

Living Stones

Volume 1 Issue 5

October 2011

Features:

**The Plea of A Young Mason
Freemasonry and Revolution
Hiram, Noah, and Gilgamesh
Tennessee Cave Degree**

...and more



A Magazine

For Freemasons

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Hi, I'm W.B. Robert Herd, Editor/Owner of Living Stones Magazine. Thank You for purchasing this new magazine for Freemasons. We continue to receive wonderful reviews from our readers and the subscriptions are still trickling in. The Living Stones Magazine Facebook page now has over 300 people "liking" it which is fantastic. Please consider subscribing if you have not already done so. This magazine will be electronic until we have enough subscriptions to fund the high cost of printing and mailing. So help us get the word out and get brethren signed up so we can all enjoy hard copies. Please keep spreading the word to your brothers, lodges, districts, and Grand Lodges. Also, I'd like to remind you that if you have an article/news/photo, you'd like to share, please email me. We are receiving some great submissions. This month we have again used several papers submitted by readers. We are always looking for fresh content. If you received this from a friend, and haven't already seen the website, please take a look at www.livingstonesmagazine.com for updates, back issues, and upcoming news.

Thank You Again!

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Get the picture? :)

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In 1988, my grandfather spoke to me about geometry being the basis of the universe. He gave me family trees and



old Bibles. He told me to take care of it all. He said he was entrusting it to me because I was his only grandchild that he knew would do it. And so I did.

He never spoke about it with me, but my grandfather was a Freemason. He was also a member of the Scottish Rite and a

Shriner. When he died, he received a Masonic funeral. Years later, as I started to organize our family history, I started to see a pattern. Our story was an old one of over 800 years that stretched across America, Ireland, Scotland, France and England. Our people had a tendency toward religion and music. Many of the earliest names belonged to knights and crusaders. And many of us were Freemasons. We even fought under the command of George Washington.

It never even occurred to me to pursue Freemasonry. I had always gotten the impression it was a little pagan and sinister from the churches I attended. I never could understand that. My grandfather and great-grandfather were profoundly solid, good men. In fact, everyone I had ever known who was a Freemason or Eastern Star seemed to be pretty grounded and happy. Not all, but most. They weren't super rich, but they were hard working and fairly content. All of them were profoundly patriotic.

I have a lot of irons in the fire at any given time, but I am a teacher by trade. I teach history and critical thinking among other things. I decided to approach this fascinating subject of Freemasonry objectively. What I found was something that resembled, in some ways, a group I had always wanted to be a part of: the Jedi. I personally think we created the United States of America. Think about it... democracy, a place where all are considered equal, offices that have set terms, voting, a belief that we are "Under God" and "In God We Trust" while not forcing a definition on what to believe about God, taking oaths on the Bible to prove we are serious....all these things are very American

and ALL of these things were first practiced in Freemasonry.

Freemasons, time and time again, were "the good guys" and also fairly intelligent as well. They seemed to be somewhat mystical and yet also practical. Every time I found a web page that said something ugly about Freemasonry, it had the opposite effect of what was intended. It gave me a real disgust for conspiracy theorists and a great affection for the Craft. I wanted to be one. So I started to research online how to do it. I came across many websites that had the phrase "to be one, ask one".



By this time, all of my Masonic relatives had died. My father and uncle, like most of their generation, never became Freemasons. So I went to a local Masonic lodge... truly of my own free will and accord. For over 6 months, I met with these guys. I grew to really like them. They were real men. The old school kind. My father was a cop and I spent a lot of time around him and his friends as a kid. I know what real men are. These were the same kind of people. My kind of people. The only way I can describe it is to tell you to watch "The Man Who Would Be King". Watch how Kipling, Dravot and Carnehan carry themselves and how they care about each other as brothers. Police have this kind of feeling for other police officers and Freemasons are the same way. It is something that is very special and hard to communicate to someone on the outside looking in. If there is anything mystical in Freemasonry, it is the true brotherhood that all Masons share for one another. It is very real.

Once I had satisfied the required time period, I petitioned to become a Freemason. I was never so sure of anything in my life. THIS is who I always was in my heart. If anything is my true heritage, it is Freemasonry. I had finally come home. I told my father. He still doesn't seem to be interested in becoming a Freemason and that is fine. He was raised by his grandfather who was a Freemason and without realizing it, my father is very much of that quality. He picked up a lot of his grandfather's good character traits...traits I now realize a lot of Freemasons share. He

was very pleased to find out I was becoming a Freemason. It is no small thing.

I have learned a lot in my short time as a Freemason. I am a natural bookworm. I have already read many books on Freemasonry. In my reading, I was always careful not to read anything that might spoil my experience of going through the three degrees of Freemasonry. I will say that even if you have looked up the rituals online, there is still nothing that can compare to the actual experience itself. It is very powerful and life changing. It is not something I would ever want to rush through.

In my studies, I came to realize the genius of the Symbolic Lodge and the three degrees. It trains a man to embark upon a lifelong quest in search for truth and self improvement. While not a religion and while refusing to endorse a particular religion, Freemasonry does consider God and immortality to be quite real. (The study of near death experiences is very fascinating to me and proves what we believe. My two favorite authors on the subject are Jeffrey Long and Howard Storm.)

I love the wisdom of the Grand Lodge system that honors and safeguards the three degrees as BEING Freemasonry while not dogmatically disallowing brothers to go onto pursue their Masonic life in the other rites such as the time honored York Rite, Scottish Rite and Shrine. Freemasonry is all about individualism and freedom.

We are fortunate to live in such times as Freemasons. Brother Albert Pike, I am convinced, would have had a blog and lost countless hours of his life pouring over all of the books available to us online. We can read every classic ever made including the Francken Manuscript and almost every Masonic ritual ever created. We have excellent authors such as Hodapp, Hammer, Morris, De Hoyos, Cooper and many others. We have access to all the religious texts, mythologies and classic literature ever written...for FREE! We have no excuse not to pursue further light. We are the most blessed Freemasons that have ever lived.

Here are some of the books that I think every Master Mason should read "The Origins of Freemasonry" by David Stevenson, "Born in Blood" and "The Pilgrim's Path" by John J. Robinson, "Observing the Craft" by Andrew Hammer, "The Rosslyn Hoax?" by Robert Cooper, "Morals and Dogma" and "Esoterika" by Albert Pike, "Solomon's

Builders" by Christopher Hodapp, "Is It True What They Say About Freemasonry" by Arturo De Hoyos, and the "Idiots" book by Brent Morris as well as the "Dummies" book by Hodapp.

Some people fret that Freemasonry is on the decline. I disagree. We may see a drop in numbers in the next few years as the last of the WW2 generation starts to leave us for the Celestial Lodge, however, young guys like me are rediscovering Freemasonry. It is a "national treasure" and I would say a global treasure, too. It is the Jedi and every lodge is a Hogwarts.

Masonry has something for everyone. The Symbolic Lodge has the original teachings. It is the Freemasonry of Benjamin Franklin, Rudyard Kipling and the Enlightenment. For brothers enamored by Christian knighthood, the York Rite has it all. For the esoteric brothers, is there anything cooler than the Scottish Rite? For the brothers who love the American style fraternalism and charity of days gone by, the Shrine is the answer. There is something for us all.

I think that no matter what path one takes in Freemasonry, it is important to realize that our quest never ends. Albert Pike understood this. While the third degree is truly the highest, our education does not end there. It never ends. A true Freemason is a seeker and a mystic. He wants to know how things tick. He wants to KNOW. He also realizes that at the end of it all, faith rises where reason sinks defeated. The highest wisdom we will ever truly attain is that of the Golden Rule. The love of good friends...of brothers. We are knights together on this quest for further light.



I love Freemasonry and how it has improved my life. As I build my temple, I become a better husband, father, churchman and citizen. This is the great gift of Freemasonry to civilization: good men. I pray this article provides is a blessing to you. May the Grand Architect of the Universe guide and protect all true, regular Freemasons. Long live the Craft.

Freemasonry and Revolution By Bro. Scott A. Schwartzberg

In the Lodge, we are taught that two topics of discussion that we are forbidden to discuss in Lodge are Religion and Politics. In fact, during the opening of a Lodge, we salute “the Flag of Our Country” (whatever country the Lodge is in), offering respect to the government of that nation. Why, then, does it seem that many Revolutionary movements are led by Freemasons?

In Lodges that follow Continental Masonry, those that do not trace their descent to the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), such as those Lodges subordinate to the Grand Orient de France, the prohibition on Lodge discussion of religion and politics is not followed. One of the ancient Landmarks, a belief in Deity, is not considered necessary, and therefore, atheists may become Masons in a Continental Lodge. These Lodges are considered ‘irregular’ by mainstream Freemasonry, and Masonic contact is not permitted between these Lodges, and ‘regular’ Lodges.

In discussing the Boston Tea Party, Christopher Hodapp, author of *Freemasons for Dummies*, explains that while members of St. Andrews’ Lodge in Boston were heavily involved in that incident, it was certainly not plotted in the Lodge . The group responsible for the Boston Tea Party, the Sons of Liberty, met regularly at the Green Dragon Tavern in Boston, just a few doors down from Dr. Warren’s house. The Tavern was owned by St. Andrews’ Lodge, which met in a lodge-room upstairs. Dr. Joseph Warren, Paul Revere, John Hancock, and Sam Adams, Masons all, are said to have been involved in the Boston Tea Party, a protest against taxes imposed by the legal British Government.

One of the Ancient Charges of a Freemason counsels the Mason to be “a peaceable subject to the Civil Powers” and “never to be concern’d in plots and conspiracies against the peace and welfare of the nation.” This charge was listed as the second of those contained in the Constitutions adopted by the Premier Grand Lodge at London in 1723, long before the American Revolution. We do have proof that there were Colonial Freemasons involved in the Revolution; in fact, there were Brethren on both sides of the conflict. Dr. Warren led the fledgling American troops

at the Battle of Bunker Hill, where he lost his life, while another Brother of St. Andrews’ Lodge, Dr, John Jeffries, fought alongside the British at the same battle.

One possible argument for the involvement of Freemasons in this conflict for freedom is that the Fraternity itself was not taking sides. The ‘noble experiment’ that is the United States of America may have been birthed in Philadelphia, on July 4, 1776, when independence was declared with the vote of the Continental Congress, but the conception of the nation occurred over at least the previous half-century, if not over several centuries, as thoughts of self-government and the ability to elect a leader from among the population took place in the Lodges of Speculative Freemasonry.

The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania traces the decline of the “Modern” branch of Freemasonry and the ascent of the “Antient” to the Revolution. The Moderns tended to be loyalists, while the Antients were strongly patriotic. According to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, out of the 56 signatories of the Declaration of Independence, nine have been proven to be Freemasons, with another eleven suspected of membership or affiliation. Of the 39 signers of the Constitution, 13 were Brethren. Of the 74 General officers commissioned in the Continental Army between 1775 and 1783, 33 (46%) were Freemasons.

Another conflict in which Masonry was significant was the American Civil War of the mid-nineteenth century. It could be argued that the States’ rights issue which caused 13 states to secede from the Union was a revolutionary movement.

Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, the 3rd and 4th Presidents of the United States have both traditionally been included in lists of Masonic Presidents. Their membership cannot be conclusively proven, although they did both have much contact with Masons and it is still speculated that they were in fact Brethren. Whether they were or were not initiated, passed, and raised, the specifics of both Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States, primarily written by

1. Doing a Google search, I translated “Flag of our Country” and “Freemason” into French, and pulled up an article, which, when translated back to English, discussed paying proper respect to the Flag of Our Country.

<http://jean-paul.barriere.pagesperso-orange.fr/livres/initianc.htm>

http://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=http://jean-paul.barriere.pagesperso-orange.fr/livres/initianc.htm&ei=y_6-TOmZJoO0lQfWycThBw&sa=X&oi=translate&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CC4Q7gEwBA&prev=/search%3Fq%3D%2522drapeau%2Bde%2Bnotre%2Bpays%2522

<http://www.microsoft.com>

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Madison, show the influence of Masonic thinking.

Jefferson and Madison secretly wrote the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions in 1798 and 1799 after the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts, under the principal that the individual States were united under a federal government only when the government acted within its Constitutional limits. The 10th Amendment specifically gave the States the right to act in the best interests of their own citizens. "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

In the 1830s, federal tariffs on goods were benefitting northern industrial states, and causing hardship on the agrarian southern states. Instead of being able to buy goods from foreign nations at a cheaper level, import tariffs forced people to buy goods produced domestically, at a higher price than they would have originally paid. Certain state legislators also vowed to fight against the return of captured slaves to their owners, especially in the north and northeast of the nation. This growing tide of unrest precipitated the Civil War. South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas seceded from the Union, and formed the Confederate States of America, basing their constitution on a strong states rights principal with a weaker federal government. After the southern attack on Fort Sumter, in Charleston, SC, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee seceded and joined the Confederacy. Slave-owning states that did not secede and remained in the Union were Missouri, Kentucky, West Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1862 did not free any slaves in states that were a part of the Union, only in Confederate states, which were not bound to listen to him as President.

Abraham Lincoln was not a Freemason. He was a member of the Knights of Pythias, a fraternal organization founded in Washington, DC, in 1864. There were many Masons involved in this war on both sides of the conflict. Fourteen percent of Union Generals were Freemasons, while over twelve percent of Confederate Generals were Brethren. Lincoln's cabinet had 16 men in it, of which five were Freemasons. Jefferson Davis' Confederate cabinet had 18 men, of which four were Freemasons.

In this conflict, men on both sides were sure that they were fighting for the principles that this country was founded on. One side saw the strong union of states, with a powerful federal bureaucracy, as good and necessary, while the other side preferred that the strength remain in the hands of the individual states, bound together in a confederation, as the fledgling United States was, before the Constitution was written, during the Articles of Confederation. Which group was acting unMasonically? Was either faction wrong?

In France, Freemasonry started as English Masons travelled to the continent and build Lodges. The Grand Orient de France was founded in 1733. Benjamin Franklin was a prominent American Freemason, and a member of the Lodge Les Neuf Sœurs, a Lodge which offered assistance to the Americans during the American Revolutionary War, and also proved to be a source of the intellectual discourses leading up to the French Revolution. Another member of this Lodge was Georges Danton, a leader during the Revolution, and the first President of the Committee of Public Safety.

A schism took place between the UGLE and the Grand Orient, in 1877. A Protestant priest demanded that a belief in a Supreme Being – one of the Ancient Landmarks of Freemasonry as practiced by the United Grand Lodge of England, no longer be required for a man to become a Mason. The Grand Orient argued that the Landmarks in Anderson's Constitutions are his own collection and his own interpretation, and therefore open to other interpretations. A second Grand Lodge formed in 1894, as Lodges left the Grand Orient, to form the Grand Loge de France. A Third Grand Lodge was formed by the UGLE in 1913, the Grand Loge Nationale Français, which is the only Grand Lodge in France deemed "regular" by the UGLE and most Anglophone Lodges.

Although many French Freemasons took part in the Revolution, there are no written records conclusively linking Freemasonry and the Revolution. One of the key leaders of the French Revolution was the Duc D'Orléans, cousin to the King, and Grand Master of the Grand Orient de France. According to Gould's History of Freemasonry, there were at least 10 and possible as many as 30 Masonic

2. There were 584 General officers in the Union army including brevet ranks, of which 81 were Freemasons. In the army of the Confederacy, there were 424 General officers including brevet ranks, of which 53 were Freemasons. Information was obtained from the websites <http://sunsite.utk.edu/civil-war/generals.html> and <http://www.authentic-campaigner.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-717.html>

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organizations conferring degrees and issuing warrants for Lodges in the years leading up to the French Revolution. When the National Assembly was formed, out of the 1,336 delegates to the Estates-General, at least 320 are believed to have been Freemasons. Several writers, such as John Robison and Abbé Baruel, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries attempted to draw connections between the Bavarian Illuminati and the French Revolution, though later scholarship has shown these associations to be specious. It is likely that the French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte was a Freemason, initiated into the Army Philadelphie Lodge, in 1798. He was certainly well-versed in the Brotherhood. His four brothers were Masons, as were 5 of the 6 members of his Imperial Council. He also apparently believed in the rumor of Freemasonry directly descending from the Knights Templar.

These two writers, still often quoted in Anti-Masonic screeds, are both guilty of taking information out of context. Robison relied on translations of German writings, which lacked citation in his 1798 *Proofs of a Conspiracy*.

The continued existence of the Illuminati is debated, with most scholars believing that the order ceased to exist by 1785, while conspiracy theorists claim that the organization is still active, and actively running the world from behind the curtains. It can be said that the Illuminati do survive in the western world, as their main goals of representative democracy, separation of church and state, and the emancipation of women have been established in modern society.

Giuseppe Garibaldi is considered to be one of the founders of the modern Italian state. He fought in both wars of independence in Italy, and although never joining a Lodge in Italy, he did try to use the organization to help organize the new nation and for political purposes and was seemingly frustrated by his inability to do so. The Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite named Garibaldi Grand Master while the Grand Orient of Italy gave him the honorary title of "First Italian Freemason."

Simón Bolívar was President of Gran Colombia, a union of states newly independent from the Spanish Empire, in South America. Bolívar was initiated in Cadiz, Spain, and joined the Scottish Rite in 1807. Bolívar was present at the coronation of Napoleon in Paris, and this appar-

ently ignited the fire of independence in him. He led an invasion of Venezuela in 1813, becoming known as "El Libertador". Under his leadership, Gran Colombia was created, encompassing modern-day Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and Ecuador. Bolivia was named after him, as was the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

In Haiti, François-Dominique Toussaint L'Ouverture, a Freemason, led that country's independence movement from France. He was the governor of the Colony in 1797, when he expelled the French commissioner, and wrote a new constitution, naming himself governor-for-life.

I conclude that although politics, and therefore revolution, are not discussed in open Lodge, the sort of man who becomes a Freemason is the sort of man who will not stand by as the rights of his fellow man are trampled and is the sort of man who will fight for independence, and the equality of man. He who will fight strongly, even to the death, for the right of others to say words that he may not agree with, is the man whom I would be proud to call my Brother.

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Bro Scott Schwartzberg is currently Junior Deacon of Boynton Lodge No. 236, Grand Lodge of Florida.

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The Office Not the Man

by Cliff Porter



office” often comes into play. First, is when a man who is not liked or considered ill prepared or suited for the Oriental Chair is advanced to the position of Worshipful Master for his lodge. The other instance is when a man considered equally ill prepared is elevated to Grand Master.

With the Internet culture and the speedy delivery of information, things once the skeletons of the Masonic closets are now often very public, many have even spilled into the civil courts of more than one state. Nothing being prettier than the sometimes archaic culture and language of Masonry being poured out in front of a profane for their decision.

Let’s examine this idea of respecting the office alone against the teachings the teachings of Masonry.

The rituals and charges of Masonry speak over and over again of personal responsibility and of personal consequence for bad, evil, or wrong deeds. These include from the start the charges which declare a man is chosen for his inward qualities and not his outward wealth or qualifications. The “office” is the antithesis of inward quality and expresses only an outward thing. The “office” speaks little to the qualities of a man who might achieve it someday. Sadly, because lodges are in such ill repair for lack of learning this lesson, the “office” of Worshipful Master is left to the “only man willing” to fill it. Not an enviable position of high esteem, but a grave duty thrust upon one of the few attendees with the time to fill the chair.

The rituals and charges of Masonry declare repeatedly that we are to govern ourselves in the strictest of manners. We are to care greatly that our personal behavior never bring reproach in our professions, in our private or public lives, or upon the Fraternity. This recognition is given to the “power” of an individual, not the power of an office.

The charges often read that it is the Brothers who deserve the honor being conferred. That it is the Brothers past behaviors or regular deportment that merit his elevations. It is the brother, not an office, not a title, not a collar that is being respected. It is the actions he has taken and the actions he is expected to take that merit the honor of Masonry.

It is never said, “You are now a Master Mason and as

I want to address the topic or idea of “respecting the office and not the man.” This is a statement I have heard when Brothers discuss the sometimes ugly politics of Masonry. I decided to investigate the origins of this statement and to provide some commentary to its application in the Craft.

The history of this idea is a Western European one likely and stems from the same idea as tribute. The etymology of word tribute means to pay taxes to a master or ruler for protection. This tribute extended to the “house” of the master, and not the master himself. When the master died, that family member privilege to take his place would continue to receive the tribute or tax.

This idea of tribute to kings, princes and potentates would extend through feudal times and serfdom to paying homage to a “house.”

Different rituals and practices extended from more ancient times down to our culture. For instance, saluting a vehicle that has a certain rank sticker on it as it enters a military post whether the particular officer is in or driving the vehicle. It is a curtesy extended the rank or office of the man, not the man himself.

Let’s examine the ideas of Freemasonry, how this might fit and/or not fit with the Craft and how we might fit into this equation.

There are two situations where the term “respect the

The Office Not the Man

by Cliff Porter

such, regardless of your behaviors, are due a certain level of honor and respect. Go do what thou wilt, you are untouchable and cannot be impeached.”

Taken from Masonic ritual we have our current hero of Hiram Abiff. He, being so important, that the Word possessed by him is not shared with any other

The idea of respecting a collar while ignoring the head that has popped through it, is a dangerous idea, a lazy idea, an uncourageous idea, and it has harmed the Craft!

We should forget not that Lodges are gatherings of MM's, and need only three to exist. The lodge does not exist because their are Worshipful Masters or Past Masters, there are only these lovely titles because the lodge exist in the first place.

Masonry existed for a minimum of a 100 years without any Grand Lodges. The oldest provable Masonry in the world exists in Scotland where they were hesitant to even form a Grand Lodge and grant very little power to it even to this day when compared with other jurisdictions. Lodges have their own rituals (yes, the lodges can change and create their ritual in Scotland), their own regalia, aprons, and customs without the authority of the Grand Lodges to change them, stop them, or even uplift them; and the oldest Masonry in the world has not fallen off the face of the planet nor denigrated to clandestine tomfoolery.

This idea of an “office” being higher or more important to the man has led to one of the most dangerous and destructive traditions in Masonry to date, the Progressive Line. Be it blue lodge or grand lodge, the progressive line decays and denigrates the quality of a lodge and its leaders and the failure of one bad leader spreads like a virus, because like attracts like. The poor Master, be it blue or Grand, will make a poor appointment in many cases and the cycle of poor leadership spreads, till a good leader is appointed only by chance and then has little time to do any real good.

Any man with any life experience can tell you the potency of a bad decision over the potency of many good works.

Masons, conversely, are charged to admonish, to judge,

and to reprehend when a man violates his obligations, charges, and rules.

The progressive line and honor for an office versus the man allows for lazy minds and lazy Masons. We do not need to educate ourselves on our fellows nor do we need to do the difficult work of sorting out the best leaders from many good Brothers. A good Brothers isn't necessarily a good leader, but it is difficult to wrestle with this. Also, if a lodge is failing, which many are in many ways, we need not take personal responsibility for their failure if we can point to the outside entity of the progressive line. Then it is not you who failed to ferret out and elect a good leader, it is just that gosh darn progressive line... and by the way, you don't need to work to admonish them, judge them, or reprehend them as your Brothers... cause' once they are leaders, we just gotta' respect that office!!!!

Circular and foolish thought, harmful and lazy thought, that gives way to lack of action.

What can we do as Masons?

Glad you asked.

1. Never vote for someone ONLY because they are the “next” in line. Do your research. Be active, observe them, and don't vote based on “hurting feelings” but instead vote for helping the lodge. If a man doesn't receive a position and leaves lodge for that very reason, then you just learned more about him than you knew before and your choice not to vote him has just been validated.
2. Work to create a fulfilling lodge experience so that the good men have not been run off and you are left with meager choices.
3. Stop immediately the progressive line in your lodge.
4. If you have a good Master, leave him in for a while and support him.
5. Stop trying to figure out why things won't work, and help make them work.
6. Step up again and again to take leadership roles of any kind. That means some don't come with fancy titles. Some just mean making Masonry a priority over and

over again.

7. Exclude men from lodge that don't deserve it, and have the guts to recognize that not all do.
8. Exclude men from leadership that don't deserve it, and have the guts to recognize that not all do.
9. Work to change the Constitutions and laws of your Grand Lodge so that they conform to democracy and not to kingly sovereignty.

The Grand Lodge of Oklahoma has a rule that any Master Mason in good standing can run for the elected Grand Lodge offices. They submit money and paperwork to run, and it is not at all a progressive line. Way to go Oklahoma. The men who run for office make themselves available to blue lodges, visit, and discuss their vision for the office they are seeking. What a wonderfully democratic, American, and Masonic idea!

10. Work within the Grand Lodge rules to create an amendment that allows for the impeachment of Grand Lodge officers.

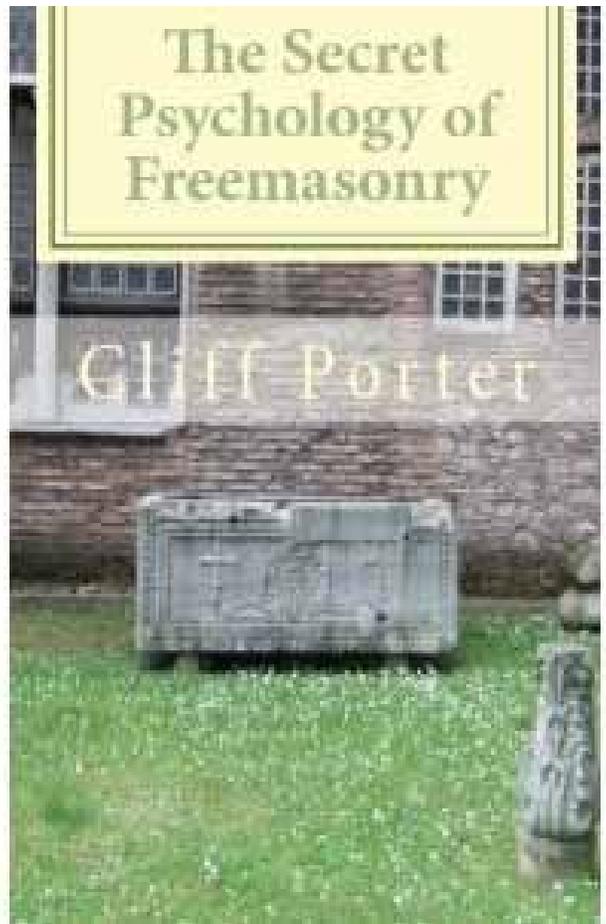
Or....

You can read this and break out your "that will never happen here banner" which should be stored next to your "that will never work" and "they are too powerful" banner. Careful though, don't through your back out carrying all those excuses, they can be heavy.

Brethren.....

Masonry is extraordinary in every way. It deserves our attention, it deserves good leaders, and it deserves our time in electing those leaders.

Put good men in office, so that the sad cry that we need to respect an office regardless of its occupant never need be uttered. Because it is never uttered when the man in the office has earned it, deserves it, and does it proud.



W.B. Cliff Porter is a published author and speaker from Colorado Springs, Colorado. He is also a founding/charter member/and Past Master of Enlightenment Lodge #198 AF&AM of CO, a Traditional Observance Lodge.

His latest book "The Secret Psychology of Freemasonry" is available on Amazon Books now. W.B. Porter is a featured opinion writer each month with his article section titled The Relevant Mason, made popular initially by his blog: www.therelevantmason.blogspot.com W.B. Porter also holds seminars on Detecting Deception. His seminar information can be found at: www.detectingdeception.com

The Plea of a Young Mason

by Kyle James Ferguson

I've come to the realization recently that if it wasn't for Freemasonry, I don't know where I'd be right now. I have a great family and a decent job, but I never really felt fulfilled by any of it. Once I became a Mason, it was like "That's It!" I was truly reborn, not in the mere ceremonial sense, but in the true spiritual sense.

Ever since I've reached legal adulthood and really started to think for myself, I've always had this part of me that was never fulfilled. I tried several things through the few years that elapsed between then and now to fill that void but nothing was ever the right fit. I felt like I was trying to stick square pegs into a round hole. I knew I needed to find that round peg.

I had a great group of friends through the years, but none of them ever thought the way I did. I always had a feeling of spiritual lacking that it seemed no one else ever had. I never thought I was weird because I had a need for something more in life, but I never really put it out there either because I knew that most of my buddies, who were thinking on a lower plane than myself, would just never get it.

I became involved with a woman, who is currently my wife, right around the time that I was really starting to get sick of this partying scene that my friends insisted was the thing to do. If it wasn't for her, I don't think I would have found Masonry and adopted its teachings in the way I did. She supports me in everything I do and is a huge proponent of Freemasonry.

Now, I should note, Freemasonry was something I've wanted to do for a long time but not for the reasons why I embrace it the way I do today. I was always fascinated by it but more for its mystique than for its spiritual way of life. It wasn't until my mid 20s, when I really started to learn what it was all about and decided that I was at a place in my life where I could give it 100% effort.

Little did I know, that that decision to petition a lodge would end up in my top three life changing moments. The other two were marrying my wife and coming home from an 18 month deployment to Baghdad, Iraq with the U.S. Army. That petition started my journey into this great Masonic world. As soon as I got my first degree, I felt that spiritual gap inside me closing, getting exponentially smaller with each proceeding degree. I knew I

had found the thing I needed. It was almost as if I were destined to do this.

I spend every single moment of my life with the mindset to be the best Freemason I can be. I do this because I know if I master that philosophy and apply it to every action, I will be a better husband, a better coworker, a better son and son in law, and, in general, a better person. And the important people in my life have noticed that change in me to the point that my father in law told my wife it was the best thing that ever happened to me.

I strive always to live, as Walter Leslie Wilmshurst puts it, by my Divine Center.¹ Freemasonry provided me with the tools to accomplish this within myself. And as W. Kirk McNaulty says in his book *The Way of the Craftsman*, paraphrased into my own interpretation, the rituals and teachings that Freemasonry has hidden behind its veil have allowed me to live my life from my highest point of thought, to make every decision from the part of my spirit that is in closest contact with my internal Divine Presence and by doing so, making myself better prepared to be built into the building of a better society, a better human race.²

If it were not for the existence of Freemasonry, the world we look at today would be very different. Millions of men took the same journey Eastbound that did and discovered the potential of the Great Architect of the Universe that breathes life into each and every one of us. And now we travel towards the west, making every effort to distribute the light of the rising sun of the East to the people who live in the dark, moonlit West. Our world exists as it does because of the organization we belong to. This then is a serious weight on our shoulders as it is now our duty to carry this fraternity into the future so it can continue to influence the world and build a better human race.

This fraternity, that has done such beautiful things to me and millions of other men, so much so that the world is a better place because of it, is being sold away and torn apart ritualistically to appease people who have never experienced it and most of which never intend to.

The rituals, the true initiatic experience that they are, are being handed out to anyone who wants to pay for them and, in a lot of Grand Lodges, all in one day to thousands of men at the same time. Why? Because men "don't have

The Plea of a Young Mason

by Kyle James Ferguson

the time" to do it the old way or "younger men will join the fraternity if we make it easy". Words, phrases, and actions within our rituals are being removed because people might be "offended by it" or "it is outdated language and is more offensive than relevant".

Well, here's my response. If you don't have the time, don't be a Mason. We need quality, not quantity and if you are going to tell us, before you even join, that you don't have the time to do it, then don't do it. Very simple. Unfortunately, some Brothers that are in positions well beyond me feel that we should change the fraternity to accommodate these men instead of them having to change themselves to be one of us.

These same men feel that younger men will join if we make it easier and less mystical. This is the polar opposite of truth. I am 26 years old and I personally requested to go through the same initiations and proficiencies that my great grandfather had to go through when he was raised 100 years to the day before I was. I came in search of knowledge and spirituality, not a title, handshake, and dues card. The overwhelming majority of brethren and prospective candidates that I have spoken to, under the age of 35, concur with that statement.

This beautiful ritual was passed on to us by our forefathers and passed on to them by theirs and so on. The form and wording of the ritual and obligations were designed to change the person who spoke the words or went through the journey of the ritual (I refuse to call it a ceremony because it is much more than that). And what are we doing with it while it is within our charge? Changing it in an attempt to make people outside the fraternity feel comfortable with what we are doing, when, in reality, they never will. They will always find something wrong with us because we stand for freedom of thought, speech, religion and not blind adherence without intellectual choice. As Worshipful Brother Cliff Porter says, we need to stop apologizing for who we are.³ Apologizing for something that has made us who we are today, something that has shaped our very existence and the existence of the world as a whole. Apologizing is not something I intend to do.

It's time to change, brothers. It's time to do this right. It's time to put Freemasonry back into Freemasonry and let it be mystical, spiritual, life changing, encouraging freedom

of the person to be whoever and think whatever they want, all under the fatherhood one God in the brotherhood of all men who desire it in their hearts.

I am ready to stand up, Brethren.

Are you?⁴

Notes

1. The Meaning of Masonry, Revised Edition (Agapa Masonic Classics) by W.L. Wilmshurst, edited by Shawn Eyer, Plumstone Publishers, 2007
2. The Way of the Craftsman: Search for the Spiritual Essences of Craft Freemasonry by W. Kirk McNaulty, Published by Central Regalia, Ltd, 2002
3. The Great Masonic Apology by Cliff Porter <http://thesanctumsanctorum.blogspot.com/2008/03/great-masonic-apology-by-bro-cliff.html>
4. For additional information on how to change the culture of your lodge or for information on being an observant Mason, go to <http://www.traditionalobservance.com/>.



Pictured with his wife, Justina

Bro. Kyle James Ferguson is a member of Kingsbury Lodge No. 466 and Union Lodge No. 291, Free & Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania and a Companion in Lackawanna Chapter No. 185, Grand Holy Royal Arch Chapter of Pennsylvania. He is active in the Pennsylvania Academy of Masonic Knowledge, a member of The Masonic Society and of the Grand College of Rites.

The Coaches Coach: Degrees of Separation (Part Five – Raising Ashlars)

What actually Raises Ashlars?

The commonly held view of most Freemasons is that Brothers Raise Brothers. Tucked tenaciously within this view are elaborately supportive Rituals where these “Raisings” occur. Brothers experiencing these Rituals believe that, once so experienced, they have been Raised and by this Rite, have earned the Title, Rights, Lights and Benefits of a “Master.”



There’s another view of Raising though that few Brothers know. This view is steeped in a deep understanding of what Masonry is intended to do for Brothers who practice it. They know that Ritual points toward this intention at least twice within the first two Degrees. They know too that Ritual expresses the importance of Raising, but not in the manner that other Brothers have come to know. Those uncommon Brothers, who understand this intent, practice this wholly different type of Raising and reap its eternal benefits.

What is behind this other Raising?

You probably know the answer to this already. If you have invested any time whatsoever in listening to the first and second Degree Rituals, you may see that it has already been clearly spelled out for you. You are not alone in this. Many other Brothers have heard what you have heard and have seen what you have seen. If pressured, all of you would reveal exactly what truly Raises men, according to what Ritual espouses.

Nevertheless, knowing this will not change the reality of how most Brothers are Raised or what they would share about Raising when asked. The problem is not that Brothers don’t know how this Raising occurs. The problem is that most Brothers who hear what it takes have not been held to account for following through on what they have been told they need to do. This lack of accountability has been a major stumbling stone for those professing a desire to be truly Raised. This is also one of the reasons why some Brothers are covered in the Rubbish of mediocrity.

This lack of accountability is not the fault of those who shared this information with every Brother who proceeds through the Degrees. Masonry requires a higher Degree of pro-activity from Brothers than does Freemasonry in such matters. Pro-activity by its very nature requires an internal motivation likened to a man with unquenchable thirst for a waterfall or with a hunger satisfied only by acres of wheat sheaves. Sadly, such motivation is not commonly found within the ranks of Brothers. Few men desire to do the Work required to Raise themselves above the din of every day dealings.



Why must Raising involve such Work?

Those who originally shaped and revealed Freemasonry knew something about mankind. They realized early on that being provided Light by others isn’t the same as seeking and finding Light through one’s own efforts. They knew provisions unearned don’t exercise “mental muscles” necessary for self-sufficiency. They also knew that provisions earned develop specific skills and thinking vital to future earnings and well-being. Developing any type of dependency equates to future bondage. It also creates liabilities for those fostering such dependencies. Foster enough dependency upon those providing Light and those who depend upon

the sources of this Light will rarely seek it elsewhere. These dependant hoards will also devastate temples rather than contribute in nurturing ways for they have not developed a nurturing spirit to do otherwise.

This is the danger of work that fosters dependence. It is why so much of Masonry is self-directed – *it must be!* It is also the reason why only the bare minimum is expected for progression within Freemasonry. Men not inclined to do what truly needs to be done will do only what is necessary, and that with only tremendous coaxing. They are slaves to those who do their thinking for them, though they may indignantly argue against this label. This is why Masonry insists through its manner that it is the responsibility of each Brother to find for himself the motivation to progress and in his own way. Such internal motivation is the only driver that brings this other type of Raising into fruition.

What is this other Raising?

It is an Internal not external Transformation. More specifically, unlike “entitlement” oriented external Raisings where a title, rights and privileges are *bestowed* upon someone, “true” internally oriented Raisings Transform the very *being* of the men who actively pursue it.

How does it do this?

Well, in truth, “it” really doesn’t “do” anything. It is men who must “do” it to and for themselves. That’s the distinction between external Raising and Internal Raising. While External Raising is something that is done to men by other men, Internal Raising is an activity that each man does to and for himself. He does this by remapping the gray matter between his ears. The initial Preparation for this remapping is done through the Work specified in the first Degree. This Work unburdens those who complete this activity. It Prepares the way for the activity that truly Raises those who engage in it.

How does Work unburden a man?

Some Work burdens men. Other Work unburdens them. Clearing away Trumpery allows easier access and Travel from one area to another. Reducing excessive weight and excessive activities further reduces unnecessary maintenance and resource use. Building one’s muscles eases future efforts. In the case of first Degree Work, divesting specific things and investing specific others brings about the resources necessary for future improvements while clearing the way for those very same improvements. *It “prepares” those so inclined for what is to follow.*



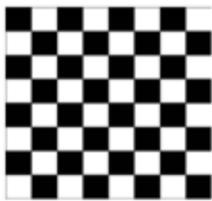
What is that Work?

Once the initial Work of the first Degree is completed, the Work of the second Degree, the Internal Raising, comes into play. By actively engaging in specific Internal Raising activities, *men Transform themselves.* That activity is best described as “Learning how to Learn.” Many men think that they have already done this in their lives. Chances are they have only learned what they were told to learn. The Learning activity that the second Degree invites men to engage in is different from the learning that they might have had in their past. It may even appear to some to be the same learning, but it is something far grander. In some respects, *Learning how to Learn* is indeed learning but it is a type of learning that teaches a man “how” to truly Learn.

How is learning different from "Learning how to Learn?"

Learning that focuses upon "Learning how to Learn" prepares men to Learn differently. More specifically, it trains them to *Learn on their own* and in a way that best Prepares them for future Learning, independent of others. Men who Learn independently foster future Learners not dependent upon others for their Learning. Conversely, men who continually return to others for their learning foster dependence upon teachers who provide such Light. In case you have not surmised from your personal experience of Freemasonry, creating an environment where pro-active men foster their own Learning is toward what the second Degree Ritual points. Ritual tells men what must be Learned. Once this is communicated, it is then up to them to go forth and Learn. No further instruction on this will or should be provided. This is as it should be for providing further instruction does no justice to what truly must be Learned and cultivated by those desiring more.

Yes, you might be saying to yourself that "all this all reads like convoluted Trumpery. Learning is Learning! It can't be said any simpler." And, you are right, if viewed from the prospective of someone who has yet "Learned how to Learn." From this view, it is not clear what is being subtly communicated. Here's the understated distinction. Some learning occurs when it is externally



driven. Some learning occurs when it is internally driven. *Learning how to Learn* is based upon Internal drivers that continually Ask, Seek and Knock for more. The Learner drives it independently. Externally driven learning is what others provide to learners and it has a high probability of fostering dependence, rather than independence. And, "yes," within reason, there is room for both. The points that should be gleaned are that *you are responsible for your Learning* and *Learning how to Learn* is what Ritual directs you toward. You will also be the one who is held to account for this type of Learning, by your future dealings.

In this respect, Ritual also provides an excellent Threshing-floor to Separates those Brothers who do the Work that is required to Raise Masons from those Brothers who do the work that Raises Freemasons. The former reap eternal benefits that the latter never reap.

What are those eternal benefits?

The eternal benefits reaped by those who Raise themselves are many. This article though will only overtly put forth one. Brothers who Raise themselves obtain a much clearer and deeper understanding of their chosen Faith. This occurs because their Work creates Internal Transformation that rewires their brains to be more receptive to the writings and related symbols in which most Faiths are rendered. The Work improves pattern recognition, increases awareness of subtleties and heightens the ability to make vital connections. Where some see no discernable pattern, those so trained recognize them immediately. Where some see no doors, those trained to detect and open them already have their keys. Where some are stop by gaps and chasms, those so trained to cross them find easy passage and in ways that might appear to be magical.

An untrained person might think that the metaphors just shared reflect physical realities. Trained souls know that these are the challenges that are met by those who Travel within their Faith's literature and rendered symbols. Faiths present subtle patterns undetectable to those who see nothing but shadows. They have many doors requiring keys that can only be turned by transforming one's view. They contain multitudes of solid connections that appear as disconnected Rubbish to those unable to bridge



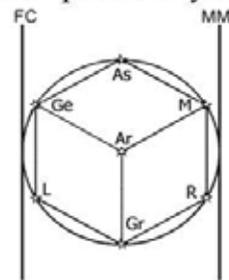
the gaps intended to block the untrained. To the untrained, their Faith's maps appear as illegible scratches upon a dimly lit cave wall. They give no clear understanding of Faith's terrain to the illiterate who attempt to use them.

If you don't believe such Work is necessary, you might want to Perpend the reasons behind such training. You may look to history for grist for your mental mill. During the middle ages, scholastic training *was required* by anyone who desired to participate in higher learning. That higher learning was mostly focused upon Philosophical and Theological based issues. Scholars knew what was required to support such focus. Do you think they knew something about *Learning how to Learn* that you too need to know for you to obtain what you desire most?

What does anything here have to do with the flanking on the Circumpunct?

It's interesting to see how many Masons understand that the flanking on the Circumpunct reflect a man's Internal Work efforts and successes. All of these efforts are educationally based. As these writings have continuously conveyed, this flanking is the separated legs of the Compasses. If you have done the Work too, you also recognize that they represent the supports, called "stingers" or "stiles", that you find holding both the Rungs of Jacob's Ladder and the last Seven Steps required to Raise a man.

For those who have *Learned how to Learn*, it might be noticed there was nothing shared herein that *required* learning. Much like Ritual, this writing merely reveals there's Work for you to do, *if you are so inclined*.



Points to Perpend:

- 1) How do Freemasonry and Masonry differ?
- 2) What Work Raises Masons and what Work Raises Freemasons?
- 3) What distinguishes Externally Raisings from Internally Raisings?
- 4) Why must the Work that Raises Masons be self-initiated and self-directed?
- 5) Why is the Work that Raises Freemasons administered or directed by others?
- 6) What does Freemasonry require to Raise Freemasons?
- 7) What does Masonry demand from Masons who desire Raising?
- 8) What other benefits are obtained by doing Work that Raises you?
- 9) What Suitable responses can you provide to the questions sprinkled throughout this article?
- 10) What constitutes the stringers/stiles of Jacob's Ladder & the Staircase's last Seven Steps?

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Dr. John S. Nagy is a Master Mason, Lodge Musician and Masonic Education provider for his two Lodges and others that invite his sharing. He is author of the "Building Series" of Masonic Education books. His books, **Building Hiram, Building Boaz, Building Athens** and **Building Janus**, his Video **"The Coaches Coach: Building Builders"** and his Masonic Education Workshops cover aspects of Masonry designed to **Build Better Builders**. His materials are used to instruct Blue Lodge, Scottish Rite and York Rite Candidates in Symbol Recognition, Understanding and Application. You can find out more about him, his books, his video and his workshops through his webpage at: <http://www.coach.net/BuildingBuilders.htm>

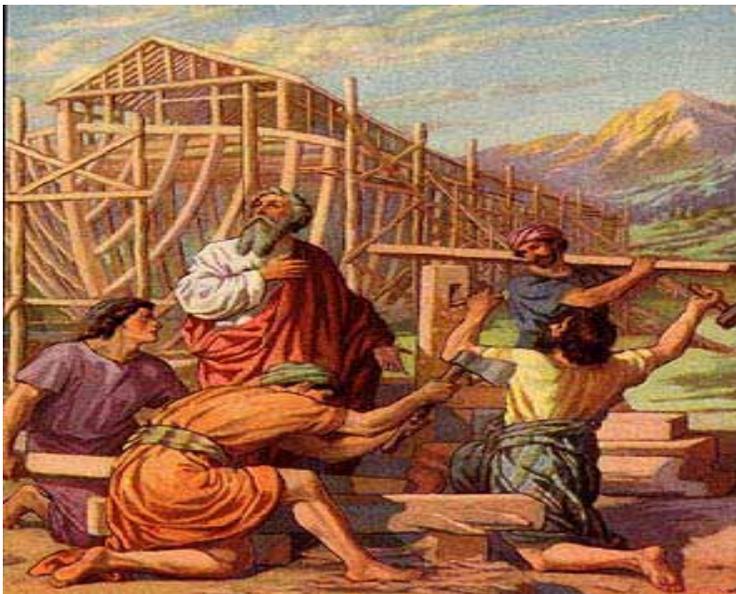


Mythology “Repurposed”

As a young college student, I was fortunate enough to spend a semester studying in Puebla, Mexico at the University Of The Americas. I lived nearby in a small village called San Andres, which sat at the base of a mountain that had been excavated to reveal a buried pyramid, the great Cholula Pyramid. This pyramid “is, in fact, the largest pyramid...ever constructed anywhere in the world.” Sitting atop of the yet unexcavated part of this temple sits a Catholic church, the Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, built by Spaniards in 1594. When I asked a professor at the University why the church was built upon a pyramid, I was told that the church simply built where the people were already coming to worship – that it was an easy way to convert the indigenous population to a new and unfamiliar religion. I later learned that this is called “repurposing” a religious site.

Since then, I have learned that the idea of “repurposing” is not only done with religious sites, but also with religious myths. An example of this would be the many myths, which have been passed along from the Babylonians to the Egyptians to the Jews, and finally to the Christians. Interestingly enough, a more specific example of repurposing can be found in the stories that form the basis of one of our own Freemasonry rituals.

Many brothers may be surprised to learn that the Hiram Abiff legend was not always a part of Masonic lore. Prior to 1730, our Masonic brothers were taught that “the secret word” that they sought was buried with the Old Testament biblical character, Noah.



According to the original story, Noah’s sons were in search of the “word” that they believed God had given to Noah that would enable him to start a new civilization after the flood. After a failed attempt by his sons to raise him from his grave, the sons chose a substitute word. The original word was never revealed, and remains lost to this day.

While there are differences between the Hiram Abiff story and the story of Noah and his sons, the general outline remains the same – a great builder is in possession of a word (or words), which will allow the building to continue. However, the word(s) are lost, and mankind continues to this day to search.

Let us now jump ahead to 1844 when a British researcher, named Austen Henry Layard was traveling in Northern Iraq around the town of Mosul. Excavating the ruined palaces of Nineveh, the ancient capital of Assyria, he discovered of a hoard of stone tablets inscribed with cuneiform script. At the time, it was considered to be an interesting, but minor find.



These tablets remained undeciphered until 1872 when a young British museum curator named George Smith translated the writing. Reportedly, when he deciphered one particular section of the tablets, he became so excited that he tore off his clothes and began running around

the laboratory. You see, the tablet he deciphered told the story of a Babylonian who survived a great flood. The similarities between what was written on these stone tablets more than five thousand years ago, and the Old Testament flood story were remarkable.

These stone tablets tell a story about a man named Gilgamesh who sets off on a journey with a friend. During the journey the friend dies and Gilgamesh, having never known death, is filled with fear and grief, crying out... "Must I die too? Must I be as lifeless? How can I bear this sorrow that gnaws at my belly, this fear of death that drives me onward? If only I could find the one man whom the gods made immortal, I would ask him how to overcome death."

Here then, in one of the earliest written stories that civilization has yet uncovered, we hear of man's greatest fear – the fear of death, and we hear of man's first search for the secret of everlasting life – immortality. Written in stone, over five thousand years ago.

Could the story of Gilgamesh have been "repurposed"? Is the story of Hiram Abiff's assailants, and Noah's sons search for the secret word actually a "repurposing" of Gilgamesh's search for everlasting life? Is the search for the lost words – so that we may continue building the temple, an allegorical story of man's search to find the one thing that will allow us to continue to build our own allegorical temples -- our lives?

In all three stories the content centers on a search -- a search for the greatest of secrets. In the Hiram Abiff story, Hiram is a supervisor of builders, Noah is the builder of the ark, and Gilgamesh is the builder of a great city. Continuing with the Gilgamesh epic, we learn that Gilgamesh eventually meets with the Babylonian who survived the great flood, and asks him to intervene on his behalf and to ask the gods to grant him eternal life. The Babylonian refuses, but tells Gilgamesh where to find a magical plant that will give him everlasting life. Gilgamesh finds the plant only to later lose it to a snake that carries it off. [BTW – isn't it interesting that in the bible in the book of Genesis a snake also keeps man from everlasting life?]

In the Gilgamesh story, we are not told what this magical plant is. Could it have been from the acacia plant? Remember that in Masonic lore, the acacia plant is the

symbol of everlasting life. It is the sprig of acacia that marks the grave of Hiram Abiff, and the sprig which the three searchers find when they search for Hiram.

Finally, in the Noah legend, and also in the Gilgamesh story, while aboard the ark, we are told that a bird is sent out to search for signs of life. The bird returns after the seventh day with an olive branch in its beak. And although in the Noah story it is an olive branch, doesn't it make more sense that it would be a branch of acacia? That it would represent what Noah was searching for; the "continuance of life"?

In all three stories, that of Hiram Abiff, Noah, and Gilgamesh, there is a search for the ultimate secret. In all three stories, it is never found and the secret remains forever lost, and forever sought.

Most importantly, in each of the three legends we are reminded that God (or in the case of Gilgamesh, gods) hold the ultimate answer.

In the end, we find ourselves frail, and painfully human, forever seeking solace from the ultimate question of life: death.

Are the legends similar enough in traits to merit our consideration that both the story of Noah and Hiram Abiff were "repurposed" from one of man's earliest recorded stories? – The story of Gilgamesh?

I believe that they are.

But most importantly, let us forever know that those things that concern every man in this room are simply part of the human condition. Perhaps it is only in a room like this, where we can each turn to the man sitting next to us and know that our concerns, our difficulties, and our struggles – whether now, or 5,000 years ago – are what make us human, and what make us brothers.

Note: In my opinion, the best and most complete translation of the tale of Gilgamesh can be found in the book "Gilgamesh" by Stephen Mitchell, Free Press, NY, ©2004. Mitchell tells the tale twice, once with full commentary and background. For additional reading, read "The Buried Book," by David Damrosch, Henry Holt & Company, © 2006.

**Respectfully submitted,
Bro. Tavit Smith**

Tennessee Cave Degree

By Bro. Jason Eddy

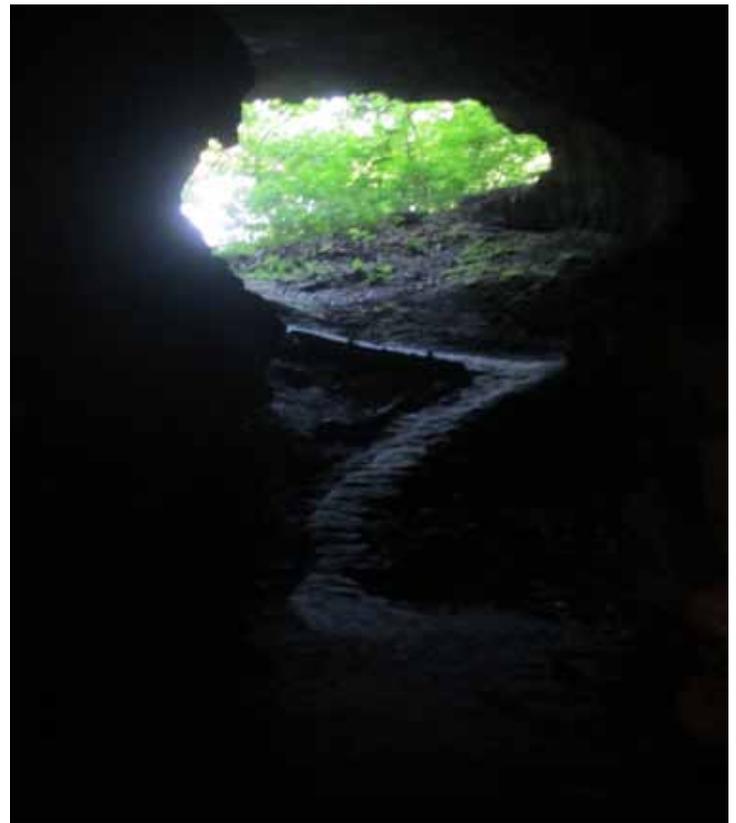
On August 19th, I, along with six Brothers from the Second Masonic District of Ohio, jumped into the car just as the sun reached high twelve. We were embarking upon a three hundred mile drive to spend a weekend surrounded by Masonic Brothers from over 115 Lodges representing 13 states! We were headed to the 40th annual Cave Degree in Kingston, Tennessee. This small town just west of Knoxville became the center of Masonic activity over the next three days with Brothers from all walks of life converging upon the small country Lodge overlooking the Clinch River. It would be a weekend full of memories for the six Brothers from High Point Lodge #773 and the lone representative of Germantown Lodge #257.



Forty years ago the members of Union Lodge sought out ideas that would help promote more interest in Freemasonry. The Worshipful Master at the time, Worshipful Brother Leon A. Meade, along with the Secretary Brother Henry Wattenbarger, Most Worshipful Brother John Arp and several others came up with the idea of conferring Masonic degrees in Eblen's Cave. The cave is a natural cave that can hold upwards of 300 people that is located just eight miles from the Lodge and is used with the permission of the Brashears family.

The weekend consisted of two main degrees. On Friday night an Entered Apprentice degree was conferred by a team from Pickens Star Lodge #220 from Jasper, Georgia. On Saturday, the degree conferred in the cave was a Master Mason degree that was done by Pleasanton Lodge #321 from Pleasanton, California. The seven of us made it to the Lodge around 5:30 PM on Friday night for dinner. The menu for the evening included chili-dogs, potato salad, baked beans and all the snacks that you could imagine. We sat with men who had come from many different places, yet were united by the mystic tie that binds all Masons.

There was not a stranger to be found among this group of men and after a short initiation into the Order of the Yellow Dog we found our seats in the Lodge room and the EA degree began. The Brothers from Pickens Star Lodge #220 put on an amazing degree for our fraternity's newest Brother. The degree had many differences from the Ohio ritual and spurred conversation long into the night as to the different approach to bringing the young man into the Light of Masonry. Though the path was slightly different, this young man's destination was the same as all of those who had come before him and at the end of the night we called him Brother.



Saturday morning started off with a tour of Eblen's Cave. The cave was set back away from the road several hundred yards up a hill along a well worn trail that used tree roots for steps much of the way. This cave had seen the raising of a Master Mason every summer for the last 40 years by Lodges all over the United States and even Canada. As we stepped out of the 95 degree heat and into the 55 degree cave the symbolism was not lost. We had stepped into a sanctuary reserved for the most solemn of practices. I was immediately struck by the thought of Plato's allegory of the cave and felt an intense connection to the journey that our new Master Mason was about to take. A veritable Chamber of Reflection awaited us as we stepped down into the bottom of the cave to find all of the implements

Tennessee Cave Degree

By Bro. Jason Eddy

of Masonry in place. A cubical rock sat as an altar in the center of the area marked off for the circumambulation that would take place. To the East, the letter G could be seen hanging from the rock over the chair reserved for the Master of the Lodge. Though the cave was cold, dark and mysterious it was filled with the warmth of Brotherly Love as men from all over the United States shook hands with those that they had never met and yet they called them Brother. The only light in the cave, aside from the occasional camera flash, came from a few Coleman lanterns tucked away in the corners. By the time things were set to start, it was standing room only as over 200 Brothers waited in anticipation for the Master Mason degree to be conferred by Pleasanton Lodge #321 from Pleasanton, California. The degree work was done beautifully and again was filled with many differences when compared to Ohio ritual. While the many differences were significant in practice, the underlying message conveyed to those listening was the same and showcased the universality of Masonry. It was an amazing experience that left a lasting impression upon all of those Brothers that were fortunate enough to be there, but most of all to our fraternity's newest Master Mason.

After the degree, the Brethren made their way out of darkness and into the light to head back to the Lodge for yet another fine meal of BBQ sandwiches and an assortment of side dishes. More contact information was exchanged with the Brothers that had made their way to this small Lodge overlooking the Clinch River and the evening wrapped up. It was over as quickly as it had begun. Hands were shaken and the Brothers from the Second Masonic District made their way back to the hotel for an evening of even more food and fellowship.

All in all, it was an amazing weekend for the seven Brothers and for Masonry in general. Plans are already being made for next year's trip in the hopes that even more will join them on the trip. Perhaps those of you that are reading this now will find the time to enjoy such a wonderful experience with your Brothers of the Mystic Tie. I certainly hope so.

Brother Jason Eddy
Senior Deacon
High Point Lodge #773
Monroe, OH



Am I Living Up to My Potential as a Builder?

We learn in our Bible Presentation that Freemasonry takes all good men by the hand and leads them to the Great Light of Masonry. It happens in all three Craft Degrees. We are led by the hand of a friend whom afterward we find to be a brother. We have a brother leading us to what we believe is quite possibly the single most influential book ever written. Why is it so difficult to believe that many Masons not only rarely, if ever, read that book but often times miss a chance to learn more about it by skipping out on the Church of their chosen faith?

No man or organization will “make” us better. People, societies, theories, religions, books, lectures, movies, audio files, websites and more exist to possibly benefit its audience. These are often mistaken for a panacea to worldly problems and personal development. We all want a “something” to fix our problems. If we want improvement in a specific area in our life, nothing but our own perseverance and discipline will allow us to achieve that improvement. We can own a copy of the bible and carry it around with us. We can have 24-hour access to a gym. We can stop eating fast food. The list of what we “can” do carry on ad nauseam. Yet if we never read the bible, go to the gym, or stop dining at fast food establishments, then having “the ability to do” anything really is inconsequential.

During each Degree there is an explanatory Lecture that discusses many of the possible answers to questions a brother either may not have thought of, or for him to actually ponder later after the evening comes to a close. In the Entered Apprentice Lecture alone there is a vast amount of symbolism that is rarely discussed again. How then is the symbolism of Freemasonry making a difference in a man’s life if he never goes back to study it? I have been guilty of it; I am sure there are men reading this that have been Masons many years and don’t know the difference between a vice and a superfluity. That statement isn’t made to ridicule but to raise a question as to whether any and all of you know the difference. I have been a Master Mason ten years, and until recently I didn’t know the application of the common gavel because I didn’t fully understand the difference between a vice and a superfluity.

Jack Canfield points out in his DVD, “The Law of Attraction”, that we are all constantly attracting things in our lives. Whether we know it or not, our thoughts generate our words, actions, body language, feelings and emotions. If they go unmonitored then we may be attracting all kinds of things that we don’t want. Yet focusing on what we really do want makes it more possible to attain or achieve it. If someone wants to lose weight and continues to eat fast food regularly, it will be difficult to do. The Law of Attraction works similarly in the sense that if we don’t take action to attract the things we want, then getting what we want will become harder to do, and may not happen at all.

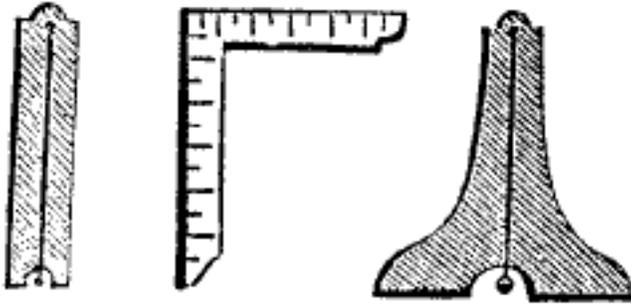
So now the question arises, and it really is the moment of truth for us all – what do we want or expect out of being a Mason? While you ponder that, ask yourself – what am I willing to do to achieve what Freemasonry has conferred upon me? If you go to The House of the Temple in Washington, D.C., in the Tyler’s room, there sits a marble chair with an inscription given to us both by Plato & Socrates, “Know Thyself”. If we go back to the use of the common gavel and examine what purpose it has to the Rough Ashlar, we can see that it is used to break off corners and roughness. What purpose has it in divesting our minds and consciences of dangerous habits and unimportant and unnecessary thoughts, words and actions?



We are obligated to be chivalrous to our fellow Masonic Brethren, to their widows and orphans. We are to learn the importance of integrity through the ability to maintain the confidence of another brother. We learn secrecy and how and why it is essential to our society. We learn the importance of duty as Masons. We receive the proper working tools in our Entered Apprentice Degree to prepare us for being able to help chip away at our previous life as an uninitiated man and place firmly the cornerstone of our new moral and Masonic edifice. With the twenty-four inch gauge, we learn how to manage our time and prioritize the areas in our lives so that we can

My Potential

By Bro. Matthew James Backus



gravitate toward natural balance.

Later we come to the Working Tools of a Fellow Craft; The Plumb, Square and Level. If the only things we were supposed to learn from these tools was to walk upright in our several stations before God and man, to square our actions and to know that we all traveling upon that level of time to that undiscovered country, from whose born, no traveler returns...then we have easily become proficient in the use of our Fellow Craft working tools and our Ashlar should now be Perfect. That is not all that is being taught here. Rectitude means having “morally correct behavior or thinking”; righteousness. Having rectitude sounds extraordinary to my current behavior and thinking. A quote by Masonic author Dr. John S. Nagy, “By affixing the Plumb to what is above, what is below shall come into alignment” (p. 32 Building Boaz, Nagy). In this one sentence we learn an application for this tool that makes perfect sense. How do we affix our personal Plumb to “what is above”? By Becoming more spiritually fit, going to Church, reading the bible, praying to God for others and self? We need to state our intentions of becoming more righteous and having pure motivation to boot. This will allow us to affix our TWA (thoughts/words/actions) to God and open a clearer path of righteousness to follow along in his footsteps. The Plumb will indicate whether we are staying properly on our path and if we keep our intention and motivation in mind in our daily lives, over time we will maintain our path.

The square is set up on a “right” angle. We are able to keep our work “square” or “right” by using what is righteous in our lives. A mode of recognition commonly used in Prince Hall Masonry is “square”. It’s very similar to the use of the terms dude, man, bro, bud, friend, amigo, etc...I have been greeted by more than one of our Prince Hall brethren with “What’s up Square?”. The Square of Virtue is a guide to all of Masons actions with mankind because it acts as a possible safeguard and defi-

nite reminder of our conduct. We are aware that the Holy Bible is a guide of everything moral, virtuous and will offer anyone who reads it a guide to living “right”. So as I stated before, why is this a book given to a Mason if he never chooses to read it? Aren’t we supposed to be in the practice of righteousness?

In Lodge, we have an emblem as well as a Working Tool that keeps us all equal. Once an Entered Apprentice is taught how to wear his apron, and the significance of it is explained to him, it is his first lesson of equality to all Freemasons worldwide. Later the Apprentice is passed to the Degree of a Fellow Craft and is given an explanation of the use of the Level. He now knows that all Masons are to be equal in a Masonic setting because we are united for higher purposes and greater good of all men. As the Level is the jewel of the Senior Warden, and it is the Senior Wardens duty to see that none go away dissatisfied when it comes to their wages, then “The Level assures that all resulting Wages are Equal for any Work so completed.” (p. 36 Building Boaz, Nagy) The level exists to remind us of balance as well. Modern men have more on their agendas than ever. We don’t need to be told that balance is essential in making sure that we have our priorities in line, do we? I for one need constant reminders of the various activities and responsibilities I have to juggle on top of being a boss, an employee, a son and a brother (both blood and fraternal). The symbol of the Level, just like the Square and the Plumb, is presented as a visual stimulation for us to use, so that we can do our best to be righteous on our path. We need to consistently be aware of our conduct while juggling the demands of the outside world, so we can properly manage our lives.

If a building lacks integrity, then it shouldn’t be occupied for the possibility of coming down. If we as Masons lack integrity as well as the proper motivation to change it, then we are not fully invested into the tenets, morals and virtues of our institution, and may as well demit. Freemasonry takes good men and makes them better, but those men better be willing to do the work to improve or else Freemasonry won’t change anything, much less the Mason. Unfortunately they unlearned Mason will change aspects of Freemasonry. Some Lodges have long forgotten Masonic Education as well as teaching their Membership about Freemasonry. This may sound redundant to some and will be dismissed; others will ponder it and become inspired to find the difference. My esteemed mentor from Florida was the one who taught me this dif-

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ference, and much like many of the lessons he has taught me, or offered to me in his series of “Building Builders”, he handed nothing to me.

Freemasonry has a natural ebb and flow of existing and thriving. Modern Freemasons are often lost after they are raised, and because of a lack of retention tools and mentors, they slip away from our ranks to become another ring wearer instead of a ring bearer. Many feel as though joining the ranks of the Scottish or York Rites will provide further light. While this is undeniably true, they miss the foundational teachings of the Craft Degrees that contain a concise and relatively complete explanation of “how to become a better man”. This short paper was drafted to provide insight to all those who were serious when the Worshipful Master brought them from darkness to light and still find themselves in relative darkness feeling around for a light switch.

If you sit in a fully illuminated room with your eyes closed, you can literally experience the light as it is trying to work past the thin skin of your eyelids and display what is right in front of you. Once you choose to physically open your eyes, you have taken the initial steps in understanding how to find what you seek.

Just as opening your eyes is a physical act and a choice, so too is the study of Freemasonry, its Working Tools, and the application of them in building a new life and becoming the Mason you took an obligation to be, and moreover were charged to become.

May the blessings of the G.A.O.T.U. shine further light upon us all.



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Freemasonry seemed to attract a number of influential occultists, magicians and all manner of believers in the paranormal during the Victorian period; the networking and the search for hidden knowledge luring an array of gentlemen, such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Arthur Edward Waite, Frederick Bligh Bond and Aleister Crowley. Rider Haggard was also a Freemason who was interested in the paranormal, and like Conan-Doyle, conveyed Freemasonry in his writings. Indeed, Masonic themes can be seen in Rider Haggard's late Victorian works *King Solomon's Mines* and the wonderfully exotic novel *She*, a story which has obvious occultist leanings and deals with death and re-birth. Both of these works present the idea of the heroic explorer searching lost civilizations for hidden knowledge and testify not only to the popularity of Freemasonry at the time, but also the acceptance of the Craft in Victorian society, which, within these literary contexts also conveyed an element of mystery and the occult.

Henry Rider Haggard was also a close friend of Egyptologist and occultist Ernest A. Wallis Budge – famous for his translation of *The Book of the Dead* which was published in 1895; both of them have been linked to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.¹ Conan Doyle also took a keen and almost obsessive interest in the occult, becoming deeply involved with psychic research. Arthur Edward Waite would become more famous for his co-creating of the influential Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot card deck, which, when published in 1909, displayed elements of Masonic



symbolism embedded within the mysterious picture cards.

Waite had become a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1891, an occult society which embodied the essence for the learning of magic in Victorian society. It had been founded three years earlier by Freemasons Dr. William Robert Woodman, Dr. William Wynn Westcott and Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers. Waite's search for the deeper secrets of initiation led him to join Freemasonry in 1901, Waite becoming a rather prolific Masonic writer and historian, who seemed to be in constant search for the more magical origins of the Craft, writing *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry* which, when published in 1921, part projected Waite's more mystical Masonic fancies.² Of his initiation, Waite commented:

'For myself it was a curious experience in more ways than one, and perhaps especially because it was so patent throughout that I could have told the Worshipful Master all that he was communicating to me. My Initiation was nothing therefore but a means to an end: I awaited the Grades beyond.'³

Indeed, Waite was anxious to explore the more mysterious and exotic further degrees which Freemasonry opened up to him, and by 1903 he had achieved acceptance into various other Masonic 'Rites' and Orders; having entered into the Rosicrucian Society of England, the Holy Royal Arch and the Knights Templar, even traveling to Scotland to receive the 'Early Grand Rite' and then on to Geneva to receive the 'Rectified Rite'. Waite was exploring all the further degrees, quenching his thirst for deeper knowledge, seeing Freemasonry as a path of mystical enlightenment, and in this respect, to Waite, Masonry was almost similar to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn; a society which would endow him with the hidden secrets of Nature and Science. He saw the symbolism of Freemasonry has having the same original source as other esoteric pursuits, such as alchemy, Kabbalism and Rosicrucianism; all providing a pathway to enlightenment through the search for hidden knowledge. Waite referred to his experience by saying that:

1. Thomas Michael Greene, 'Clubs, secret societies and male quest romance' (The thesis looks at Rudyard Kipling and H. Rider Haggard's Masonic associations and the Masonic themes in their work), a PhD, School University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2002. For a discussion on Rider Haggard's links to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn see Chris Hodapp, *Freemasonry for Dummies* (USA: John Wiley & Sons, 2005), p.188.

2. Arthur Edward Waite was initiated into the London based St. Marylebone Lodge No. 1305, on the 19th of September, 1901. See also Arthur Edward Waite, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, Vol. I & II, (New York: Wings Books Edition, 1996) and R.A. Gilbert, 'The Masonic Career of A.E. Waite', in *AQC*, Vol. 99, (1986).

3. See Gilbert, 'The Masonic Career of A.E. Waite', in *AQC*, Vol. 99, (1986). Also see Arthur Edward Waite, *Shadows of Life and Thought. A Retrospective Review in the Form of Memoirs* (London: Selwyn and Blount, 1938), p.162.

‘there is a Masonry which is behind Masonry and is not commonly communicated in lodges, though at the right time it is made known to the right person.’⁴

He believed he was special enough to be accepted into the ‘Masonry which is behind Masonry’ – those more mysterious rituals which would only be revealed to the chosen few. He was also interested in gaining enough secret knowledge and experience to create his own rituals, Waite having plans at one stage to establish the more obscure ‘Rites’ in England. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn certainly offered a more ‘magical’ experience, practising ceremonial magic and using many Masonic symbols within the ritual. The Order became extremely popular and attracted writers and poets such as Waite, W.B. Yeats and Arthur Machen, though unlike many of the clubs and societies of the era, the mysterious and magical Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn accepted women members.⁵

The founding of the Golden Dawn can be traced back to 1887, when Dr. William Wynn Westcott, a Freemason who was constantly in search for hidden knowledge, and had joined many Orders and Rites such as the Rosicrucian Society of England, obtained a mysterious manuscript in cipher from fellow Freemason the Rev. A.F.A. Woodford. The cipher – on translation – turned out to be a series of rituals, and Westcott asked fellow Freemason and Rosicrucian Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers to work on and expand the rituals. Amongst the papers of the cipher manuscript that Westcott had received from Woodford, he had found the name of a certain Fraulien Anna Srengal, a Rosicrucian adept from Germany, and after writing to her, Westcott was ‘granted permission’ to form an English version of the Golden Dawn.

The occult Order needed three Chief’s, so Westcott and Mathers brought on board fellow Freemason Dr. William Robert Woodman, who was at the time the Supreme Magus of the Rosicrucian Society of England,

and thus the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was founded. Westcott even invited the elderly Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite leader Albert Pike to join, but he declined. Nevertheless, the Golden Dawn became exceedingly fashionable, attracting the likes of Waite and Yeats, and by 1896, there were five Temples and over three hundred members, and a Second Order was also thriving. Despite this success, there was disruption as the leaders began to fall out after Woodman’s death in 1891; Westcott resigned in 1897 after his work in the magical Order conflicted with his career as Coroner and accusations of forging the papers which had led to the founding of the society by Mathers followed.⁶

The Victorian interest in the occult and the search for lost ancient knowledge was fuelled by many sources, such as developments in archaeology – especially in Egypt – capturing the imaginations of many intellectuals at the time. The founding of the Egypt Exploration Fund in 1882 and an array of widespread publications on Egypt, such as Amelia Edwards’ *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* in 1877,⁷ all assisted in stirring interest in the lost civilizations of Egypt and of course, the hidden secrets of the ancients. Occultist, Rosicrucian and Freemason Kenneth Mackenzie – most famous for his *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* which was published in six parts between 1875-77, had previously edited and translated *Discoveries in Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Peninsula of Sinai* in 1852 – a work written by the German Egyptologist K.R. Lepsius. Mackenzie claimed to have secret knowledge of obscure Orders and rituals, most notably the ‘Hermetic Order of Egypt’ and the ‘Order of Ishmael’, the latter of which was ruled by Three Chiefs, which was very reminiscent of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Indeed Waite, writing in his *Shadows of Life and Thought*, suggested that Mackenzie may have been behind the Golden Dawn ciphers.⁸

Masonic interest in Egyptian mysteries was nothing new; as early as the eighteenth century, certain Freemasons, such as the infamous occultist and alchemist Count Cagliostro, were claiming to possess the secrets

4. See Gilbert, ‘The Masonic Career of A.E. Waite’, in *AQC*, Vol. 99, (1986).

5. See Mary K. Greer, *Women of the Golden Dawn; Rebels and Priestesses*, (Rochester, Vermont: Park Street Press, 1995).

6. R.A. Gilbert, ‘William Wynn Westcott and the Esoteric School of Masonic Research’, in *AQC*, Vol. 100, (1987), pp.6-20.

7. See Amelia Edwards, *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*, (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1891). Amelia Edwards was the co-founder of the Egypt Exploration Fund. For a further insight into the late Victorian obsession of Egyptian archaeology see Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Mummy, Funeral Rites & Customs in Ancient Egypt*, (Guernsey: Senate Press, 1995), which was first published in 1893.

8. Kenneth Mackenzie, *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, (Worcester: The Aquarian Press, 1987), pp.vi-ix, in which John Hamill and R.A. Gilbert discuss Mackenzie’s life and work in their ‘Introduction’ to the edition. Waite had put forward that Mackenzie may have partly invented the mysterious cipher, and partly been inspired by his translation of ‘German Grade experiences’, Hamill and Gilbert also supporting Waite’s claims, mentioning that Mackenzie had translated manuscripts on magic and astronomy.

of mysterious Egyptian Rites.⁹ In England, the early Masonic interest in Egyptian mysteries can be seen in the naming of the London based Egyptian Lodge No. 27 in 1811, and as the nineteenth century progressed, occultist Freemasons such as Mackenzie and Waite vividly explored ideas of Egyptian mythology, trying to discover the lost knowledge of the ancients.¹⁰

The Victorian era also witnessed an explosion in Gothic poetry and novels – most famously exemplified with the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in 1897, although this was not the first literary portrayal of the vampire. Dr. William John Polidori, the personal physician to the Romantic poet Lord Byron became a Freemason in 1818,¹¹ Polidori being credited with the beautiful evocative Gothic short story *The Vampyre*, written in 1816 during his stay at the Villa Diodati at Lake Geneva in Switzerland. Polidori had stayed at the Villa with Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley, and during a number of days in which they were kept inside due to bad weather, they recited ghost stories and *The Vampyre* and Mary Shelley's Gothic masterpiece *Frankenstein* were written.

Polidori's story was finally published in 1819 and featured the secretive 'Byronic' aristocrat Lord Ruthven as the Vampire and followed his introduction into London Society and his travels to Rome and Greece, the Gothic and occultist themes of the story being hauntingly evident.¹² As the nineteenth century progressed, Freemasonry increasingly attracted writers and poets such as Kipling, Conan Doyle and Rider Haggard, the mysterious nature of the Craft and the status it provided as a networking 'club' made it an essential element of their social scene and presented an obvious inspiration for their work. Writers and poets had been linked to Freemasonry since the early part of the eighteenth century, with Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope being famous literary members

who had also found inspiration in the Craft.¹³

Another Freemason and celebrated psychic researcher who, like Mackenzie and Waite, had also become involved in the Rosicrucian Society of England, was Frederick Bligh Bond, an architect and a keen student of the occult. Bligh Bond knew Conan Doyle and they shared similar interests in psychic research, Bligh Bond having used psychic mediums to assist him in his famed excavation of Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset, which, according to Bligh Bond, led to the discovery of the Abbey being built with sacred geometry. According to Bligh Bond, his mediums received information from dead monks which assisted him in discovering archaeological remains of the Abbey. This rather unorthodox approach to his archaeological work eventually led him to be dismissed from the site by his employers, the Church of England. Bligh Bond went on to write about the Geometric cubit as a basis for proportion in the plans of medieval buildings and published his account of the Abbey excavation in his celebrated work *The Gate of Remembrance* in 1918.¹⁴

Conan Doyle had embraced psychic research after the death of his wife and several other close family members, and until his death in 1930, he ardently supported spiritualism and constantly sought proof of life after death, a curiosity which can be paralleled with writer and Freemason Mark Twain's interest in parapsychology in the USA. Conan Doyle's book *The Coming of the Fairies* in 1922 put forward his support for the infamous Cottingley Fairies; where two girls, from Cottingley near Bradford in the north of England, had supposedly taken five pictures of fairies.¹⁵ Decades later, the girls, then



9. See Philippa Faulks and Robert L.D. Cooper, *The Masonic Magician; The Life and Death of Count Cagliostro and his Egyptian Rite*, (London: Watkins, 2008).

10. See Mackenzie, *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, pp.185-188, and Waite, *Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry*, pp.218-225.

11. William John Polidori was a member of the Norwich based Union Lodge No. 52, Initiated on the 31st March 1818, Passed on the 28th April 1818, and was Raised on the 1st June 1818.

12. See William John Polidori, *The Vampyre*, (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1819).

13. See David Harrison, *The Genesis of Freemasonry*, (Hersham: Lewis Masonic, 2009).

14. Frederick Bligh Bond was a member of the Bristol based St. Vincent Lodge No. 1404, being initiated on the 28th of November, 1889. He served as Worshipful Master of the lodge in 1894, although his membership ceased in 1914. He was a member of the Rosicrucian Society and the infamous Ghost Club, a club which also had links to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and occultist and Egyptologist E. A. Wallis Budge. See Frederick Bligh Bond, *The Gate of Remembrance, The story of the psychological experiment which resulted in the discovery of the Edgar Chapel at Glastonbury*, (Kessinger Publishing Co., 1999). Also see Frederick Bligh Bond, *Central Somerset Gazette Illustrated Guide to Glastonbury*, (Glastonbury: Avalon Press, 1927).

15. See Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Coming of the Fairies*, (Forgotten Books, 2007).

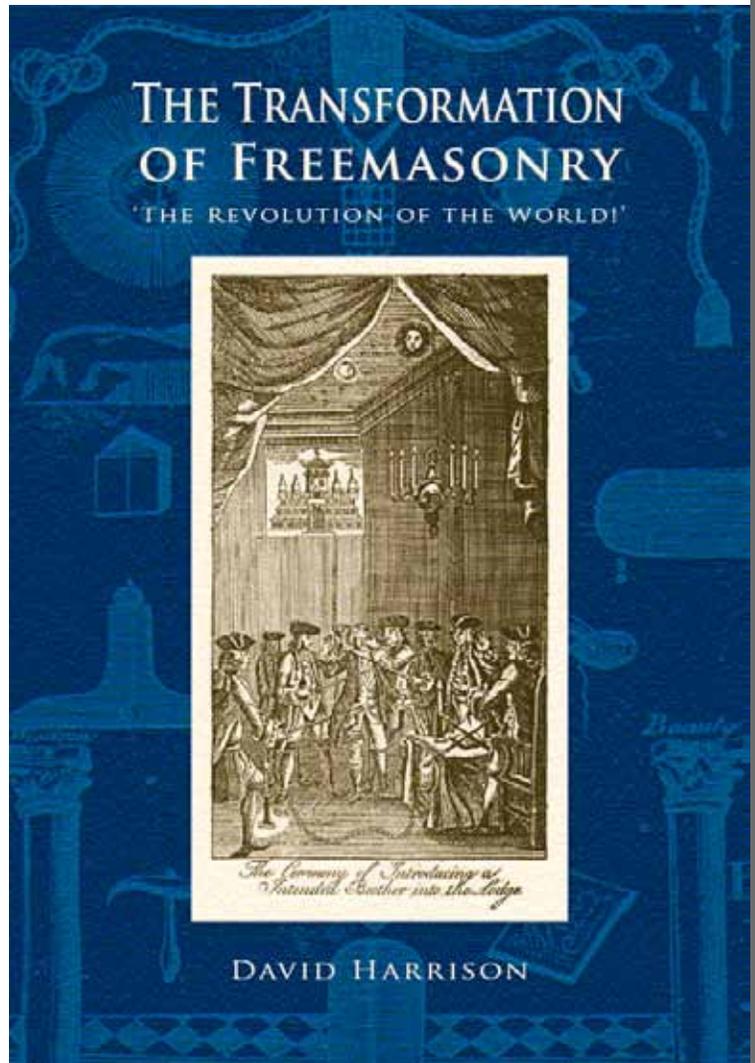
elderly women, admitted faking the photographs, but in 1922, Conan Doyle strongly supported their claims. His 1926 work *The History of Spiritualism* also lent his support to séances conducted by various psychics at the time and their supposed spiritual materialisations.¹⁶ One of the spiritualists that Conan Doyle supported was Daniel Douglas Home. Fellow Freemason Lord Lindsay was also a supporter of Home, having witnessed the spiritualist mysteriously levitate out of a third story window only to return through the window of an adjoining room.

Interest in occult philosophy grew during the later Victorian period, not only amongst the literati of the period, best exemplified with Yeats and Conan Doyle, but with the prosperous and educated who wished to explore the mystical esoteric belief systems, and Freemasonry became a fascination to many because of this. An example of this is how Freemasonry stirred an interest in the occultist Aleister Crowley, who, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, became involved in the Golden Dawn, joining in 1898, and from there went on to sample the hidden mysteries of Freemasonry after joining an irregular 'Scottish Rite' lodge in Mexico and the irregular Anglo-Saxon Lodge No. 343 in Paris. Crowley later joined the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, which like the Golden Dawn, admitted both men and women, having a Masonic influence within the ritual. Crowley's closeness to Mathers added to growing tensions within the Golden Dawn, and it soon splintered into different groups, with Arthur Edward Waite becoming involved in the leadership of one particular faction.¹⁷

Freemasonry certainly attracted and influenced a desire to search for hidden knowledge, its ritualistic practices and its mysterious symbolism providing inspiration to create new and more magical orders such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and various other more magical societies. The Victorian occultists such as Crowley, Waite and Mathers certainly reveal a passion for exploring ritual, magic and symbolism in an attempt to unravel ancient mysteries, and Freemasonry provided a gateway on their mystical journey. Other Freemasons such as Conan Doyle and Bligh Bond committed themselves to researching the supernatural and paranormal, the search for the hidden mysteries of nature and science being a driving force in their quest to discover lost knowledge.

16. See Arthur Conan Doyle, *The History of Spiritualism*, (Teddington: Echo Library, 2006).

17. Martin P. Starr, 'Aleister Crowley: Freemason!', in *AQC*, Vol. 108, (1995), pp.150-161

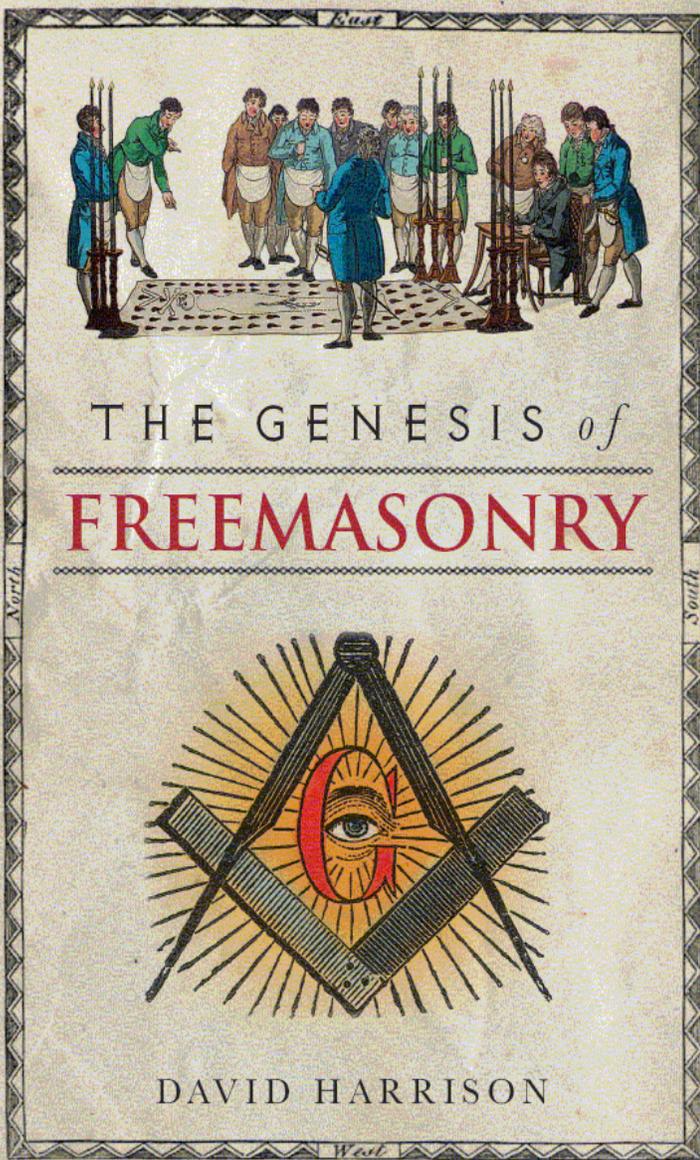


*This Article was edited from the author's book, **The Transformation of Freemasonry**.*

Dr. David Harrison has been a history lecturer for over ten years and has written on the history of Freemasonry for a number of journals and magazines. He is the author of "The Genesis of Freemasonry" which was published by Ian Allan in April 2009, the book representing his PhD work which he successfully defended at the University of Liverpool in March 2008. Harrison's follow on work "The Transformation of Freemasonry" was published in September 2010 by Arima Publishing.

If you liked the previous article, read the author's books!

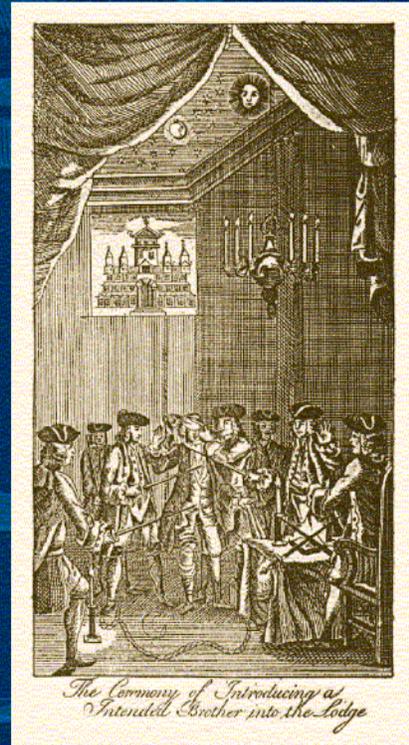
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The Genesis of Freemasonry is a revealing and thoroughly enjoyable journey through the intricate history of English Freemasonry. Historian Dr. David Harrison reconstructs the hidden history of the movement, tracing its roots through a mixture of mediaeval guild societies, alchemy and necromancy. He examines the earliest known Freemasons and their obsessions with Solomon's Temple, alchemy, and prophecy, to the formation of the Grand Lodge in London, which in turn led to rebellions within the Craft throughout England. Harrison also analyzes the role of French immigrant, Dr Jean Theophilus Desaguliers in the development of English Freemasonry, focusing on his involvement with the formation of the mysterious modern Masonic ritual. All Freemasons and more general readers will find much of interest in this fascinating exploration of the very beginnings of Freemasonry, still one of the most mysterious brotherhoods in the world.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF FREEMASONRY

'THE REVOLUTION OF THE WORLD!'



DAVID HARRISON

The Transformation of Freemasonry looks at how Freemasonry in England and Wales adapted after the Unlawful Societies Act of 1799, and how the Craft became tinted with the stigma of Revolution, only to transform itself in the Victorian period to become the most enduring and enigmatic of secret societies. Harrison delves into Masonic links with the slave trade, especially in Liverpool and the Trans-Atlantic links with the USA, and discusses the mysterious Liverpool Masonic Rebellion and the Wigan Grand Lodge. Harrison also looks at how Freemasonry transformed itself during the 19th century, and how the Craft began to appeal to Victorian Occultists and writers. This fascinating new book is a must for any reader who enjoyed Harrison's first book *The Genesis of Freemasonry*, and will be enjoyed by both Freemasons and general readers alike.

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The Raising of The Body

By Bro. Tim Hogan

Perhaps the most dramatic and historically controversial element of Freemasonry has been its preoccupation with symbols associated with death, and it's dramas that have featured, among other things, the raising of a body from the grave. Such ritual emphasis in the third degree in particular, and in other degrees of other rites, have led to wide speculations regarding what the meaning of this strange rite is supposed to illustrate. Certainly it is one of the most impressionable moments in the life of each Freemason, and yet very few have stopped to wonder why we do it. This article is an attempt to explain some theories regarding the origin of this rite, and what the meaning behind it could be alluding to.

There has been wide debate as to when the third degree of Freemasonry was created. It has been popular in recent years to assign a date to the degree in the mid to late 1700's. However, since Master Grips and a Master Word are referred to in a number of sources going back into the 1600's, this has also led other researchers to believe that possibly the third degree of a Master Mason was just reserved for Masters of Lodges- and hence why it was not a popularly disseminated degree. Therefore, according to this theory, Fellows of the Craft could be officers of Lodges, but they could not actually be a Master of a Lodge until they had received a Master's degree, which would of course be performed by Masters of other already existing lodges, or by Past Masters of the lodge in question. Regardless of its origin, we know that it became a degree that was disseminated to the general Craft by the mid 1700's, with any Fellow Craft having the opportunity to ascend to the third degree, and some believe that Jean Theophilus Desaguliers had a hand in creating it in its current form. That being said, we

do know that there were Masonic rituals in Scotland, prior to the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717, which had a degree in which a candidate represented Noah, and he went through a symbolic death and resurrection. The theme behind this degree entailed Noah dying on the Ark prior to reestablishing civilization, and his sons had to raise him from the dead in order to attain a word that was lost to them- (assuming to possibly be the name of God). The existence of this degree is the origin of Masonry being called a "Noachite Religion" in certain old documents, like Anderson's Constitutions, and it may have later led to degrees like the Ark and the Dove degrees that are now preserved by the Allied Masonic Degree Councils, and other degrees being called "Noachite" in other Rites of the Craft.

This has led some researchers to speculate that the early raising rituals were in fact designed to mimic some kind of necromantic magical resurrection rite. Though in the current form of the third degree, we learn that Hiram Abiff is killed and buried in three separate places- thus implying that he was never really resurrected from the dead so to speak, but rather the body was just raised. Many Masons are in fact uncomfortable with the idea that the raising could in fact illustrate some kind of resurrection act, and yet, an argument can be made that this is in fact what it illustrates on some level. The fact that the brother being raised is communicated a word that he is expected to remember, after having been killed, suggests that this is in fact a resurrection of some kind, as a dead person would not be able to remember nor communicate such a word physically. Likewise, even though we are told that Hiram was later buried, we are also shown a monument to him which has, among other things, a virgin weeping over

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an urn of Hiram's ashes. This implies that Hiram was later cremated and not buried, so we have a contradiction here, unless it is metaphor of some kind.

Other Christian Freemasons have looked to this initiatic process has somehow illustrating the resurrection of Jesus, or in some way mimicking the resurrection of Lazarus. In this light, it should be noted that the word usually translated as "resurrection" from the Greek is the word "anastasis", which actually more correctly means "awakening". Christian Gnostics always interpreted Jesus' "anastasis" as an awakening to the Light of direct Knowledge of God, and not as an actual bodily resurrection from the dead. In fact, when Mary Magdalene declared that the "tomb is empty", they interpreted this as relating to the knowledge that the physical body (represented by a cave or a tomb), is not the "real" part of ourselves, and that we have a soul that transcends the illusions of the physical world. Just as Jesus was born into a cave, surrounded by animals (which the Gnostics interpreted as representing his lower nature), so too does he awaken outside of the limitations of this cave. This cave, in fact, is the same cave as described by Plato. Therefore early initiation rites of the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the early Gnostics demonstrated taking a candidate and making them go through a symbolic death and raising to represent this process, and some even utilized the tying of an initiate to a cross (representing matter), and others involved using a sarcophagus. In fact, in some traditions it was believed that conditions were set up to jar the candidate so much, that they actually achieved a level of an out of body experience, or an astral projection, which helped to prove to them that some aspect of consciousness can exist and live beyond the physical body. In order to achieve

this, the objective senses were overwhelmed or shocked to such a degree that this consciousness projection occurred on some level.



Above- Ancient Roman Sarcophagus at Baalbek, Lebanon, that is showing a lion lid and a person being raised as a lion on the side of the sarcophagus. Photo taken by author.

As mentioned, others believed that the act alluded to the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and the Christian Gnostics believed that this act done by Jesus was in fact an initiation rite. It is perhaps coincidence that Lazarus was a widow's son, like Hiram, though what is not coincidence is the fact that the symbolic death for a "third degree" can be found going all the way back to ancient Egypt. In fact, some researchers suggest that the raising of Lazarus from the dead by Jesus was just such a reenactment of this ancient mystery school drama. The name "Lazarus" in Hebrew is "El Ausor". "El" was a Hebrew name for God, and "Ausor" was the Egyptian name for the God Osiris- who symbolically dies and was raised from the dead by Isis/ Sekmhet- lioness. In fact, in the Man-dean Gnostic tradition of the Middle East, one of the names for God continues to be "Aursor". The story of Lazarus takes place in Bethany, which in Hebrew is "Bethanu". "Beth" in He-

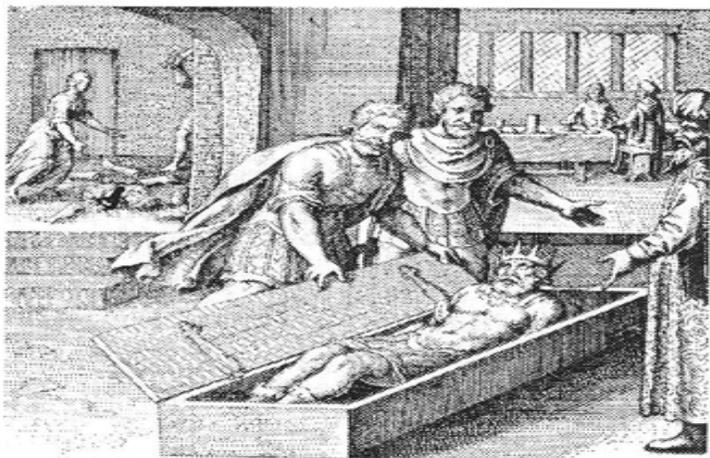
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brew means “house” and “anu” in ancient Egyptian was the abode of the dead. Therefore “Bethany” or “Bethanu” means “house of the dead”. Interestingly, if we change the Hebrew name for Lazarus around so that “El” is last and “ausor” is first, we get the name “Ausorel” or “Azrael” - which is the angel of death. In any event, it is widely believed by researchers that the raising of Lazarus was illustrating an initiatory rite, which is why Jesus took so long to go get him out of the cave he was symbolically buried in. In ancient Egypt, every candidate who was being initiated represented Osiris, and they would in fact have to go through this symbolic death and raising. If this is indeed the origins of this passage in the Bible, then it raises interesting questions in Freemasonry, since it too passes on the same initiation rite. From a symbolic standpoint then, the death of Hiram represents the death of the lower self, and only the higher self can be raised and achieve awakening. Perhaps this is why there are also two Hiram - as they are the twins in classical myth, with one twin representing the lower self and the other the higher self. The lower self must die for the higher self to achieve absolute awakening. King Solomon then can only raise Hiram with the help of God, since King Solomon represents the wisdom that comes from awakening.

There is, however, another aspect to this initiation rite that should be considered, and this is from an alchemical standpoint. Alchemy has been a fundamental aspect of the Masonic tradition, and ultimately the aim of alchemy is to break something apart, remove the impurities, and then put it back together in a new form that is much more potent. In fact, the word sometimes used for alchemy is “spagyrics”. The word “spagyrics” comes from the two Greek words “spao” - meaning “to tear open” or “separate”, and “ageio” meaning to “collect back together”. So in essence, the process in alchemy involves taking a substance, like an herb or a metal, and subjecting it to processes to kill it, and then it must be raised from the dead, and reassembled with its best parts. This may, in fact, be the origin of the word of necromancy, as “necro” means death.

Alchemy likewise comes from “al-khem”, which was the ancient name for Egypt, but it likewise meant “black”. It was generally believed to relate to the black soil deposits of the Nile, from which rich minerals could be derived, however in alchemy it also related to the idea of death. Images associated with the killing and raising of a body occur many times in alchemical manuscripts, and even in alchemical allegories like the Rosicrucian story of The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkruetz. These ideas were never meant to be related to the actual killing and raising from the dead of people or animals, but the idea did apply to herbs and metals. In fact, this is also the origin of the phoenix bird, which was said to be killed, and burnt to ashes, and then it came back from the ashes alive and renewed in a better form. In ancient Egypt, this phoenix was called the bennu bird, deriving from the ancient Egyptian word “ben”, meaning both “light” and “stone”. In fact, the Philosopher’s Stone, said to be able



Above: “the raising of the body”, symbolic of raising the stone to a new state in alchemy. M. Maier, Atlanta Fugiens, 1618.

The Raising of The Body

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to transmute metals into gold, was called the ben-ben stone in ancient Egypt, and it is also interesting that the word “ben” when spelled backwards is “neb”, which is the ancient Egyptian name for gold. The finding of the stone or the light associated with the ben-ben stone was called the “Ma’at ben” in ancient Egypt (pronounced Mah-hat ben), and this meant “the truth of light” or “the truth of the stone”. Ultimately, the goal of these transmutations were to restore things back to their state of health- whether it be the health of the body, the health of the mind, the health of the soul, or the health of metals. In the later initiatic rites of Mithras, a candidate was said to go through a symbolic death and raising, and they were said to represent Mithras, who was born out of a stone with a torch and a trowel. Below is an image of this rite, and some have interpreted it as the light that is hidden in matter, and others have interpreted it as an alchemical metaphor.



So as we can see, the death and raising of the body theme has many applicable uses in various ancient traditions, and all of these should

be considered when we examine the idea in Freemasonry. Ultimately, in all of these themes, we find a constant idea that death is not something to be feared, but rather celebrated- as something special can come out of it. Certainly this is one of the greatest spiritual truths hinted at within Freemasonry itself, and from the Colorado Masonic Funeral we read that “this evergreen is a symbol of our faith in the immortality of the soul. By this, we are reminded of our destiny beyond this mortal life, and that we have within us an immortal part, which can never- no never die.” The evergreen being referred to is the acacia, which is so intimately associated with the death of Master Hiram. It should be mentioned that some scholars have associated this acacia with what is called in Sanskrit the Akasha- or that collective consciousness that transcends any one individual, and which can be perceived during periods of deep death-like trances in meditation, or at the hour of our final departure from this physical world. In fact, there is even some evidence that early alchemists attempted to make elixirs from acacia in an effort to get into this deep state (though the writer of this article advises against this!) In any event, the point is that there is a spiritual root to us all, and ultimately it is this spiritual root that leads to mastery. Likewise, when we get over our fear of death, then we can truly behave as Master Masons in the world- as we can create freely.

Such are some of the truths that are inculcated by the rituals of Freemasonry, and we would do well to learn from them.



I See You Have Traveled Some By Bro. James Friend Dickerson



Harmony after a Tiled Lodge in Scotland

A Master Mason possesses many rights and benefits including the ability to Travel. Masonic Travels are cool! Mason's visit other Lodges near and far from home making friends, experiencing different Masonic rituals and etiquette all while gaining Light through new programs, events and experiences. Another aspect of Masonic Traveling focuses on accepting and making visitors to our Lodges feel welcome and at home. Have you traveled?



Wor. Bro. Mike D. Griffin receiving a Scottish Delegation to Widow's Sons' Lodge No. 60 in 2002.

Shortly after being raised and returning my Master Mason's catechism (yes, I was full of knowledge and knew ALL about Freemasonry), a group traveled outside our District to the George Washington Masonic Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia attending a Lodge meeting of Alexandria Washington Lodge No. 22. The many foreign visitors demonstrated a variety of rituals and floor work, as each Mason followed the ritual and work of his own Grand Lodge. Up to this point I knew there was only one ritual (Grand Lodge of Virginia A.F. and A.M. of course!). My wise traveling companions admonished me to be quiet and observe during the meeting, so we could discuss during the 2 ½ hour drive home. I soon found another benefit to Masonic Traveling, the time spent with other Brothers in the car going to and from the meeting. That time in the car remains a great way to get to know Brothers better, learn a bit of ritual, or discuss ideas for improving our Craft!

When visiting Lodges outside my Grand Lodge, the hospitality and friendship are great. On my first trip to another Grand Lodge, I was asked to fill the role of Jr. Steward as the Virginia Traveling Masons (a band of Brothers organized by Most Worshipful Jeffery E. Hodges who travel and spread the joy of our Fraternity while in-

creasing the bonds between Brothers) exemplified the Virginia Master Masons Degree in Delaware. Being a Steward, I missed the opening but was entertained by a Delaware Brother who told us jokes, stories and shared a wee bit of Delaware Freemasonry with us. He really made the new Masons feel welcome and at home. When time came to close Lodge, much to my surprise, I found this friendly Brother to be the Grand Master of Masons in Delaware! By his example I learned the valuable lesson of welcoming Traveling Men into your Lodge. Since Widow's Sons' Lodge No. 60 A.F. & A.M. (my mother Lodge) city location includes a major University, we continue to have many visitors from out of town, State and the

Country. Often we have to examine the visiting Broth-

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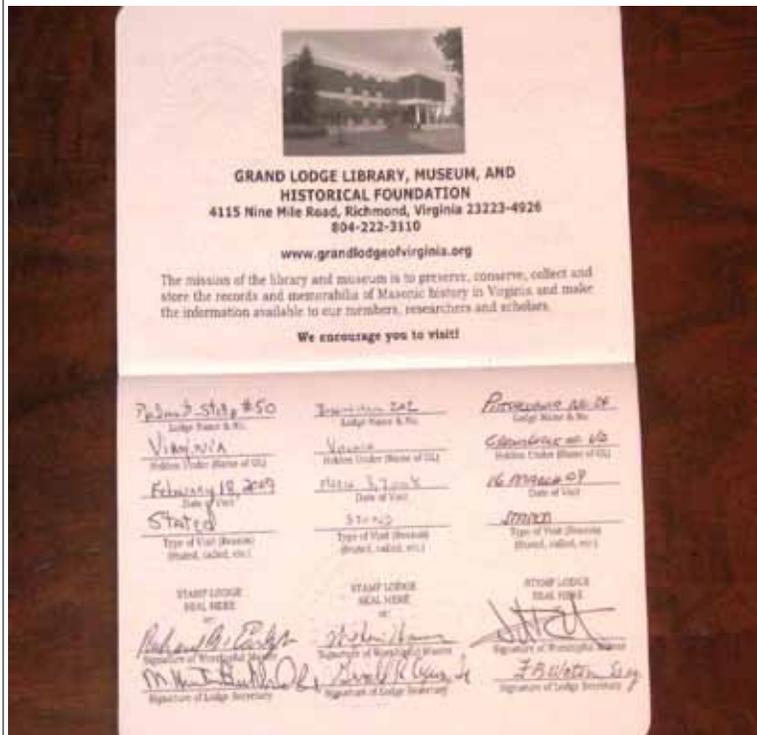
ers. In addition to determining whether they possess the right to visit, we try to explain how we open and close Lodge, what will be happening that night in Lodge, and have a Brother sit with them. We've also begun a time of harmony, with refreshments and a social exchange, after the stated meeting. We encourage visitors to join us in harmony, allowing us to get to know each other better.

Before you travel outside of your Masonic Jurisdiction, check with your Lodge Secretary and Grand Lodge Secretary to learn what advance steps you need to take. Do you need special documentation or will your Lodge dues card be enough? Do you need a letter of introduction? Also, check with the Secretary and/or Grand Secretary of the Lodge you will be visiting (you may need to go through your Grand Secretary's office so please check with them). What will be the dress for the meeting? Lodge attire differs from bib overalls to colorful Hawaiian shirts to dark suites to sport coat and tie to Masonic polo shirts to Tuxedos. You want to dress appropriately for the meeting you'll be attending. Also, will you need to bring your own apron and white gloves or will those be supplied? It's best to ask a few questions before you visit a Lodge than to arrive in a Tuxedo when the rest of the Brothers have on bib overalls!



Most Worshipful Jeffery E. Hodge (Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, 2009) with the assistance of Right Worshipful Paul D. Sleeper designed and instituted a Passport to Freemasonry for use in Virginia, which has spread to other jurisdictions. The Passport includes a place for the Lodge Secretary to affix the Lodge Seal as well as signatures for the Master and Secretary, date of visit and type of meeting (Stated, Degree, Table Lodge, etc.). The Passports also includes information on Masonic organizations and appendant bodies. The success

of the Passports was quickly recognized as Brothers lined up at the Secretary's desk prior to meetings getting their Passports stamped and signed. Many Brothers are on their second Passport. The Passports were produced in house and sold for a nominal fee. The profits from the sales went to a Masonic Charity. If your Lodge or Grand Lodge does not have a Passport to Freemasonry, perhaps you can take the lead in developing one. I truly enjoy looking back through my Passport to Freemasonry, recalling the fun times spent at each Masonic event.



The Brothers I hang out with have always been active Traveling in our home District and the adjoining Masonic Districts for stated meetings and degree work. It was not until I was honored to serve as District Deputy Grand Master that I really began to Travel around the Commonwealth and experience many of the different Lodge and Masonic events. I found that many of us face similar challenges in membership decline, lack of participation, desire for younger members, need for fundraising, etc. Through visiting others Lodges, Districts and Grand Lodges, I've found others may already have the solution or part of the solution to our challenges. During conversations before and after meetings, I've learned a lot to take back to my Lodge and District. As you travel, don't let the opportunity to gain more Light from others pass you by. Ask questions and then listen to the responses. The only bad question remains the one you don't ask. I've found Masons more than willing to share with each other.

I See You Have Traveled Some By Bro. James Friend Dickerson

If we don't Travel with our eyes open, we'll never be exposed to many of Freemasonry's best facets.



Rt. Wor. Bro. Andrew D. Keller being received in the East while Traveling in Scotland

Traveling overseas can provide memories that last a lifetime. I've been fortunate to travel to Scotland three times and England once visiting Masons and Lodges while on holiday with the Virginia Traveling Masons. We've attended Tiled meetings, toured Lodge and Grand Lodge buildings, and stayed up till sunrise discussing Freemasonry. On these trips many Masons brought their wives and/or older children. During the day we toured historic sites, castles, farms, etc. and some evenings we went to Lodge meetings. Several nights the Masons and their ladies organized banquets, a Burns night (haggis and poetry!), or a Ceilidh (food, drink, and music). I soon learned when you tell a Brother you liked his Masonic tie, pin, etc.; he may be taking it off to give to you. If you are traveling overseas, try to work in a visit to a Lodge or Grand Lodge headquarters and take some Masonic tokens to share. Again, check before you go with your Secretary/Grand Secretary. You want to visit recognized Lodges/Grand Lodge so educate yourself on their location prior to the trip. Also, some Lodges go dark in the summer (they don't have meetings!). With a little planning, you'll have a great visit creating memories of your own. On our 1st Trip to Scotland, we had a Mason as our bus driver who became a dear friend and help to arrange our next two visits. It's a small work when you travel as a Freemason! Many Masons wonder why their sons haven't

expressed an interest in our Craft. Sure we probably missed school plays and little league games due to Masonic events; but did we take them with us to any Masonic events? I know you cannot bring them to a Tiled meeting but how about a Lodge Family Cookout, or Family Day at the Masonic Home of Virginia, or to visit the George Washington Masonic Memorial, or for a tour of your Lodge building with dad so they can see where you go. We should be more intentional including our families in our Masonic travels and then maybe we would not have so many spouses who feel like Masonic Widows! Having our wives with us in England and Scotland added to the trip. Some evening the Scottish Mason's ladies hosted our Ladies and we joined together for a meal or refreshments after the meeting. The family interactions made the trips extra special!



Some of the Scottish & English souvenirs

When I travel, I try to wear the square and compasses insignia (again check before you Travel since our Fraternity may be frowned upon in some countries!). It may be a ring, baseball cap, lapel pin, etc. I always meet Brothers! While honeymooning in Key West, Florida, an antique store owner noticed my ring and inquired if I was a Traveling Man. We immediately struck up a conversation and he invited me to attend his Lodge the next evening. Being on my honeymoon I used the wisdom of King Solomon and politely declined the invitation indicating I wanted the marriage to last longer than a week. Sometimes we

I See You Have Traveled Some By Bro. James Friend Dickerson

need to remember our families and decline a Masonic visit! Remember to wear Masonic emblems and be aware of others wearing them. Who knows what friendships and interesting experiences will evolve from Brothers recognizing each other?

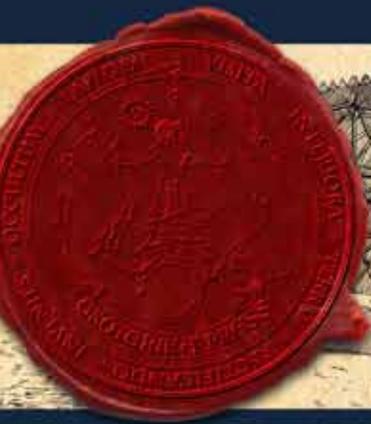
In closing, I strongly encourage all Freemasons to fully explore the rights and benefits of our Craft especially through Traveling. Our Fraternity (not just the Blue Lodge but appendant bodies included) continues to offer a rich and diverse menu of events, people, and places that we all can experience, if we will allow ourselves. Should you find yourself Traveling in or near Charlottesville, Virginia on the 3rd Monday night of the month, please come visit Widow's Sons' Lodge No. 60 A.F. & A.M. under the Grand Lodge of Virginia. Whether in my Lodge, your Lodge or another Lodge, I look forward to sitting in Lodge with you soon.

Raised in 1995, when not participating in Masonic events, Brother Dickerson enjoys serving his God, playing with his grandchildren and bride, bird hunting, fishing and selling real estate. I am sure he would enjoy hearing of your Masonic Travels, so please do not hesitate in contacting him today.

James@VirginiaHomesFarmsLand.com

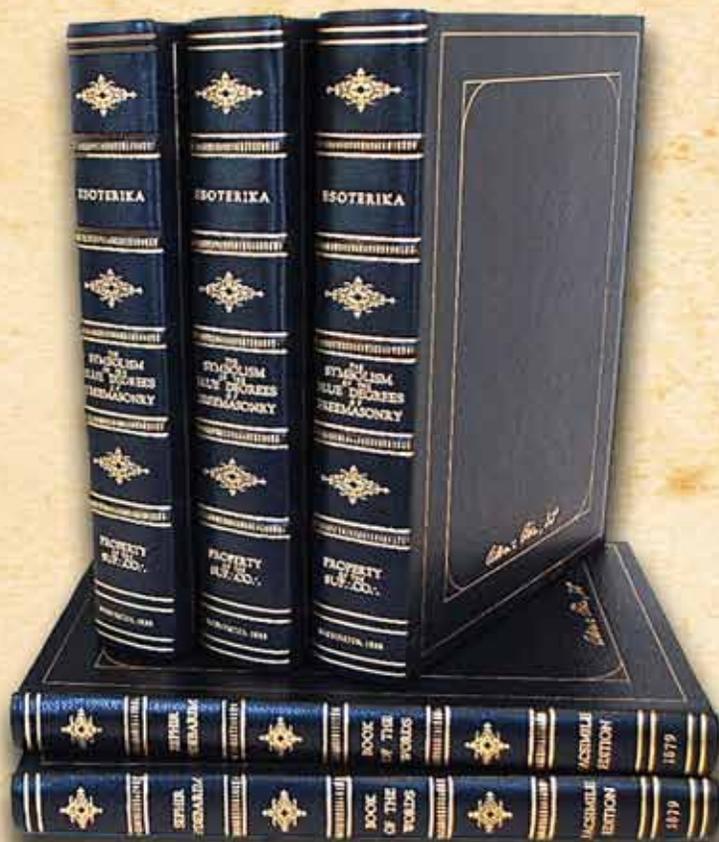
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“You’ve got to go out on a limb sometimes, because that’s where the fruit is”. **Bro. Will Rogers**



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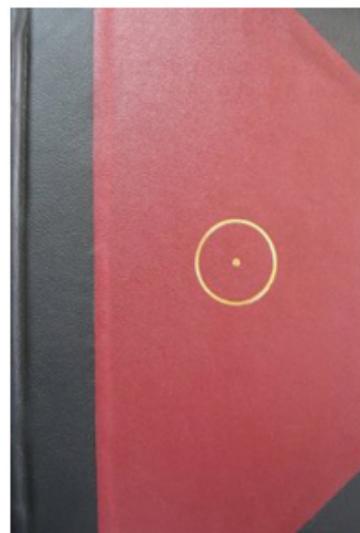


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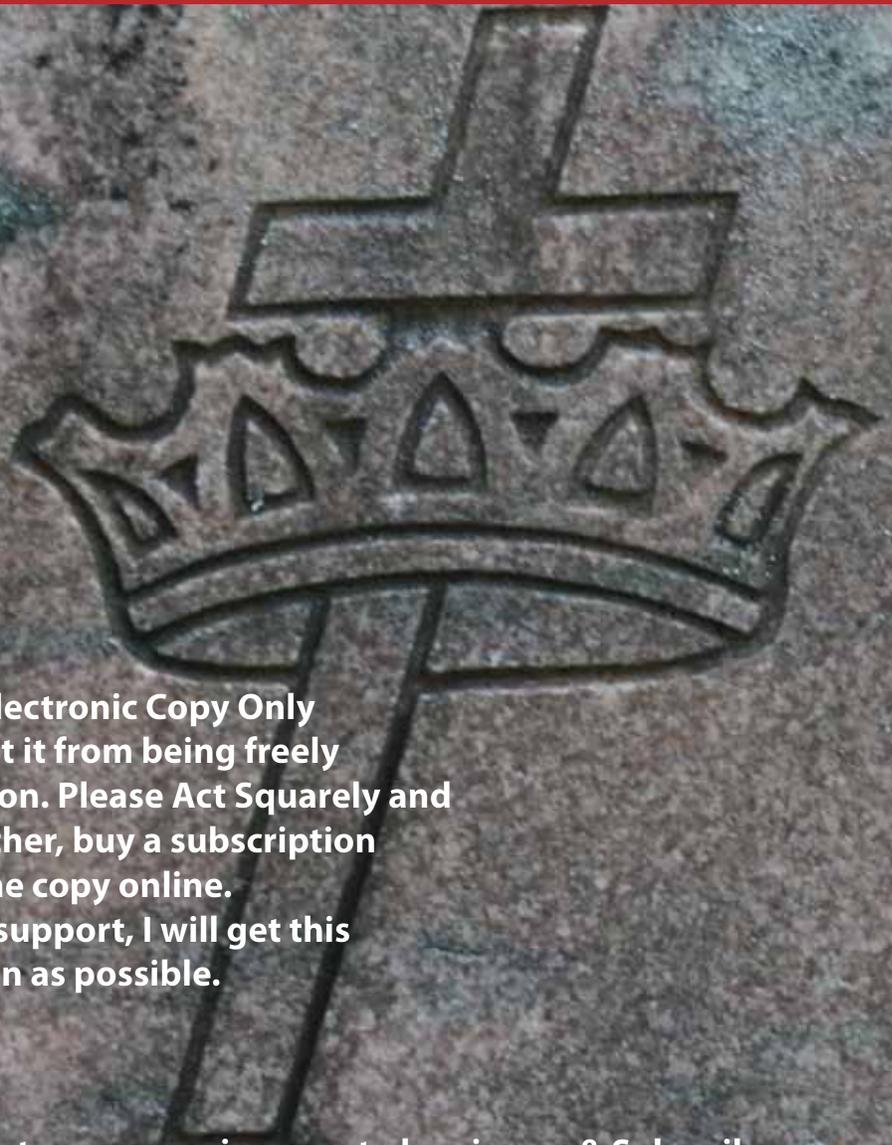
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