



Pillars of Light



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Considering the importance of our image

Like any other similar organization in the world, our Freemasonry must accept the challenge of being constantly ready to present itself in the best possible light, especially to the newer generation that have the potential to join.

We cannot assure our continuity and further development based on our past history alone, nor upon the accomplishments of a number of great men in the past who, by their membership in the Craft, have enriched our heritage.

In order to survive, our Order must continue to merit and enjoy the respect, admiration and trust of the society in which we live. It is the only way in which we can hope to attract the appropriate human material with the potential to appreciate and understand the essence of our teachings and thence enhance the capability to carry on our craftsmanship. Regardless of each of our individual statuses in Society, we all share the responsibility in this matter. We must find a dignified manner to convince the men of this new generation that Freemasonry has something worthwhile to offer, something pertinent to one's and society's needs, something that will enrich their lives and contribute to their future success and happiness.

Each of us is an ambassador of our organization and every one of us should always be ready to say a good word for our Brotherhood and testify as to the important part it occupies in our lives. Every lodge should be able to take a responsible part in the promotion of Freemasonry by seeing to it that our newsworthy Masonic activities receive proper publicity. The time of hiding our important contribution to the welfare of the society in which we live, is over. We must always be aware that the world judges us by our conduct and our character. Whenever an individual Mason fails in his behaviour, whenever a Lodge accepts an unworthy person as a candidate, whenever we indulge in a conduct that discredits our historically well established good reputation, an irreparable damage is done to

the name of our Brotherhood and it can be understood if the general public loses faith in the moral worth of our Institution.

So long as Freemasonry remains true to its own teachings, dedicated to its tenets and adheres with tenacity to the Ancient Landmarks of the Craft, so long as it maintains those high moral standards which are its most valuable characteristics, it will continue to have a reason to exist and can hope to contribute to humanity by creating a better individual in its midst. As long as Freemasonry persists with this just and admirable way, none of us will ever hesitate to encourage a potential candidate to join and share with us the beneficial Light of our Lodge.

But never forget, that this Light of our Lodge is not created by an enjoyable communication alone, but by sharing thoughts, participating in common efforts that are aimed to advance the Craft and thus refine the quality of our meetings, of our conduct and of our deeds.

J.V. Haffner

The library's team of volunteers wishes our readers and their families a

Very Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah and a Prosperous Healthy New Year 2010 of great

Masonic achievements.





The Ionic Column of Youth

Regardless of our age, at one point in time you would have held unmeasurable reverence for your elders and those who've come before you. However despite this, the human condition appears to wipe this thought from our minds and as a collective, we continue to make often destructive decisions without regard of the fallout or consequence. Every man at some point or another has acted rashly and upon later pondering has thought that it's been a bad idea. These thoughts are recorded in numerous memoirs, the VSL and even communicated through direct word of mouth by Brethren whom wish to impart this wisdom to those who have as yet not experienced the bitter taste of a decision ill made.

Within our Order there may be Kings or indeed the lowliest workman, which is of course the beauty of the Square and Level. However, in my short 21 years on this terrestrial sphere I have met men walking both paths from whom I've learnt immeasurable valuable lessons, whether they be through positive reinforcement or witnessing catastrophic decisions which have not only affected their own lives directly, but those around who stand seemingly innocent of the whole matter. The question I would like to pose though is why indeed do we continue to make these age old mistakes despite this pool of wisdom being freely available to all those who wish to search for it or on another plane altogether, choose to act upon what they have learnt.

I do not want to claim any form of sainthood in this thought because I have no doubt that I've fallen victim to this human condition on more than one occasion and will continue to do so for many years to come. However I would sincerely like to learn to break away from the travesty of this almost youthful ignorance. Indeed one could argue that the theory of behaviour modification first formally proposed by Edward Thorndike in 1911 is an important part of the human experience. The fact that the stove is hot, the knife is sharp and the dog will bite you if you try to steal its food are of course important lessons that any toddler in the world should learn, but why do many men seem to remain in this toddler like state for the rest of their lives, acting rashly, with the consequences never truly sinking in.

This theory of behavioural modification is in no way necessarily a pure evil. Quite to the contrary, without it we would still be hunters and gatherers, very much living from day to day to provide for our villages and families. The advent of the domestication of animals on the other hand saw civilisation burst forward and continue to grow at often a rapid and alarming rate. But to our knowledge, as the most intelligent form of life on this Earth, why is it then that we still subscribe to applying this theory to our own lives as well. At some point in time shouldn't this knowledge and wisdom have become somehow inherent in our genetic make-up?

The best examples of this are indeed the migrations of Whales, Ducks, Turtles, Atlantic Salmon, the list goes on.

All of these creatures of land, air and sea have an inherent understanding of their place in the cosmos and of what time certain events need to be enacted to ensure not only their own survival, but also the continued survival of their species. The human race though does not seem to inherit this higher plane of intelligence and instead we stumble blindly through our daily lives. Indeed if one subscribes to the String Theory, one would think at some point the strings of the world would become terribly knotted. Perhaps the result of this is marked by catastrophic events such as war.

Where then should this inherent knowledge and wisdom be kept? Right where it always has been; in the words of our fathers and grandfathers, in institutions sworn to protect it such as Freemasonry and everywhere in nature around us. The one difference though is the need for a subtle change in the way mankind thinks. In order to continue to further understand our universe we must look to antiquity and learn from the mistakes that were made. Personally, I would like to make my own NEW mistakes and not continue to make the ones that my ancestors and relatives before me have made. At this point in time, the world is stuck in the loop of Ouroboros, forever turning around and biting its own tail stretching on to infinity. My question is Brother, when will you as your own individual snake let go of your tail and decide to move forward into the unknown abyss of potential new mistakes that is the beauty of unmapped eternity?

Charlie Thomson, FCF 544.



Masonic Study

*gleaned and interpreted from the Masonic Wisconsin Journal.
By RW Bro. Alex Morris PAGM*

(For many years RW Bro. Alex Morris has been the Grand Representative of the G L of Wisconsin)

One grand peculiarity about Freemasonry is that it will stand investigation; the deeper the research, the more extensive the knowledge of its hidden art and secret mysteries, the more highly it is appreciated. A man who merely takes his degrees in a listless, careless sort of manner, who remains a mere spectator at all lodge meetings and considers the customary refreshment at the close as the best part of the proceedings, may think that masonry differs little from other Societies. But the man who dives deeply into Masonic literature, takes a lively interest in every part of the ceremony, and learns the origin, meaning and moral bearings of its symbol, cannot possibly fall into such an error. To him Masonry has a refining and elevating influence not to be found in the ordinary run of Societies. To bring his influence to bear on every member of the Craft, and to direct them to the systematic study of Freemasonry, should be the great aim of every true Mason who has the welfare of the Craft and his Brethren at heart.

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

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

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



Freemasonry and its Study

It becomes obvious to every one of us, soon after Initiation, that a lot of the terms and notions in our Ritual are quite difficult to understand if not followed up by clear explanations. The same applies to the literature that is handed to us on the first night in Lodge. With time, and if such time is given between Degrees, we realise that our Rituals teach and explain the meaning of various lectures, symbols, allegories.

But still, much is missing in the basic transmission of our teachings. I dare to say that the teachings in Lodge fall into the same pitfalls as teachings of history, philosophy, religion etc. in non Masonic educational institutions. The error committed is one of overlooking our basic purpose; to inculcate our Brethren with the true precepts of Freemasonry, to educate them in the real meanings of the moral lessons of our Craft.

In my opinion the Study of Freemasonry must play a decisive role and not merely be reduced to the learning by rote of the Ritual, and its theatrical presentation, as is often done in most lodges of Instruction. It is not a question of "teaching" our new Brethren, but rather the need to offer to them the material that will attract their attention, raise their interest and guide them on the way of Discovery, so that they can discern the worthy message offered by Freemasonry, themselves.

Teaching them and instructing them have become obsolete, as teaching and instruction have never resulted in education; the development of character. Cramming material into the minds of men does not necessarily result in 'men becoming better men', much as the quantitative 'making of Masons' has never produced more than only a tiny number of quality Masons; those that are required to perpetuate our Craft. I do not wish to diminish the importance of the learning methods or material used in the Ritual. It is obviously necessary to pass the oral "exam" before being allowed to advance to the next degree; it is not, however, necessarily proof of understanding or absorption of the knowledge and the educational value that is offered by each degree.

All too often the words 'education' and 'teaching' are used, and with a breadth of meanings. What do they really mean?

The most popular dictionaries offer the following definitions:

*To **educate**:* to develop character and mental powers.

*To **teach**:* to give knowledge, to explain, to train.

Clearly teaching, alone, is insufficient preparation for a future generation of a Brotherhood which will be respected in society, which will promulgate and profess our tenets.

I could say that to achieve our goal of Brotherly Love in this world, with Peace and Truth, we must all realize that the cause of human progress is our Cause. We must understand that Freemasonry has a place in the development of our future. We must consider our practical involvement in the creation of a society which will embrace our Tenets and Principles, and through them become a more tolerant and constructive society. If we do not achieve these goals, why are we here? Because Brethren, we definitely are not just another Club; we are here to make men 'better' and not only just to give them another choice of having fun.

*To **study**:* to think deeply, reflect, or consider.

We must start at once to learn more about our Order, our aims and our destiny. We must start to Study and discover the ways of understanding and applying our Study to our every-day life. Masonic life does not end in Lodge. Lodge is only the workshop, the laboratory in which, separated from the tumult of the outside world, we concentrate on how to better contribute to the improvement of this world.

There is really no better way to take advantage of the wealth of moral teachings and the Light imparted to us than to start our own study of all this material which is offered for us to discover.

We must immediately start to apply all those teachings we are learning, which are Freemasonry's gift to be enjoyed by us all in our daily life. The Community in which we live must benefit from our teachings and their reverberation, clearly embodied in every one of our actions in public and in our families. The best sermons are those preached by deeds and action compared to those of the lips and tongue. By our practise and example of Humanity, of Charity of Thought, of consideration for our fellow men, others will be influenced and educated too.

Continued next page



Welcome back to the Questions and Answers, a successful feature of past issues, discontinued for a short period of time.

Q: Why and how is the Hat worn by the Worshipful Master in certain lodges?

A: In some Jurisdictions, in the USA, Philippines, and Germany for example, the hat has been adopted as an emblem to distinguish the WM as a leader of his lodge from the other members. Keeping his head covered, the Worshipful Master is manifesting an authority and superiority in Rank and Office. As a part of protocol the WM must courteously doff his hat to greet the Grand Master when he visits officially, as well as offering his Gavel. Also, the WM must lift his hat at mention of the GAOTU and remove it during prayer, holding it as part of the Sign of Fidelity.

Q: What is the significance of the term "LOST WORD" in Freemasonry?

A: In the Traditional History imparted to every Mason during the Ceremonies of the Degrees, we are informed of the past existence of a WORD of the greatest value, known only to very few and lost under sad circumstances as related in one of the Degrees. We are told that as a result of this unfortunate loss and in order to be able to continue our work, a substitute word was adopted until the real unique and most venerated WORD could be recovered. But the most significant aspect of this was the search and the effort deployed to recover our loss, for the very philosophy of Freemasonry teaches us that by the immortality of the soul there is no loss without eventual recovery. This is the inspiring substance of the LOST WORD and its promise of eventual rediscovery...Passing through all the stages of the Craft's advancement in knowledge, each Mason receives the 'substitute' word, which becomes one of the most important milestones on his journey of study to acquire that ray of Light that is reserved for him at the end of his efforts. The Lost Word has become the symbol of Divine Illumination, the most important goal of every Mason.

Q: Where does the expression "Mystic Tie" comes from?

A: According to my information the term was first used by the Jewish Historian Josephus Flavius in reference to the strong link that bound the members of the Essene sect together. In fact the Essenes, an orthodox Jewish sect that lived in Judea between 160 B.C.E and 70 C.E., chose the seclusion of the desert to the tumult in the city of Jerusalem and established themselves along the northern and western shores of the Dead Sea, at Qumran. They used to travel from one town to the other and never carried any luggage or food for the road with them. Wherever they arrived, they were hosted by Brother Essenes and by proving themselves members of the Brotherhood, even if previously unknown, were provided with all their necessities free of charge. This expression of Brotherly Love between the members of the sect, was called by Josephus Flavius, "the Mystic Tie."

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Freemasonry must exemplify the guidance of mankind for the benefit of ALL. Let us never forget that Courtesy and Service are not synonymous with servility, but the price we have all promised to pay when taking our basic Obligation.

Let us start our Masonic Study; let us discover and understand the true and valuable gifts received; the tools to use for modelling ourselves and our world, so that our passage through life will become our meaningful gift to Humanity, the fulfilment of our Masonic Mission.

Joseph V. Haffner – PGrand Librarian

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