



Pillars of Light



Compiled by the
Editorial Team of the
Grand Lodge Library

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Editorial

Over the past thirteen months our Grand Lodge Library editorial team has made every effort to offer the best we could for our occasional but avid readers.

During this time some rare readers would offer an article from their point of view or proposing to discuss a subject for the next issue. In spite of the continued encouragement to submit articles, ideas or any Masonic material, our large source of inspiration, that are the community of members, choose to remain silent, passive, noncommittal. The help that we received having been so limited, I do urge you brethren, to submit or suggest articles on Masonic subjects pertaining to any aspect of our Craft, in our Jurisdiction or anywhere else in the world.

On a more successful subject, this month, a long time desired modernization of our Library, becomes a reality.

Our Grand Master MW Bro Raymond B. Brooke assisted by the Deputy Grand Master and the Assistant Grand Master will inaugurate and name the Library's Study Centre, a computerized, modern facility that will offer our members a new service. It will allow access to the large world of information on any Masonic subject to be researched and studied.

With it, our new computerized lending system will be introduced, another huge step towards adapting our Library to modern times.

It remains our main policy to enlarge the number of those who would be interested to discover all that we have to offer in our Hub of Knowledge.

We endeavour to extend the opening hours of the Library to cover the pre-tying time of the Lodges in the late afternoon. This can be realised if we obtain support from you, my brethren, who can offer of your time by volunteering and thus be recognized for a major contribution to the advancement of the cultural level in our jurisdiction.

If you want it, let it become a reality !

J.V. Haffner

A Clarification on Symbols

Freemasonry is in short defined as " a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by SYMBOLS".

We refer to our Craft degrees as the Symbolic Degrees.

"Symbolism is the soul of masonry, with every symbol the mute teacher of morality " said Albert Pike in his "Morals and Dogma of Freemasonry".

But, what is a Symbol? I feel we should firstly clarify what we mean by "Symbol".

In order to enhance what is symbolized, a number of types of symbols have been created. There are 'indicative symbols', 'emblems', 'signs', 'devices', 'parables', 'tokens' and 'badges'.

An indicative symbol is something that represents something else. It is done by suggestion or by some relation of any kind. As an example, the letters of the alphabet symbolize sounds; the flag of our country symbolizes our nation and the power that unites us.

An emblem is suggesting that for what it stands. A Crown is the emblem of Royalty, the colour White is the emblem of purity. No need to discover the special meaning of emblems, they are suggested by themselves.

A sign is any distinctive mark or action by which something is recognized. We will all agree that a blush is a sign of shame or embarrassment. The sign of penalty of our Obligation is a clear reference to the penalty itself.

A device refers to a symbolic design as in a Coat-of-Arms. The cardinal virtues are a shield against impropriety, hence are represented generally on shields placed in the four corners of our Lodges.

A parable is a spoken, expressed symbol. It is used to teach or illustrate a moral principle, not clearly expressed, but left to us to discover. In Matthew XIII, Jesus spoke in parables. In Freemasonry, the Hiram legend is a parable illustrating fidelity. Another word for parable is 'allegory', which means that an allegory is also a symbol. It is for this reason that Dr. Mackey the famous author of the Encyclopaedia proposed to correct the definition of Freemasonry. Instead of "peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols", he proposed: "A system of morality developed and inculcated by the science of symbolism ".

A token is something offered as a symbol of an attitude or understanding. A grip is a token of recognition; a kiss is a token of love.

Finally a badge is an emblem by which a person or an association is distinguished. Our Aprons denote our membership in the Craft. Our lapel signs are indicative of our belonging to the Fraternity. The Square and Compasses on the front of our building are the Badges of our Order.

(to be continued in the next issue – The Nature of Symbols and the development of Symbolism)

Are you in love with our Traditions and the richness of our Heritage?

Are you thirsty to dwell into the Hub of Knowledge that is your Library?

Would you invest a few hours a week and be recognized

as a valuable member of our Volunteers Team?

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

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

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



From John Hosking-Rowell

SW Lodge Hiram No 12 , Prague , Czech Republic

As we have limited resources in the Czech Republic and it is snowing heavily outside, we have been snowbound for two days. Could you please inform me of what a "Broached Thurnel" actually is? Also any additional information on the origin of the "Latin Rubric" as referred in some of the 1759 ritual?

S. & F.

John Hosking

Dear John,

How refreshing your pictures of the Snowy Czech Republic are in Sydney' 42°C -no rain- Christmas.

I hope you're in the best of health and mood, as always. Let me wish you first, a Very Merry and Happy New Year eve and the Best of years to come, of health and satisfaction and great Masonic achievements.

Now, as *Vita Brevis - Ars Longa*, let me address your questions.

The Broached Thurnel.

A symbol that is not used anymore but to be found on old Tracing Boards of the 1st degree. Its representation was a cubical stone with a pyramidal apex. It is the symbol that can be still found with the same form in all French Tracing Boards, under the name of the "Pierre Cubique" or Cubical Stone and which in our Tracing Boards and Ritual has been replaced by the Perfect Ashlar.

The name Broached Thurnel comes from the French "Brochette", a spear or a BBQ spit and "Tourelle" which is a small tower, both creating the Spired Tower that has the form of a Cubic Tower with a spire springing from it.... The Broached Thurnel, then was the Spired Turret, a model on which apprentices could learn the principles of the art as it contained the forms of the Square and the Triangle, the Cube and the Pyramid.

The Latin Rubric

Is actually that part of the Oath or Obligation that indicates in old Rituals, "HOW" the Obligation must be taken. The instruction is given in Latin as to how to hold in the left hand the VSL and put the right hand over it during the Obligation.

The Latin instruction is of old origin and was adopted by Theological Seminars as a token of respect to the VSL..

Therefore during Mass the Book is always held in front of the Reader, as heavy as it may be, by a priest and never placed on a lectern.... so that the reader never leans over it but stands erect before it.

John, I hope you got the answers to your questions, and as always, I am happy to be of help. God bless you in your effort to learn more and more, a way of life that should be adopted by many more Masons... Happy 2006 !!!

S&F,

Joe Haffner

FREEMASONRY – AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM?

by Rt. Wor. Bro. Raymond Apple, AO RFD

Various religions have had problems with Freemasonry. In Australia, most often it was the Anglicans, but occasionally other denominations. Globally, there were long periods when Catholics were warned against the craft, though the Vatican stance has now softened.

The arguments against freemasonry differ from place to place and from time to time. It is too religious for some, who accuse it of being a rival religion, and not religious enough for others, who allege that it is too accommodating and open-minded.

The Masonic view of religion derives from the early 18th century when a Grand Lodge was established in London. Asserting that in ancient times Masons "were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation", the tenets formulated by James Anderson in 1723 stated that now it "was thought more expedient only to oblige them to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves".

The philosophy of the time was deism and the view that there was "a Supreme Being who can be conceived of by any rational being... it was assumed that this religion of reason was at the root of every historical religion" (Jacob Katz, "Out of the Ghetto", 1978).

Anderson's principles were tested when Jews sought to become Freemasons. If Jews were accepted, the movement would be decisively dechristianised. In the end Jewish membership was approved, and there even began to be so-called "Jewish" lodges.

Yet in some areas, there were still Christological elements which limited Jewish participation and, if anyone had been prepared to notice it, sat uneasily with Anderson's principle of toleration. Yet as time went on Masonic broadmindedness endorsed a candidate's use of his own Scriptures, and this is now the accepted rule.

But is this "religion in which all men agree", and is there really any such thing?

I personally have been part of this discussion in a number of contexts, for example in the debates in NSW about religious instruction in State schools, hinging on the question of whether there is a "general" religion which can be taught in the classroom, and in the Defence Department, where national events and commemorations raise the issue of whether there is an across-the-board religion in which both Christians and non-Christians, and indeed various brands of Christians, can share.

Some cite the slogan, "Judeo-Christian tradition". It is true that Jews and Christians both talk about God, the Bible, human dignity and ethics, but as Churchill said about the English and the Americans, it is two peoples divided by a common language.

However, neither of these two examples is a useful analogy for Freemasonry. Unlike State education, the craft is not concerned with teaching religion. Unlike national commemorations, the craft is not concerned with acts of worship. All that the craft requires is that members have a belief in a Supreme Being, but there is neither a Masonic theology nor a Masonic style of worship. **Freemasonry is not a religion.**

We do utilise Biblical events and terminology in our procedures but in a neutral way and without doctrinal or exegetical implications.

True, today's Australia has increasing numbers of faith groups for whom King Solomon, the Temple, Jerusalem, Hiram Abiff, Ruth, Jachin and Boaz and the Book of Ecclesiastes have no cultural resonance, but the small numbers of Masons from these groups do not seem to have raised any objections. Presumably they view Biblical references as part of the Australian ethos, like Eureka, Gallipoli and the Dismissal.

Some such groups, though religious, have no room for God in their thinking, but they do not seem to have objected to the letter "G" in the lodge room.

Like every movement, we have our folklore (I use the word in a non-pejorative sense). If we leave out the traditional "folklore" content, Freemasonry is unrecognisable – but if we leave it in, the craft is not universal. Is Freemasonry an impossible dream?

My answer is no. Freemasonry is a system of ethics. It illustrates and symbolises its ethics by means of allegories which have a Biblical connection. The allegories fascinate the antiquarians and academics, but it is the message which is the main thing.



An extract from

The 11th Grand Master's Study Circle

This month the study circle comprised the following brethren:

Rt Wor Bros: Robert Ridding, John Thomson, Michael Mills, Joseph Haffner and Richard Dawes ; V Wor Bros: Jack Hely, and Wal Billington ; Wor Bros: Graham Painton, John Blake and Keith Stockley ; Bro. Manfred von Risch.

The facilitator on this occasion was Wor Bro. Graham Painton

Apologies: Rt Wor Bro Greg Levenston, V Wor Bro. Eamonn Moulding.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss a series of

'Principles of Masonic Education and Progress'

as formulated by Wor Bro Graham Painton.

The discussion started with Responsibilities, considered the Principles to be maintained, touched on the acceptance of a candidate into Freemasonry and explored the progress of a 'new' Mason through the degrees and the offices of a lodge.

Vigorous discussion characterized the attendees' approach to the subject.

Among the tentative findings were:

Because of the relative lack of experience of many Worshipful Masters it was deemed the responsibility of a WM to manage the education and progress of candidates with the assistance of LEOs and DEOs. etc. It was not the responsibility of the WM to do all the 'hands on' education and progress appraisals.

Systems involving detailed record keeping were likely to fail because lodges have to rely on voluntary labour – an increasingly scarce commodity.

In principle a lodge program should incorporate a balance of degree work, education, and events of an original and compelling nature.

Vetting of a potential candidate should emphasize the demonstration that he is proficient enough in English to absorb, understand and apply the philosophical concept of Freemasonry.

In exploring the progress of a Mason through the Degrees and the offices of a lodge the meeting considered:

That Maguire's chapter "The idealism of Freemasonry' (The History of Freemasonry in the UGL of NSW, Volume 2, pages 651 thru 655) should be read and understood by all members of the jurisdiction.

Every Mason needs to be able to understand the ritual - not just learn it by rote. In fact the meeting felt that a cultural change was needed with a return to past standards albeit not every past detail as relative priorities have changed over the years.

In summary we felt that there were no short term solutions and that if we attempted to overload the Lodge Management structure we would generate resistance with a resulting demotivation of those people whom we wish to bring about change within the individual lodges.

We felt that young candidates were more attracted by idealism than their forebears who tended to follow the footsteps of their fathers and elder relatives.

We considered that there was a need to demonstrate excellence to our peers so as to sow the seeds of change.

In conclusion, the following comments were made :

"We cannot compel the brethren to adopt any changes. We are a voluntary organization. We must ensure that the Mentoring System will help achieve change and we must give the new system time to have an effect.

We do need to get back to basics and stem the 30% loss of Masons in the first three years of their membership.

We do need to ascertain the real needs of our new candidates: and then meet those needs.

We have to stimulate an interest in the philosophic aspects of the craft and we have to seek out and attract candidates who are interested in such aspects."



The articles and information presented in the Pillars of Light, continue to be of inestimable value and I would wish you every success, to the benefit of all members of the Craft. -

Alain Forriere

GL of France, Bordeaux

I take this opportunity of congratulating you on the publication of the "Pillars" and let you know not only of the education I have received but also the pleasure and relaxation I have enjoyed while browsing through the past copies, made available on the site of your Grand Lodge -

An avid reader

from the North Coast

This excellent publication is read each month with great pleasure by myself and then handed on to my brother who derives just as much pleasure from the instructive articles you publish. He actually inquires about joining

Gordon B. Stanwick ,

QLD.

...May I suggest you increase the number of pages of the Pillars of Light. It shouldn't really be a problem, I hope. By doing so, you will be able to include more of your valuable material. Masonic publications like yours are very, very few and constantly attract more readers. But with that, the " Pillars of Light " undertakes the major responsibility to provide more subjects, even wider perspectives. We had a debate in lodge on your article on the *Essenes* by Bro. GH Levenston. Rarely have we found so much information provided so clearly in such a reduced space. Continue to achieve your goals. You are in the right direction, Brother.

- J. Akehurst - PM

(N.B. - Only lack of space prevented us from including all the mail received.)



Enlightened Pillars of the Grand Librarian

Disappointed in Masonry, my Brother?

Do you remember that you once promised "to make some daily progress in Freemasonry?" Failure to keep that promise may explain the fact that you find Freemasonry growing stale and the Lodge less attractive than in former years.

You should not blame your Freemasonry for this – rather you must place the blame where it rightly belongs – **BLAME YOUR-SELF!** Are you making any attempt to keep the promise you made as an E.A.? A more intelligent grasp of what really takes place in the Lodge will assure a clearer understanding of the hidden truths, dramatized there before your eyes.

There is no such thing as standing still in Masonry – you are either going forward or backward. Remember that Freemasons are not born, but made, and sometimes the material is so poor that it is impossible to work it into Freemasonry. If you do not care to be interested and refuse to follow the pattern, all the Masonic powers cannot brighten you. You will grow rusty, and the more rust that accumulates, the worse off you become – and you then cease to be a credit to Freemasonry and yourself. If your Masonic effort is going to mean anything, then Masonry must mean something to you.

If you do not want to be disappointed with Freemasonry, be faithful to it, and thus, faithful to the best interests of mankind.

Masonry is useful to all men. It will be useful to you just in proportion to the extent to which you appreciate it. Learn first of all (if you have not already done so) that it requires that you act earnestly and actively for the benefit of your Brethren, your country and mankind.

Every Lodge is on the lookout for eager, sincere workers. No Lodge has ever had too many, nor has it failed to recognize the merit and ability of a real worker.

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"St. George's Banner" newsletter)

Daily advancement in Masonic Knowledge

What exactly does this mean? Surely not only learning the ritual, attending a Lodge of Instruction, or the perfection of working the ritual.

Important as these are, they form but a part of Masonic Knowledge. What then is Masonic Knowledge? It is something that blossoms very deep within a Brother.

Masonic Knowledge is one of the secrets of Masonry, but not a secret that can be transmitted. For such a secret is one of emotion or understanding, tolerance, or Brotherly Love. How can something that is purely abstract and personal be communicated, in order that another person may appreciate its full value and meaning? Such a thing is impossible to communicate and must, therefore, remain a secret. And the only way to knowledge of such a secret is the endeavour to make a daily advance in Masonic Knowledge by nurturing the seeds that were implanted in our hearts when we were initiated. Open the ritual at any page, pick any sentence and think about it. Think about it for a long time. For example, we have pledged ourselves to maintain and uphold the 5POF. Some of us know them by heart and can recite them with feeling and meaning. But do we fully understand them? Understand them in a broad sense?

There are untold secrets that we could and should learn from just a few words of the ritual. When standing in the NE part in the Lodge and were asked to be ready to help a Brother in distressed circumstances... We will all remember that 'peculiar moment' But do we understand and appreciate just what we ourselves symbolically undertook to do? A Brother might be in distressed circumstances yet be far from being poor.

This is but another point worthy of serious thought, and perhaps after some thought and contemplation, we shall then know the Masonic secret symbolized in the NE part of the Lodge.

The greatest secrets and mysteries cannot be communicated to us. We must search for them ourselves, and in searching make a "Daily Advance in Masonic Knowledge".

(From the Research Lodge of Otago No. 161 – New Zealand)

We need you !!!

Do you have a Stand and an Opinion?

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

Then come and join in our Study Circle.

Call the Grand Librarian, (02) 9284 2825

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