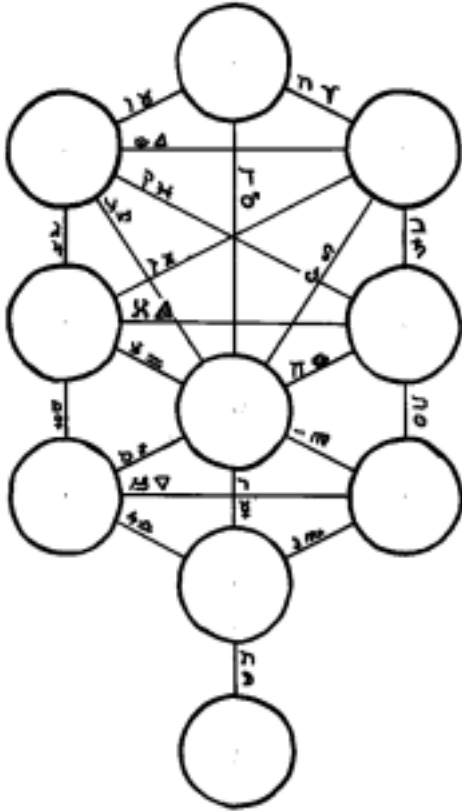


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our ascent spirals, in that the foundations of each pillar needs to be worked before rising to successive levels.

The Pillars

A friend of mine, both a former Grand Chaplain⁷ and subsequently a Bishop, once described a meditation in which he saw - with the mind's eye - a pebble dropped into a water's surface. The concentric circular rippling that occurred was like the first representation of the Tree of Life I presented earlier. Hence, a hand came down and lifted the pebble, dressed in the gown of the water's surface, giving rise to a Kircher-like (here a Lurianic) version of the Tree of Life:



Let's consider each pillar in turn. First the central pillar is that of Beauty, then the left-hand of Strength, and finally the right-hand of Wisdom. In that order, we are also first advancing on those emanations that we reach in their order of ascent. Whether the Master or a Warden is there connected I leave to the reader, simply asking that the earlier considerations as to the Floor plan in use, and the relative placement of the three pillars (when three are used).

- Q. How high was your Lodge?
- A. As high as the Heavens, and as low as the Earth.
- Q. How many Pillars had your Lodge?
- A. Three.
- Q. What did you call them?
- A. Beauty, Strength, and Wisdom
- Q. What do they represent?
- A. Beauty to Adorn, Strength to Support, and Wisdom to Contrive.

Beauty



Beauty, *Tifaret*, is the central golden globe here shown. It is often allied to the Sun.

Somewhere (and I cannot recall the source), I once read that "in *Tifaret*, conflict is reconciled, and contradiction resolved".

Below it are, respectively, *Yesod* (Foundation) and *Malkut* (Kingdom). As these two are, respectively,

often connected to the Moon and the Earth, we have here an ascent from Earth, to Moon, to Sun, to the Sun-beyond-the-Sun (alluded to in Plato's 'allegory of the Cave' in Book VII of his *Republic*⁸) as *Keter* (the Crown).

The lowest of the two require that we both keep our feet on the ground and that we build a solid foundation before ascending further. We have physical body, and life forces with which to work and direct. These provide initial work.

It is appropriate that the pillar is named by the central *Sefirah*, for the highest reminds one of Enoch: he 'walked with God, and was not'.⁹

Strength



Strength, *Geburah*, is here the central red emanation.

It's more common translation is 'severity', but even in Hebrew, it has another common name: *Pahad*, or 'fear' - as in '*Pahad* of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom'.¹⁰ It should be noted here that *Pahad* is better rendered by 'Awe', an aspect intimately connected to the concept of 'fear' that seems to have

perished.

'Awe awakens in us the possibility of knowledge and wisdom' may here perhaps also be considered.

Strength is, of course, one of the cardinal virtues,

and central to both Aristotelian and Platonic considerations of what makes a person Good or virtuous, and can lead to a desirable life. As strength, it is often connected with Mars.

Below *Geburah* is the emanation of Mercury, *Hod* or Glory. Combining these, I am lead to reflect on Goethe's exquisite 'Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily'¹¹, in which a catechism presents itself:

"What is grander than gold?" inquired the King. "Light," replied the Snake. "What is more refreshing than light?" said he. "Speech"¹²

Above *Geburah* is *Binah*, Understanding. It has the vast emptiness of fecund space, a space filled with light, but as yet to give birth to object on which such light will be reflected.

Wisdom



Here it is the top *Sefirah*, that of *Hockmah* (Wisdom), that is indicated. It is the closest one can strive to the source of all other emanations.

It also points that all emanation, passing through this *Sefirah*, is imbued with Wisdom, even is layers obscure its glow.

Below are *Hesed*, sometimes translated as

Loving-kindness, but also the word used for 'covenant': a binding together of willing parties. Below that, at its foundation, sits *Nezah*, victory or reverberation, hinting that each of our acts, feelings and thoughts reverberate and have their own victories beyond the confines we may otherwise wish.

Three Pillars, or two?

And so we finish where we started. The pillars, whether as two or three, call to mind far more than mere 'lesser' lights!

Viewing the pillars Boaz and Jachin as the two extremes, we are asked to pass *between* them, reminding those who have taken to heart the study of the seven liberal hearts and sciences that it is the golden mean between extremes that reflects virtue. The extremes also remind us of the two pillars between which our life stands as its own third pillar - between the portals of birth and



death.¹³

I am here reminded of the beautiful Masonic pillars that once adorned the sides of the doors of the Würzburg Cathedral (often referred to in various Freemasonic writings). Like Floor plan A and the 18th century tracing board, passing through the pillars leads one to the inner sanctum whereby the third pillar is implied by the Master in the East - in the case of the Cathedral (and hence for the Christian), by Christ not only crucified, but in Ascension.

If we observe closely the 'knots' of these two pillars, they illustrate clearly that their respective foundation is two-fold: each pillar effectively has two bases, one standing on the ground; the other in the celestial realm. What 'binds' them together appears as interweaving - I would here say the interweaving of life's weavings itself.

And so, we are lead to consider how to best make that binding strong, beautiful and wisdom-filled by further considering the *Sefirot* or emanating spheres on the Tree of Life.

Whether two pillars are represented, or three, there is always an implied third element, each able to guide us in the consciousness of daylight as well as by the darkness visible in the spiritual light of night.



Initiation

Continue from Page 10

come at four o'clock in the afternoon, then at three o'clock I shall begin to be happy. I shall feel happier and happier as the hour advances. At four o'clock, I shall already be worrying and jumping about. I shall show you how happy I am! But if you come at just any time, I shall never know at what hour my heart is to be ready to greet you . . . One must observe the proper rites . . ."

"What is a rite?" asked the little prince.*

What is a rite? What is a ritual? Surely at the least it is something done at a regular time and place, in the same way each time. But that is not enough. Those words are enough to describe mere habit.

Masonry communicates by symbol and allegory. What does this mean? Even though words are spoken in the ritual, they refer to symbols which communicate nonverbally. We must read them the way illiterate people read stained glass and statuary in the middle ages. Our rituals represent to us, duly assembled with our brethren, what it is to be a Mason. They display a pattern on the trestleboard. These symbolic and allegorical representations are suggestive. As we pay attention to our Masonic rituals (repeatedly, consistently in certain places and at certain regular times), "workmen" of the subconscious reconstitute us according to that pattern, building the temple not made with hands.

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- 1 These were earlier called 'greater lights' but, in working compromise between the 'Antients' and the 'Moderns', were re-named.
- 2 Cf. B. Jones 1956, p. 355 f
- 3 Cf. his *Physics* 3.2
- 4 As the *Sefer Yetzirah*, possibly a circa 2nd century text, states "Ten Sefirot out of Nothingness: Ten and not nine, ten and not eleven".
- 5 I am aware that many are of the view that

there are only, and precisely, three degrees in Freemasonry. I simply note here that such remains, no matter how dominant and 'officially' pronounced, one amongst other views.

- 6 Again, not all Lodges even have trestle or tracing boards.
- 7 Lodges warranted under certain Grand Lodges have Chaplains and, in turn, the Grand Lodge a Grand Chaplain. Though the position need not be filled by a priest or other minister of a Church, it often is.
- 8 So here we have both Plato's concept of ultimate 'Good' and Aristotle's concept of the Unmoved Mover connecting to the highest of realms.
- 9 Genesis 5:24
- 10 Psalm III:10. But note also Proverbs 1:7, where 'Knowledge' is used in lieu of 'Wisdom'.
- 11 A 'fairy tale' for adults, or at the very least for his brothers in Freemasonry, if ever there was one!
- 12 Sometimes translated as 'communication' - something very Mercurial.
- 13 R. Steiner also makes this connection between the two pillars and death, between which, he is claimed to have uttered "we have the time of our life" (obviously to its ambiguity in English). Cf Lecture 3, "The Twelve Senses, 20th June 1916, in *Toward Imagination*.

Symbols and allegories provoke thought. Their interpretation is not always obvious at a conscious level. For example, the plumb teaches us to be upright, and the level teaches us to deal in all matters on the level with our fellows. But can't a stiff rectitude foster disharmony? Don't you have to go along to get along? Do you perhaps fear being thought a stiff-necked moralizing prig? Think about that felt conflict, for we shall return to it presently. And now consider the example before us of Hiram holding to moral principle even to death, and yet all the while acting entirely on the level with his attackers, not supercilious or aloof in his station. He simply restated the conditions for their advancement, which they well knew, and even gave positive assurance that they would receive what they wished when they met the requirement for "regular and upright conduct."

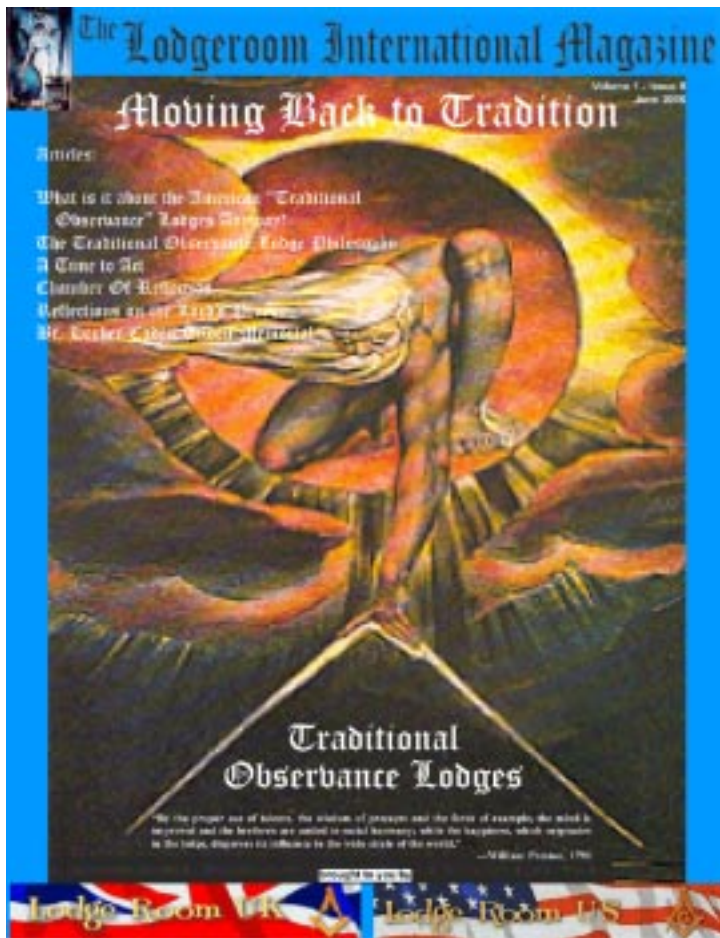
While we are in training, moral principles are stated prescriptively, as guidelines that prescribe what we should and should not do. As our inward initiation progresses, those same statements of moral principle become descriptive. Instead of being rules by which we should constrain our behavior, they flow naturally from our inner nature. And this is not by adding them to our inner nature. That true inner nature is within you all along, obscured only by a clutter of conflicting suggestions to your subconscious mind. The transition from rough ashlar to perfect ashlar is accomplished by



Continued on Next Page

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to our inner nature. That true inner nature is within you all along, obscured only by a clutter of conflicting suggestions to your subconscious mind. The transition from rough ashlar to perfect ashlar is accomplished by removing what is unneeded.

The seeming conflict between rectitude and acting on the level, those moral principles that are represented emblematically by the plumb and the level, arises out of our fear of what others might think of us. With the progress of our inward initiation, our intuitions of the thoughts and feelings of our fellows ripen, by a winding way, from apprehension to empathy, from conformity to compassion, and rather than governing, they inform.

To an extent this will happen slowly over time if you merely persist in sitting through the ritual. You are well advised, however, to take matters in hand and participate more actively in your own advancement. Memorizing ritual is a first stage. Subconsciousness in a fundamental aspect is a storehouse of memory. To memorize the words, you must open a conversation with your subconscious mind. Make her acquaintance. She works by association. Be alert, and she will offer you associative clues that will help you to remember. Move your body and enact the words in posture and gesture.

The words and images of ritual provoke thought and raise questions in your mind. Write these down, and when you retire at night spend a few moments pondering them. Then when you awaken in the morning, look again and see if some new insights have been offered to you from within. As you learn, think about how to apply those meanings to situations in your daily life. At first you will recognize practical applications only retrospectively as you think back over the events of the day and week. With time and persistence, the principles that you imbibe from Masonic ritual begin to inform your responses. Pay attention. Listen to what comes from within. This is intuition: inner tuition, teaching from within you, from the same teachers who have guided Masons from time beyond memory.

As you watch and listen from the sidelines, as you attend Lodge of Instruction, as you go to rehearsals, even if only to observe and help when needed, as you move through the chairs enacting your part with the others, each part in turn— by virtue of such “homework,” every time the outer initiation comes around the circle it is at a new level of a waxing spiral of growth. Each time, new disclosures open to you, new insight into the significance of the words, and beyond words the significance of the actions, the floor work, the lights, ornaments, jewels, furniture, implements, the officers and their roles—all aspects of the ritual progressively light up with meaning, and shed light each on the others. As that light brightens and spreads within you, all that is not of that light naturally falls away, as shadows, and the light spreads outwardly in all your relations with your fellows, easily, as water flows. This is the progress of your inner initiation, and the true meaning and purpose of the outer.

Continued on Next Page

* *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. This little book for children has more to say to us than appears on the surface. See for example *L'ésotérisme du Petit Prince de Saint-Exupéry*, by Emmanuel-Yves Monin.

Circle

Continue from Page 10

that it is the Creative Energy of the Deity, is represented as a point, and that point in the centre of a Circle of immensity. It is to us in [the Entered Apprentice degree], the symbol of that un-manifested Deity, the Absolute, who has no name." That word he used, "un-manifested," is a curious one.

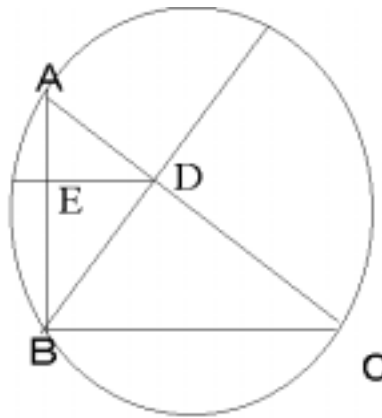
Without going deep into the Kabbalah, but probing into the meaning of Pike's word choice, beyond the sephiroth of Kether are the three veils of negative existence, *Ain, Ain Soph* and *Ain Soph Aur*—they are depicted as arcs leading to the circle of Kether. Worshipful Brother Chris Okorafor states, "Worthy of note is that the veils are only shown as arcs of the circles to which they pertain in the understanding that Kether is brought into being by their concentration and then within the open-ended parts of the veils, expresses itself in the manifestation of Chokmah and thence all the other Sephiroth which will all in time be absorbed back to Kether as their one and only source of essence and existence."

Both Pike and Manly P. Hall point us to the direct conclusion that the point within a circle represents the Kabbalistic abstract concept of *Ain Soph*. Per Hall, "... the Rabbis postulated certain theories regarding the manner in which *Ain Soph* projected creations out of itself, and they also assigned to this Absolute Non-Being certain symbols as being descriptive, in part at least, of its powers. The nature of *Ain Soph* they symbolize by a circle, itself emblematic of eternity." Further on he states, "According to this concept, God is not only a center [the point] but also area [the circle]. Centralization is the first step towards limitation. Therefore, centers which form in the substances of *Ain Soph* unite because they are predestined to dissolution back into the Cause of themselves."

Jumping around the mystical paradigms map, the Hindus summarize this same concept beautifully and simply in the Bhagavad Gita (8:181): "When Brahma's day is manifest, this multitude of living entities comes into being, and at the arrival of Brahma's night they are all absorbed back."

Coming back ourselves from the very abstract to the very concrete, from a pure geometric perspective, the point within a circle can be used to physically construct and illustrate three other important symbols: the 47th Proposition of Euclid, The Golden Mean (a.k.a "Golden Ratio", "Divine Proportion"), and the Vesica Pisces.

The first of these, the 47th Proposition of Euclid is another important Masonic symbol that deserves

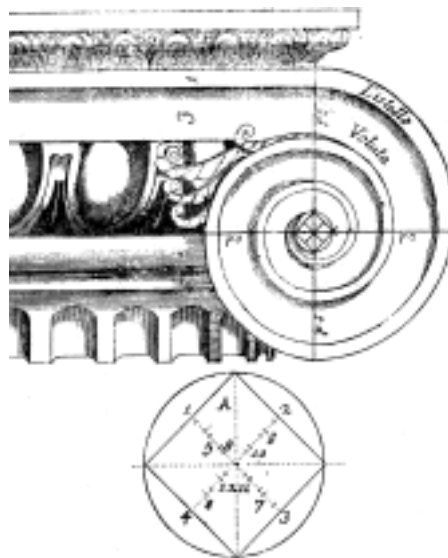


its own discourse. As an interesting sidebar, a point within a circle can be used to mathematically prove Euclid's 47th Proposition. The development of the proof itself is credited to James A. Garfield the 20th President of the United State and an initiated Masonic Brother.

Like the 47th Proposition, The Golden Mean is another deep symbol whose deeper investigation is also outside the scope of my talk today.

Setting aside these two aspects to return to today's topic, with respect to the Vesica Pisces constructed from the point within a circle, it is interesting to note that the Pythagoreans considered this a holy figure. The ratio of its width to its height is the closest approximation to the square root of three obtainable by a ratio of whole numbers and is a holy number known as the "measure of the sh." The denominator of the ratio is 153 and, according to the Gospel of John (21:11), is the number of sh caught by Christ. This could be a coded reference to Pythagorean mysteries. It is also interesting to note that the Vesica Pisces itself symbolizes the female genitalia which ties back to the phallic generative interpretation of the point within a circle.

As it turns out, constructing the Vesica Pisces from the point within the circle is only a first step. Extending the construction further results in a triangle, square, and—in fact—each of the classic



Platonic geometric forms including a proper representation of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life glyph. In addition, all of the ratios that define our musical harmonies can be thus constructed. In his fabulous book, *Constructing the Cosmological Circle*, Michael Schneider illustrates how to directly continue construction of an accurate representation of our entire cosmos starting from the point within the circle.

This all gets very interesting to me when one considers that modern scientific cosmology hypothesizes the physical universe as forming from a singularity which expanded out after some non-understood spontaneous initiation forming the universe in which we exist and defining the laws of physics as we know them.

Masonry also adds to the basic point within the circle form, the bounding parallel lines and the holy book. According to Mackey, the two perpendicular lines represent the point at which the sun has reached its greatest northern and southern declination, e.g. the summer and winter solstice where the sun is found in the zodiac signs of Cancer and Capricorn. The summer and winter solstices are, of course, the celebrated days of the two Saint Johns. Obviously, there are also additional deeper implication with respect to our pillars.

I hope to later explore these additional Masonic additions, but for now, I will close this very brief surface scratch at the meaning of a point within a circle with a quote from the same author by which I initiated this talk. Brother Claudy gives good advice when hesitates of this symbol, "Pass it not lightly. Regard it with the reverence it deserves, for surely it is one of the greatest teachings of Masonry, concealed within a symbol which is plain for any man to read so be it he has Masonry in his heart."

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Masonic Humor

IDIOT SIGHTINGS:

We had to have the garage door repaired. The Sears repairman told us that one of our problems was that we did not have a 'large' enough motor on the opener. I thought for a minute, and said that we had the largest one Sears made at that time, a 1/2 horsepower. He shook his head and said, 'Lady, you need a 1/4 horsepower.' I responded that 1/2 was larger than 1/4. He said, NO, it's not.' Four is larger than two..'

We haven't used Sears repair since.

My daughter and I went through the McDonald's take-out window and I gave the clerk a \$5 bill. Our total was \$4.25, so I also handed her a quarter. She said, 'you gave me too much money.' I said, 'Yes I know, but this way you can just give me a dollar bill back.' She sighed and went to get the manager who asked me to repeat my request. I did so, and he handed me back the quarter, and said 'We're sorry but they could not do that kind of thing.' The clerk then proceeded to give me back \$1 and 75 cents in change.

Do not confuse the clerks at McD's.

I live in a semi rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the DEER CROSSING sign on our road. The reason: 'Too many deer are being hit by cars out here! I don't think this is a good place for them to be crossing anymore.'

From Kingman , KS

My daughter went to a local Taco Bell and ordered a taco. She asked the person behind the counter for 'minimal lettuce..' He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg lettuce.

From Kansas City

I was at the airport, checking in at the gate when an airport employee asked 'Has anyone put anything in your baggage without your knowledge?'

To which I replied, 'If it was without my knowledge, how would I know?' He smiled knowingly and nodded, 'That's why we ask.'

Happened in Birmingham , Ala.

The stoplight on the corner buzzes when it's safe to cross the street. I was crossing with an intellectually challenged coworker of mine. She

asked if I knew what the buzzer was for. I explained that it signals blind people when the light is red. Appalled, she responded, 'What on earth are blind people doing driving?!'

She was a probation officer in Wichita , KS

At a good-bye luncheon for an old and dear coworker. She was leaving the company due to 'downsizing.' Our manager commented cheerfully, 'This is fun. We should do this more often.' Not another word was spoken. We all just looked at each other with that deer-in-the-headlights stare.

This was a lunch at Texas Instruments.

I work with an individual who plugged her power strip back into itself and for the sake of her life, couldn't understand why her system would not turn on.

A deputy with the Dallas County Sheriffs office, no less.

When my husband and I arrived at an automobile dealership to pick up our car we were told the keys had been locked in it. We went to the service department and found a mechanic working feverishly to unlock the drivers side door. As I watched from the passenger side, I instinctively tried the door handle and discovered that it was unlocked. 'Hey,' I announced to the technician, 'its open!' His reply, 'I know. I already got that side.'

This was at the Ford dealership in Canton , Mississippi

How to Rope a Deer

I had this idea that I was going to rope a deer, put it in a stall, feed it up on corn for a couple of weeks, then kill it and eat it. The first step in

this adventure was getting a deer. I figured that, since they congregated at my cattle feeder and do not seem to have much fear of me when we are there (a bold one will sometimes come right up and sniff at the bags of feed while I am in the back of the truck not 4 feet away), it should not be difficult to rope one, get up to it and toss a bag over its head (to calm it down) then hog tie it and transport it home.

I filled the cattle feeder then hid down at the end with my rope. The cattle, having seen the roping thing before, stayed well back. They were not having any of it. After about 20 minutes, my deer showed up — 3 of them. I picked out a likely looking one, stepped out from the end of the feeder, and threw my rope. The deer just stood there and stared at me.

I wrapped the rope around my waist and twisted the end so I would have a good hold. The deer still just stood and stared at me, but you could tell it was mildly concerned about the whole rope situation. I took a step towards it...it took a step away. I put a little tension on the rope and received an education.

The first thing that I learned is that, while a deer may just stand there looking at you funny while you rope it, they are spurred to action when you start pulling on that rope. That deer EXPLODED.

The second thing I learned is that pound for pound, a deer is a LOT stronger than a cow or a colt. A cow or a colt in that weight range I could fight down with a rope with some dignity. A deer— no chance. That thing ran and bucked and twisted and pulled. There was no controlling it and certainly no getting close to it. As it jerked me off my feet and started dragging me across the ground, it occurred to me that having a deer on a rope was not nearly as good an idea as I originally imagined.

The only upside is that they do not have as much

[Continued on Next Page](#)



stamina as many animals.

A brief 10 minutes later, it was tired and not nearly as quick to jerk me off my feet and drag me when I managed to get up. It took me a few minutes to realize this, since I was mostly blinded by the blood flowing out of the big gash in my head. At that point, I had lost my taste for corn-fed venison. I just wanted to get that devil creature off the end of that rope.

I figured if I just let it go with the rope hanging around its neck, it would likely die slow and painfully somewhere. At the time, there was no love at all between me and that deer. At that moment, I hated the thing, and I would venture a guess that the feeling was mutual.

Despite the gash in my head and the several large knots where I had cleverly arrested the deer's momentum by bracing my head against various large rocks as it dragged me across the ground, I could still think clearly enough to recognize that there was a small chance that I shared some tiny amount of responsibility for the situation we were in, so I didn't want the deer to have it suffer a slow death, so I managed to get it lined back up in between my truck and the feeder - a little trap I had set before hand...kind of like a squeeze chute. I got it to back in there and started moving up so I could get my rope back.

Did you know that deer bite? They do! I never in a million years would have thought that a deer would bite somebody, so I was very surprised when I reached up there to grab that rope and the deer grabbed hold of my wrist.

Now, when a deer bites you, it is not like being bit by a horse where they just bite you and then let go. A deer bites you and shakes its head—almost like a pit bull. They bite HARD and it hurts.

The proper thing to do when a deer bites you is probably to freeze and draw back slowly. I tried screaming and shaking instead. My method was ineffective. It seems like the deer was biting and shaking for several minutes, but it was likely only several seconds. I, being smarter than a deer (though you may be questioning that claim by now) tricked it.

While I kept it busy tearing the bejesus out of my right arm, I reached up with my left hand and pulled that rope loose. That was when I got my final lesson in deer behavior for the day. Deer will strike at you with their front feet. They rear right up on their back feet and strike right about head and shoulder level, and their hooves are surprisingly sharp.

I learned a long time ago that, when an animal — like a horse— strikes at you with their hooves and you can't get away easily, the best thing to do is try to make a loud noise and make an aggressive move towards the animal. This will usually cause them to back down a bit so you can escape. This

was not a horse. This was a deer, so obviously, such trickery would not work. In the course of a millisecond, I devised a different strategy.

I screamed like a woman and tried to turn and run.

The reason I had always been told NOT to try to turn and run from a horse that paws at you is that there is a good chance that it will hit you in the back of the head. Deer may not be so different from horses after all, besides being twice as strong and 3 times as evil, because the second I turned to run, it hit me right in the back of the head and knocked me down.

Now, when a deer paws at you and knocks you down, it does not immediately leave. I suspect it does not recognize that the danger has passed. What they do instead is paw your back and jump up and down on you while you are laying there crying like a little girl and covering your head.

I finally managed to crawl under the truck and the deer went away.

Do not mess with old folks

Gunslinger & the Old Prospector.. An old prospector walks his tired old mule into a western town one day. He'd been out in the desert for about six months without a drop of whiskey. He walked up to the first saloon he came to and tied his old mule to the hitch rail.

As he stood there brushing some of the dust from his face and clothes, a gunslinger walked out of the saloon with a gun in one hand and a bottle of whiskey in the other. The gunslinger looked at the old man and laughed, saying, "Hey old man, have you ever danced?"

The old man looked up at the gunslinger and said, "No, I never did dance. I just never wanted to."

A crowd had gathered by then and the gunslinger said, "Well you old fool, you're gonna' dance now," and started shooting at the old man's feet.

The old prospector was hopping around and everybody was laughing.

When the gunslinger fired his last bullet he holstered his gun and turned around to go back into the saloon.

The old man reached up on the mule, drew his shotgun, and pulled both hammers back making a double clicking sound.

The gunslinger heard the sound and everything got quiet.

The crowd watched as the gunslinger slowly turned around looking down both barrels of the shotgun.

The old man asked, "Did you ever kiss a mule square on its butt?"

The gunslinger swallowed hard and said, "No. But I've always wanted to."

Humorous English Signs From Around The World

TOKYO HOTEL: Is forbidden to steal hotel towels please. If you are not a person to do such thing is please not to read notis.

BUCHAREST (ROMANIA) HOTEL: The lift is being fixed for the next day. During that time we regret that you will be unbearable.

LEIPZIG (GERMANY) ELEVATOR: Do not enter the lift backwards, and only when lit up.

BELGRADE (YUGOSLAVIA) ELEVATOR: To move the cabin, push button for wishing floor. If the cabin should enter more persons, each one should press a number of wishing floor. Driving then going alphabetically by national order.

PARIS HOTEL ELEVATOR: Please leave your values at the front desk.

ATHENS (GREECE) HOTEL: Visitors are expected to complain at the office between the hours of 9 and 11 a.m. daily.

YUGOSLAVIAN HOTEL: The flattening of underwear with pleasure is the job of the chambermaid.

JAPANESE HOTEL: You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.

MOSCOW HOTEL: You are welcome to visit the cemetery where famous Russian and Soviet composers, artists and writers are buried daily except Thursday.

SWISS MENU: Our wines leave you nothing to hope for.

AUSTRIAN SKI LODGE: Not to perambulate the corridors in the hours of repose in the boots of ascension.

POLISH MENU: Salad a firm's own make; limpid red beet soup with cheesy dumplings in the form of a finger; roasted duck let loose; beef rashers beaten up in the country people's fashion.

HONG KONG TAILOR SHOP: Ladies may have a fit upstairs.

BANGKOK DRY CLEANERS: Drop your trousers here for best results.

PARIS DRESS SHOP: Dresses for street walking.

RHODES (GREECE) TAILOR SHOP: Order your summers suit. Because is big rush we will execute customers in strict rotation.



Last Word: A Little Inspiration



When I was quite young, my father had one of the first telephones in our neighborhood. I remember well the polished old case fastened to the wall. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I was too little to reach the telephone, but used to listen with fascination when my mother used to talk to it.

Then I discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device lived an amazing person — her name was “Information Please” and there was nothing she did not know. “Information Please” could supply anybody’s number and the correct time.

My first personal experience with this genie-in-the-bottle came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor. Amusing myself at the tool bench in the basement, I whacked my finger with a hammer.

The pain was terrible, but there didn’t seem to be any reason in crying because there was no one home to give sympathy. I walked around the house sucking my throbbing finger, finally arriving at the stairway.

The telephone!

Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the parlor and dragged it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver in the parlor and held it to my ear. “Information Please,” I said into the mouthpiece just above my head.

A click or two and a small clear voice spoke into my ear. “Information.”

“I hurt my finger. . .” I wailed into the phone. The tears came readily enough now that I had an audience.

“Isn’t your mother home?” came the question.

“Nobody’s home but me.” I blubbered

“Are you bleeding?”

“No,” I replied. “I hit my finger and it hurts.”

“Can you open your icebox?” she asked. I said I could. “Then chip off a little piece of ice and hold it to your finger,” said the voice.

After that, I called “Information Please” for everything. I asked her for help with my geography and she told me where Philadelphia was. She helped me with my math. She told me my pet chipmunk that I had caught in the park just the day before would eat fruits and nuts.

Then, there was the time Petty, our pet canary died. I called “Information Please” and told her the sad story. She listened, then said the usual things grown-ups say to soothe a child. But I was UN-consoled.

I asked her, “Why is it that birds should sing so beautifully and bring joy to all families, only to end up as a heap of feathers on the bottom of a cage?”

She must have sensed my deep concern, for she said quietly, “Paul, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in.” Somehow I felt better.

Another day I was on the telephone. “Information Please.”

“Information,” said the now familiar voice.

“How do you spell fix?” I asked.

All this took place in a small town in the Pacific northwest. When I was 9 years old, we moved across the country to Boston. I missed my friend very much. “Information Please” belonged in that

old wooden box back home, and somehow never thought of trying the tall, shiny new phone that sat on the table in the hall.

As I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations ever really left me. Often, in moments of doubt and perplexity I would recall the serene sense of security I had then. I appreciated now how patient, understanding, and kind she was to have spent her time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way west to college, my plane put down in Seattle. I had about half an hour or so between planes. I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister, who lived there now. Then without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, “Information, Please.”

Miraculously, I heard the small, clear voice I knew so well, Information.” I hadn’t planned this but I heard myself saying, “Could you please tell me how to spell fix?”

There was a long pause. Then came the soft spoken answer, “I guess your finger must have healed by now.”

I laughed. “So it’s really still you,” I said. “I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during that time.”

“I wonder,” she said, “if you know how much your calls meant to me.” “I never had any children, and I used to look forward to your calls.”

I told her how often I had thought of her over the years and I asked if I could call her again when I came back to visit my sister.

“Please do, she said. “Just ask for Sally.”

Three months later I was back in Seattle. A different voice answered “Information.”

I asked for Sally. “Are you a friend?” She said.

“Yes, a very old friend,” I answered.

“I’m sorry to have to tell you this, she said. Sally had been working part-time the last few years because she was sick. She died five weeks ago.” Before I could hang up she said, “Wait a minute. Did you say your name was Paul?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down in case you called. Let me read it to you.” The note said, “Tell him I still say there are other worlds to sing in. He’ll know what I mean.”

I thanked her and hung up. I knew what Sally meant. Never underestimate the impression you may make on others.

