



Pillars of Light



Compiled by the
Editorial Team of the
Grand Lodge Library

Volume 6 Issue 3(64)

April/May 2010

Editorial

The daily advancement

Every candidate initiated into Freemasonry is clearly made aware of the fact that the Order expects us to acquire daily, step-by-step, Masonic Education.

Unfortunately, the reality of life, the demands of private business or employment, often make the pursuit of such knowledge difficult.

Nevertheless, as a keen Freemason, who is sincere in the search of knowledge, and yet find at times you are not able to invest the necessary time to study the principles and history of our Craft, you must act wisely and avail yourself of every opportunity to attend Lodges where Lectures are given.

It is also advisable that you participate to, or even initiate open discussions on the subject treated, thus enable yourself and others to penetrate below the surface of the subject, probe into the symbolic import or even into the yet undisclosed aspects and meanings of the lecture.

Many are those who rightly believe that the open discussions that sometimes, not often enough, follow a Lecture, are much more important to all participants than the lecture itself.

On the other hand, if you are a Freemason who is willing and interested to learn by study, our Grand Lodge Library at the Sydney Masonic Ctr. should be considered as one of the richest of its kind in the world. One of the largest collections of Masonic Philosophic and Historic books is available for all members of the Craft.

This year, a great opportunity is offered with the organization of the "In the Footsteps of Freemasonry" Tour lead by the Grand Master to the Holy Land and Egypt, the cradle of our traditions and symbolism. The largest number of our participants ever to go together on a trip overseas, have already registered and we are soon to reach full capacity of the 2nd bus. Services are of the highest quality at the best negotiated rate. Express your interest to the Grand Secretary e-mail : info@freemasonsnswwact.org.au and get all the information to join this fabulous Tour of Discovery of our craft.

Think about all this and as a result of considering such thoughts you should be able to obtain a truer, a higher and a nobler understanding, if not even a different dimension of the teachings of the Craft, than it was possible before, and thus help to carry out the injunction:

"Make a daily advancement in Masonic Knowledge"

Joseph V. Haffner - Past Grand Librarian

SOLICITATIONS

We are instructed very early in our Masonic career that we should not attempt to recruit new members to the Craft by improper solicitations. This implies, by inference, that there are proper solicitations that are acceptable. It was not always like this, because when I joined the Craft in 1966, Masons simply did not talk freely about the Craft, or their Lodge. One might be invited to attend a social function but not to become a member. Whilst this might at the time have been considered the right thing to do, it no doubt led to many good men not joining.

As a case in point I cite an example known to me personally where a member of one of my Lodges attended a club regularly to have a beer and a chat after work before going home. On one occasion he was approached by a member of the staff and was quietly asked if he was a Freemason. When he answered that he was, the staff member told him that if he came back tomorrow, he would show him something of interest. Our Lodge member was intrigued and turned up at the club the following day and was invited by the club employee to a quiet corner away from the crowd. When they were alone he opened a bag and produced a number of Masonic aprons, certificates, jewels and other memorabilia. Our member, after expressing interest, was asked if he would like them for his Lodge.

He asked to whom they had belonged, and was informed by the club employee that they had belonged to his father, uncle and other family members. When asked why he did not want to keep them and join the Craft himself, the club employee said that he could not have been worthy as he had never been asked to join!

Do you, like I, think that the Craft somehow 'shot itself in the foot'? Here was a good man (and he was favourably known) who had known that his family members were all Freemasons, and one by one they died, and he believed himself to be unworthy because he had never been asked to join.

I am pleased to relate that within a very short period of time his misconceptions were laid to rest and he was initiated into our Lodge. He went on to enjoy the friendship, the opportunity to learn, and he subsequently became an officer, but not in the company of his father, uncle and other relatives. We can look back down the corridors of time and with him, wonder on what might have been.

The lesson to the brethren who read this, is not to let misconceptions like this example keep good men out of the Craft. If we see a good man whom we consider would fit well in Freemasonry, say to him "Do you know that I am not allowed to invite you to join, but if you are interested now, or in the future, that you have to ask me, or another Freemason". By doing this, we may enable a good man to join the Craft and become a better man, like the club employee previously mentioned.

V.W. Bro. Robert Taylor



BY THE SQUARE

Research shows that the use of the expression, 'by the square' or, 'on the square' has been so thoroughly adopted throughout the world, not only by Masons, but also by the profane, as meaning upright living, honesty and truthfulness that there is little written about it.

Mackay has but a few lines and the Encyclopaedia Britannica just barely refers to it as an expression of Freemasonry. So the ideas I have for you will have to be my own.

The Masonic Square used by our ancient brethren was the stone mason's square and not the carpenter's square. They used the 24" gauge to measure and lay out their work, and the square to prove right angles. We know that the square was used by our ancient operative brethren but just when it began to have a speculative meaning is uncertain. We do know, however, that in the year 1830, while repairs were being made on the ancient stone bridge called 'Baal', located near Limerick, Ireland, a brass square was found under the foundation stone, and on it was inscribed these words "I will strive to live with love and care, on the level, by the square," and dated 1517. There was no name and we have no idea who put it there, but at that time the average operative Mason was unable to read or write. Whoever put it there must have been a speculative Mason.

The square is a recognised symbol of morality, honesty and truthfulness, and living 'by the square' means living a life that is upright, honest and truthful. What is the measure by which we are to judge this? Living 'by the square' means living by the golden rule, which is the basis of all major religions. Some use it in the negative; "Do not unto others that which you would not have them do unto you." It is the 'divine truth' given by God to the first men and to every man that ever lived. It is the knowledge of fundamental right and wrong, and is one of the things that make man different from other animals.

It is a simple thing. "Do unto others that which you would have them do unto you." Yet it is impossible for man to so live. We can only try, for we are part animal and the law of the animal world is the law of tooth and fang, just as the spiritual law is the law of love, and we are governed by both. God does not expect us to be perfect, but He does expect us to try to be. One of the most difficult things for man to do is to grant another the same right to his opinions that he demands for himself. It is difficult to realise that we might be wrong and another be right. It is impossible for man not to be biased. His very nature makes it impossible, for there never was one who knew absolute truth. We should always remember that no matter how sure we are in our decisions there is a possibility that we may be wrong and another may be right. And that which appears to be the complete knowledge of any subject may only be the beginning.

I am reminded of the story of the father whose two sons were constantly on opposite sides and each was absolutely

sure that he was right. One day he called them to him and after seating one at each end of a long table, placed a vase in the centre of the table and said to one, "John' what do you see on the table?" The son replied "I see a red vase." The father said "are you sure?" and the son answered "Yes sir, I am sure I see a red vase." He then turned to the other son and said, "Jim what do you see?" Jim replied "I see a red vase with a white rose on it." The father again asked "Jim, are you sure?" and the boy replied, "Yes sir, I see a red vase with a white rose on it." Without another word the father rose and left the room. The moral is that no one should be too sure that the vase doesn't have a white rose on it unless he can see both sides. It is utterly impossible for us to know **all** about any one subject.

There is another interpretation of the symbolism of the square. The stonemason's square was used by our operative brethren to check or prove the ashlar while it was being worked. They did not attempt to make each stone perfect, but to have it square enough so that the walls were perpendicular. If the workmen had been required to make each ashlar perfect, they would never have been able to complete a building. They used the square which was a perfect right angle to test the stones the same as in our production of machinery today the parts are checked by a master plan for tolerance of plus or minus. Those that do not come within the tolerance allowed are cast aside.

So it was in building, if an ashlar when checked by the square lacked too much of being perfect it was discarded. The square, therefore, being the pattern or gauge by which the perfect ashlar was determined becomes itself the symbol of perfection. This is perhaps what is meant in the Entered Apprentice degree where it says that the square is the proper emblem of the Master.

God in His infinite wisdom gave us the Commandments of square conduct by which we may check the pattern in our lives, not expecting that we will be perfect, but to enable us to try our lives by the square of the Master in order that our ashlar may come within the tolerances allowed and be not cast aside, but used in the spiritual or celestial building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The above ideas are extracted from the writings by Herman M. Johnston to whom credit is given. Some of them were included in the Oregon Mason and partially reproduced in the NSW Freemason, March 1949 issue.

This was the first place in which I had seen reference to tolerances in the creation of stones for inclusion in a building. All other writings seem to imply perfection, but from a practical viewpoint perfection was not required for all of the stones in the building.

V.W. Bro. Robert Taylor

May we suggest to the Brother Secretary that it would be greatly appreciated if he could include regularly our link:

www.uglnew.freemasonry.org.au/Library/Default.htm

in the Notice Paper sent to the members of the Lodge.



Rough Ashlars

There appears to be two poles of opinion in, our Jurisdiction, regarding petitioners for Freemasonry that they will “by similar fidelity, will reflect credit on our choice.” On the one hand the current paradigm over the last few decades has been, if the candidate has a belief in a Supreme Being and expresses a wish to join, then after a few stock standard questions in an interview of some ten minutes duration, admit him, sit him in the NE and see if he latches on to the mysteries. This approach of minimal vetting expects some attrition leaving those who are worthy to remain. However the retention rate, over the last few decades has, for whatever reason(s), brought the Craft to the brink of extinction in our Jurisdiction.

On the other hand, the challenging paradigm questions this minimal vetting of taking in all-and-sundry, and suggests we should be more particular with “...our choice”, delving a lot more deeply into the petitioner’s background, character and motives. It purports that some of our Rough Ashlars are just too rough and faulty, which includes in our ranks, men who may create a negative image to future candidates. This paradigm may have a point, for when one examines for example, France and Germany, jurisdictions which are more selective, there are, it is said, thousands of petitioners waiting to be admitted. Indeed the vetting in some of these jurisdictions is the proverbial ‘third degree’, where the petitioner is blindfolded, placed in front of the entire lodge and interrogated about his personal history, sometimes surprisingly personal and requiring considerable research. The ballot is undertaken only after this procedure.

The obvious critique of the challenging paradigm by the current paradigm is that the challenging paradigm is elitist, and conversely that our current method of ‘all and sundry’ opens us up to including such characters who have mental illness, for example, be it diagnosed or not. The current system does not always fulfil the following edict, “fit and proper persons to be made Masons are just, upright and free men, of mature age, sound judgement, and strict morals”.

So how can the Lodge Nominations Committee (or indeed the MAS system) fully evaluate whether or not the Petitioner is such a fit and proper person? In short, it cannot, fully. The challenging paradigm suggests that we can do better. It seems that in many instances, the various Nominations Committees have been like that operative Fellowcraft who for his day’s work is sent to the quarry select a suitable rough ashlar. Despite his (apparently) careful selection when he starts to prepare it and after a few blows of gavel on chisel it splits and is spoilt. Here, as opposed to the good skill of his hands (the ritual and education work of the Lodge), the fault for the loss is with the skill of his mind having failed to identify the flaw in the stone in the first place. For this, perhaps, the guidelines for assessment need to be more full and perhaps the process of admission should bear some relevant obstacles. After all Freemasonry was never designed to accept just anyone who wanted to join. Not every man, regardless of his qualifications, is fitted to become a member of our fraternity. Nor must the Fraternity accept every Candidate for the sake of acquiring

numbers. Here then are some suggested additional principles which need consideration at examination of the petitioner:

The readiness and suitability of the Candidate for Masonic Learning? Is he suitable material, ready to understand, learn and work upon the principles of Freemasonry? Does he have the intellectual ability for it? The petitioner’s attitude towards benevolence?

His capacity to keep up with the Lodge’s demands and responsibilities? His general social activity / ability / availability?

What effect his admission will have upon the members? Will they welcome him or make him feel that he is not wanted?

As we are unable to look into the heart and mind of the Candidate, we accept the recommendations and references received in relation to his character and spiritual readiness to become one of us, and we therefore place trust in him that he hasn’t come to our Lodge, which is dedicated to humanity, motivated by selfish inclinations, base intentions, the search for material advantages or excessive expectations. This point should be made to him and that he, therefore, should not be surprised of our expectations but should accept them as a matter of course

To enhance this process it has been suggested (by Painton) that amongst expansion of some of our current processes (including a visit to the Lodge’s South), that the petitioner be required to attend (or endure) a meeting with the Lodge Education Committee (or possibly a GL regular lecture series for petitioners) for about 90 minutes to hear and discuss four “talks” on the following subjects,

- A Short History of Freemasonry
- The Landmarks
- The Tenets (Friendship, Morality, Tolerance and Brotherly Love)
- The Qualifications

all prior to his interview with the Lodge Nominations Committee.

If such preconditions are applicable and if the petitioner is a suitable medium, not only will the choice of mentor be made easier, but also the chances of success in his Masonic career will be enhanced.

Rt. Wor. Bro. Christopher Telford

References:

- Rt. Wor. Bro. Dr. F. Radcliff PDGM. “Understanding the Lessons of the Craft Degrees”
- Rt. Wor. Bro. Joe Haffner. PAGM (Personal communication)
- Rt. Wor. Bro. G. Painton Gr. Counc. On the Acceptance of Candidates, (Working paper)



A decade since the passing of

Right Wor. Bro Maurice Harry Kellerman, O.B.E.

Adjudged by his peers of the Australian Masonic Research Council as being amongst Australia's foremost Masonic scholars, Harry was born in New Zealand in 1902.

He came to Australia when he was 8.

He matriculated from Sydney Technical High School to Sydney University where he graduated with the Degree of Bachelor of Economics. He then qualified as a teacher and began his career in the profession in 1923.

Harry Kellerman served in country and city schools, first as a teacher, then as a Headmaster. His career as a teacher had many highlights but he is best and most widely known for his energetic and perceptive leadership as Principal of Blackfriars Correspondence School. There from 1950-1963, he so expanded the number, breadth and effectiveness of courses taught, and their availability, that children and students in NSW isolated by distance, locality, illness or handicap from regular schools, or even subject classes, or overseas because of their parents' posting or touring, could while experiencing the sense of belonging to a class, proceed with their education from Kindergarten to Matriculation under the guidance of devoted teachers.

His early interest in Freemasonry inspired him to join Lodge Apsley No. 129, where he was initiated in 1924. His Masonic Career reflects his enthusiasm for Freemasonry in each school area he was appointed.

He has made available to freemasonry his talents for administration and communication. His involvement in Grand Lodge Committees

of Masonic Education, Foreign Correspondence and the Ritual has enriched many Freemasons who have read his articles on the Craft and heard his lectures.

As the Grand Librarian of the UGL of NSW and the ACT, he has worked assiduously for the improvement of the Grand lodge Library, expanding its services and assisting all who sought Masonic Knowledge.

In Public Life, RW Bro Kellerman was recognized for his contribution to education and community services by being awarded a Coronation Medal in 1953 and subsequently being made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1969.

Grand Lodge requested the services of RW Bro Kellerman to write the History of the Craft in NSW from 1948 to 1988. This scholarly, easily read work was published in two volumes in 1990 and is a comprehensive review of Masonic Development in a very complex period from Diamond Jubilee to Centenary.

He was honoured with the High Rank of Past Deputy Grand Master and served as the Grand librarian of our Order until his death in April 2000.

Harry Kellermann will continue to inspire us, old and young, as his life contribution to our Craft is ageless. His teachings and his example will lead our generation of Masons on the path of knowledge and discovery.

J. V. Haffner

Past Grand Librarian

Are you in love with our traditions and the richness of our heritage?

Are you thirsty to delve into the Hub of Knowledge, your Library?

Would you invest a few hours a week and be recognized

as a valuable member of our volunteers team?

All you need is a true love for the Craft, its literature & a Masonic heart that is ready to offer, and glean the satisfaction of serving the Order.

Contact the Grand Librarian Ph. (02)9284 2825

E-mail: library@uglnsw.freemasonry.org.au