



Pillars of Light



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Editorial

Last month I returned from a visit to the Grand Lodge of Israel and would like to share with you my experience in re-visiting the Ancient City of Jaffa or Joppa on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea, where we were hiding amongst the ruins, as children. A city that is practically part of the modern sun bathed Tel Aviv, but was reconstructed and carefully maintained in its original architectural glory.

The 4000 years old seaport, which never ceased to be inhabited, is the same where the timbers sent by King Hiram of Tyre were brought and landed, to be carried 70 km up to Jerusalem for the building of the Temple. The harbour is tiny and ships must actually anchor at sea, cargo to be landed by barges. Jaffa has a population of about 40.000, out of which a quarter Mohammedans. Until some decades ago, export of the finest oranges in the world, both in size and in flavour, the "Jaffas", was made through this antic gate to the sea. The road that leads up into the Judean mountains to Jerusalem is cluttered by places bearing names to be read in the Bible. Peter lodged here with Simon the Tanner, whose house is still shown to visitors. Jonah took ship here to flee from the presence of God, when told to go to Nineveh and preach against it. Today tens of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world visit Jaffa. The city was also a point of interest in the times of the Crusades as it hosted a fleet of Genoese vessels, which brought the needed supplies for the Armies of the Cross. In the third crusade, Richard of England having a truce with Saladin for three years, left the holy land to return to England. An army of 40.000 yeomen arrived, under Henry VI, broke the truce and were attacked and dispersed by an immense Saracen army who laid siege to Jaffa, which they captured and put to the sword 20.000 Christians. In 1799 Jaffa was captured by Napoleon who ordered the massacre of 4.000 Turkish soldiers, but constructed an hospital to respond to the needs of the population stricken by the plague. It still operates and is known under the name of "French Hospital", a modern equipped facility. Two Masonic Lodges are currently working in Jaffa, one as created by the French engineers who built the railway to Jerusalem in the 19th Century. The old quarter has been artistically recreated with the original material and visiting it, is a most breathtaking experience, as history is written in every stone.
J.V. H.

Continued from last month

The expectations of a Candidate. II What does he expect from Freemasonry? What may Freemasonry expect from him?

We see that success depends on many facts or rather assumptions on both sides. I have no intention to give advice, but to try and put forward suggestions, which might enable us to come closer to our goals.

Despite many adverse experiences the "balance sheet" is rather encouraging. After all a considerable number of brethren remain faithful to the Lodge and were absorbed and the greater part of their expectations were realized. My subject is rather related to those brethren, who are neither consciously aware of what they can demand, nor do they know what they can give or offer – which are doubtful cases in my balance-sheet and need help in their integration.

It is not sufficient that the candidate is of adult age. His personality should also be fully developed and qualified. We should be able to assume that the candidate has at least a rough idea about the purpose and aims of Freemasonry and that his views conform with the aspirations of the Order, such as Humanity and Tolerance.

As we are unable to look into the heart and mind of the Candidate, we accept the recommendations 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. He, therefore, should not be surprised of our expectations but should accept them as a matter of course.

Only if all these preconditions are applicable and if the newly initiated brother is a suitable medium, there are chances that he will succeed in his Masonic career. The initiation ceremony is sealed by an obligation covering his entire life span, and the new brother enters a society in which his most keen will and readiness for adaptation, harmony, sociability and tolerance are absolutely required.

Furthermore, as a suitable applicant the candidate must be partial to mysticism and have a liking for uniform ceremony. He should be modest in his demands – happy to help and give. As a man of honour he should adhere to his obligations and promises to the Lodge and to Freemasonry, even though at the time he was not aware of the deeper implications of such obligations and promises.

According to most of our By-Laws, acceptance of any office is a Masonic duty. Regular attendance at the Lodge meetings, especially after receipts of the Notice Papers, is one of the basic duties in Freemasonry.

How often are these regulation, not adhered to, not to say even ignored. How often, in our daily professional life, or even in our active social life, can we leave an invitation from a society or a group of friends without an answer?

Amongst us this is apparently possible for years on end.

According to the Constitution of our Grand Lodge, one loses his "good standing" if one doesn't pay regularly one's dues. Shouldn't we prefer an active brother, even though his payments are in arrears, to a brother, whom we do not see for many years – but has bought his rights?

Since when can ideals be bought?

As mentioned before we must reach the conclusion that not only the candidate and later on the new brother, has his duties, but that the Lodge too must be fully aware of its responsibilities. The Lodge should always be prepared to consider at any time criticism brought before it and try to evaluate the situation correctly, so that nobody's rights will be infringed.

Naturally a brother, who has failed in doing what is expected from him, should be told to correct his ways, but on the other hand, it is our duty to provide a good example.

Continued next month



The Study of Masonic Teachings

For a long of time I was confronted with the reluctance of Brethren to pursue any aspect of Masonic Education.

I must admit, today, after many, many hours of sheer despair, that it took me too long to understand this reluctance of finding out the great messages that are conveyed by our Craft.

Well, I feel much wiser now after discovering the real impediment at the core of this refusal to adopt Masonic Education. Do not laugh please, bear with me. It was the word EDUCATION! And for good reason...

We have all gone through school. We have been all educated... that is what happens to people in their childhood. So, what else can be expected from a mature man? to start from the position of a child, again, and be educated?

No, definitely not!

So I gave up and adopted the word "Study". Oh, yes. Study is something that never ends, that belongs to an age of understanding, of appreciation, of sound judgment and perception for perfection...

So be it, then.

Study is intended to acquire information on certain subjects, to explain certain doctrines and modes of living, thought and action. Study is the most important thing man has to do. No man is too old to study. He may acquire information from others less informed on certain subjects, from those whose lives have taught them in certain studies of life. All information may be called "trite", for it is information given to those not familiar with the subject taught, or if familiar with it, not informed of its force in all of its bearings upon human life.

Let's talk about a specific subject. Study it and go deeper into its meaning.

Masonry, in all of its teachings, in all of its workings is upright and intended to benefit all mankind. All moral teaching is intended for the betterment of mankind. It is intended to lead the Mason who studies these teachings, to an upright and correct mode of living and dealing with his fellow men. Masonic precepts must of necessity be moral and upright in all of their effects upon the human heart. We

must be better because we are Masons. There is nothing we can do for the good of our fellow men that we are in any way to neglect. We are each, in some way or other "our brother's keeper." And we

cannot neglect to do our duty in this respect. We are to advise him, to protect him and to direct him into the right path. We are, to a certain extent, responsible for our brother's well being. At this stage, we are maybe not helping enough our brethren in the study of the lessons of life or the lessons of Masonry, and neglecting to encourage them to acquire the necessary information that will lead to the lessons we have been taught.

That leads us to "*do unto others as we would that they should do unto us.*"

The Golden Rule is intended for everybody's practice, and when it is neglected it is a fault that we can in no way atone for. To neglect this Rule, destroys all our efforts to lead an upright life. There is nothing "in doing unto others as we would have them do unto us" that can be found fault with or complained of. The Golden Rule is the rule to guide us to the right treatment of our friends, our enemies and all people with whom we associate. It is the Supreme Rule of heaven and as such should be above all other duties enjoined upon us.

There is something for every one to do, and he who neglects to do his duty to his fellow men not only fails to obey the law of reciprocity, but also does not meet his obligations to his fellow men. The whole world is dependent. We cannot live alone. We are bound by the ties of relationship, which bind us together as a family. Our relations to each other are varied and widespread. We owe a duty to every human being and one that is most binding upon us. We are to be compassionate with our needy brethren. It is not enough for us to say "poor fellow!" and sympathize with our needy companions. It is not enough for us to see our fellow brother and not lend a hand to help him. Many a man has been helped in times of distress and has returned to others a hundred fold in good deeds. There is nothing taught in Masonry that does not appeal to the better nature of mankind. There is nothing that will not improve him socially and tend to make his association with others practicing the same sublime principles of right a benefit and lasting blessing.

Masonic Study discovers the Masonic Teaching, which is sublime and will elevate every one who lives and practices in its simplicity and purity.

J.V. Haffner

The Blazing Star

The Volume of the Sacred Law has its privileged place in Masonic Symbolism. Without its presence there – and open – the Lodge cannot pursue its labours. The opening and the closing of the book, opens and closes the Lodge of which its form and contents is the symbol.

But the presence of the square and compasses – and properly arranged on the open page – is also indispensable.

No lawful labour can be performed until all of the great Lights have been properly displayed. And here I would again remind you that we are enabled to Masonically behold the Great Lights only by the aid of the representatives.

The Square and the Compasses, when properly arranged upon the open page of the Volume of the Sacred Law, form the imperfect outline of a five-pointed star, and thus form another symbol that is known as the Blazing Star. A star, certainly – but why blazing? For one reason, because of its irregular and imperfect outline, since no blazing object presents a regular and perfect outline.

But there is another and far more important reason why this symbol is called "the blazing star."

Among the people of antiquity, our ancient brethren, the Egyptians, the five-pointed star was a symbol of the doctrine of reincarnation, a doctrine which was based on the belief in the immortality of the human soul. Among the Chaldeans it was a symbol of destiny – of that destiny which is the manifested operation of the Supreme Will.

Among the Hebrews, it was the symbol of regeneration, or the regenerating fire, and so we come to the origin of the word "blazing" as applied to the star.

Brethren,
May we suggest that once you have reached the "Pillars of Light" on the Grand Lodge Web-Site, you can very easily save your preferred source of knowledge in FAVORITES, in the menu of your browser (Internet Explorer or similar) and access thereafter the last edition of the Pillars of Light by just clicking on it.



Dear Editor,

I know that Freemasonry is sometimes perceived by its enemies as a strange organization which uses even stranger rituals and leaves the non-initiated perplexed as to the "humanitarian" character that imposes such harsh penalties on its members.

Why is it so, and if the penalties are not intended to be carried out, what is their purpose?

P.R.K –Tweed Heads

They are based on the 15th century penalties applied in the Navy for treason. Never have they been applied in Masonry and no Mason has ever suffered these penalties.

Nevertheless their content have never ceased to be a source of worry to Masons. In 1964, the GL of England has recommended that Lodges may alter the presentation of the penalties in the Obligations and in the Ritual, and the original was changed to read: The Candidate undertakes now "to bear in mind" the "traditional penalty, that of having..."

Now, therefore, the Candidate does not undertake to suffer the penalty but only to "bear it in mind". Many English Lodges have chosen not to adopt the recommended change and apply the old Obligations but the penalties remain a form of threat. In our Jurisdiction, the Penalties remain a symbolical threat, only.

Dear Bro. von Risch,

On a past occasion we discussed the subject at a Dinner which followed an initiation at Lodge Queens and I wonder if there is another explanation to this old custom.

Why is the "hoodwink" necessary?

I have explained that the most important aspect of the hoodwink was to create the threshold between Darkness and Light in the symbolic sense, but I would have to add that :

The purpose of the hoodwink is to ensure that in case the Candidate refuses to undergo the ceremony, he may be led out of the Lodge without discovering its form.

Its symbolism is the darkness of ignorance until the Light of Masonry is made known to the Candidate during the Ceremony.

Manfred von Risch

P.S. This is another aspect of our Symbolism, one of so many that are enriching our Craft. It is the use of these symbols that are the expression of our spiritual ideas, to better illustrate our moral concepts.

The wages of a Fellowcraft

The wages of a Fellowcraft are to be learned. First of all he learns that he must earn it step by step, till he reaches the Middle Chamber of Truth.

There he learns his work isn't of value if it has not been earned in consecration and trust in God. He learns that the means by which he enters this Chamber of Truth has been in accordance with the divine plan: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you; ask, and ye shall receive."

In this Chamber of Truth he learns that he must be exact in dealing with his fellows – he must give to every one under him that which is his right. Here he learns that his wages have not been honestly earned if he has not used his best efforts to aid a worthy brother in need.

Here he learns that to aid a worthy brother is not merely the giving of financial means for immediate use; but that he has sought the opportunity to reprove in love and kindness, and to say an encouraging word at the right time – words are often more beneficial than money or other material relief.

In this middle Chamber of Truth the Fellowcraft Freemason learns that he must not allow the law of selfishness to prevent him from relieving a brother, because, to do that, he might claim that it would be an injury to himself or to his family.

But the great personal benefit, which he here learns, is that he is a part of a great company of brothers; that whether he is at home or in foreign lands, a brother is at hand, and that there is always an open door for him to enter and earn the wages of a Fellowcraft; that he cannot "lose his job" in any part of the civilized world.

We need you !!!

Do you have thoughts on Masonry to share or expand?

Do you want to express your views and enlarge our knowledge?

Then come and join in our Study Circle.

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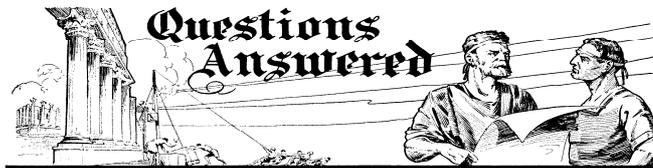


Enlightened Pillars of the Grand Librarian

Dear Brother Joe,
At a recent Lodge meeting I was asked by a Fellowcraft about the derivation of honours in the South. I have no clue how they came about or where to find the answer. Can you help please?

Yours Fraternaly

Colin Glasson REO Region 9



Dear Brother Haffner,
I have three questions to ask for which I could not find satisfactory answers. An Entered Apprentice.

Why must the candidate have no metals about him at the Initiation Ceremony ?

The reason of making sure that the candidate enters Lodge deprived of all metals, arises from an ancient superstition that metals "pollute". This is the reason why in the account of the building of King Solomon's Temple (Chapt. I Kings, 6&7 of the Old Testament) "... there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house during construction." The proof or test is required, because all other aspects of the 'preparation' are clearly visible, but the absence of metals is not and therefore should be proven.

What is a cubit?

According to the Oxford English dictionary, it is the distance from the elbow to the finger-tips which varies from 18 to 22 inches.

Why does the Junior Deacon conduct the Candidate? Could any other officer do this job?

Before 1813, this was always the Warden's job as in many Lodges there were no Deacons at all. Since 1813 it became the Deacon's Job – and this is documented - but , as a matter of fact, any other Officer could be deputized in his absence and do the job

...And from an enquiring visitor to the Museum:

The Mosaic Pavement of the Temple, as represented on the Tracing Boards, is not mentioned in the Bible. Why is it ?

The Temple did not have a mosaic pavement. In Chapter I Kings V 15 it is clearly said that Solomon "... covered the floor of the house (i.e. The Temple) with planks of fir."

J. H.

Honours / Grand Honours

They definitely are a form of expression of respect and reward by honouring a person of quality or a did of value or even as a sign of approbation and appreciation of a very special performance.

The Honours or Grand Honours in Masonry have undoubtedly an obvious link to the applauses and acclamations practised by ancient People like the Romans and the Greeks in their assemblies, arenas, theatres or senates as well as in their public games. It is evident that the Masons have copied the expression of respect of these civilized people in antiquity, when dignitaries made their appearance in public or when Judgements or Decisions were given and approved by all.

Later on, it became more accurately a mark of respect or a token of adulation to their rulers.

Freemasons have preserved the ancient custom of the "plausus" or applauding in public as practiced by the Ancient Romans and Greeks in public occasions. They have refined it, coloured it by different frequencies and numbers of applauses and have created thus our own symbolic expression of love to merit members and others.

Thank you, Colin for giving me the opportunity and being of help.

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Contact the Grand Librarian RW Bro. Joseph V. Haffner Ph. (02)9284 2825

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