



Pillars of Light



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Editorial

During my visit to Europe and the Middle East, last month, I had the opportunity to meet some distinguished dignitaries of the National Grand Lodge of Romania and to attend two very interesting Lodge meetings. I was amazed to find out that in Romania, some brethren read our "Pillars of Light" regularly.

The highlight was of course, the reception given to me by MW Bro Eugen O. Chirovici, the young, charismatic Grand Master of this dignified and active Grand Lodge. Our exchange proved the two Grand Lodges have for each other.



It revealed to me, the dedication, to the Order and the ever-increasing zeal manifested in every aspect of Romanian Masonry. It re-emerged to light, after 50 years of dark Communist oppression, to celebrate 125 years of Masonic tradition. Modern Masonic history of Romania was not entirely unknown to me, as I knew of my grandfather who was among the creators of a German Lodge in Bucharest, back in 1910 and edited a Masonic paper "Licht" (Light), and of course of my father, whose initiation ring, inscribed 1922, I wear. I remember the years of my childhood when in 1942, during the Nazi-German occupation, my parents spent nights in our cellar, burning my fathers' entire Masonic Library, to save our lives. I remember, after the war, when for a short period of time, Freemasonry was "tolerated" before being prohibited again - for the next almost five decades.

I was initiated in Israel, in my father's Lodge, the only Romanian speaking Lodge in the world, using a Romanian Ritual; I was Installed in the Chair of this Lodge, long before the Ceausescu Regime came to an end, more than ten years before the Light of Freemasonry was rekindled in the Carpathian land of my ancestors. This was my first visit to Bucharest, after tens of years, and I avidly looked after the remains of years past, recognized the house I left 60 years ago, rediscovered the old places, the school, the tombs of my grandparents in the old cemetery invaded and covered by vegetation.

But what impressed me most, was not the kitschy, extravagant Palace constructed by Ceausescu, the second largest building in the world, after the Pentagon; it was just the unique, warm feeling of being amongst Brethren, Illuminated Brethren, penetrated by the same divine inspiration and feeling of brotherhood, that is our heritage. I found the brightness of their Light, the result of profound and persisting study of our Craft. The Light of knowledge and the spiritual enlightenment acquired in so short a time, with such great effort. I thank them all for a Lesson in Freemasonry.

J.V. Haffner

The expectations of a Candidate

What does he expect from Freemasonry?

What may Freemasonry expect from him?

These are two of the first three questions – according to the ritual practised on the continent – which are put in writing to the candidate in the Chamber of Meditation or as it is called by the French, the Chamber of Reflection, that is before the Candidate's admittance in the Lodge. It is there, in the darkened room, that the candidate is unintentionally laying the first seed for a contravention of his obligation.

Under these conditions, the applicant has little space on the sheet of paper provided, little light to see and very little time to think, though this period in the darkened room should present him with the rare opportunity for meditation and introspection. Full of hope and aided by his natural human curiosity, the candidate, left on his own in the darkened room tries to answer the questions as impressively as possible and unfortunately sometimes exaggerates his promises, knowing very little about the obligations and privileges of the craft and nothing about our regulations and ancient charges.

At this stage the candidate does not yet know the brethren of his new Lodge except his proposer, seconder and the Master, thus making it difficult for him, due to lack of explanations, comments and illustrations to give a judicious reply.

To my knowledge the answers to the first question "What do you expect of Freemasonry?" given in a state of inner turmoil, are almost always identical, as if they have no bearing on the individual demands, illusions, dreams and imaginations of each applicant requesting permission to enter the Temple.

The same applies to the second question: "What may Freemasonry expect from you?" The answers given to this question generally state that the candidate IDENTIFIES HIMSELF with those objects of Freemasonry known to him and that he promises to cooperate in furthering these ideals. In this case we should be aware that an identification with our goals and ideals : entering into brotherly relationships, mainly depends on age, education, mentality, character, the new brother's ability to form such a relationship and to adapt himself, as well, for active cooperation.

But is this dependence one-sided only? Doesn't the Lodge also have its duties and obligations towards the newly initiated brother?

The responsibility for a successful absorption of a new brother into the craft rests mainly on the lodge and the brethren themselves.

Shouldn't these questions be also addressed to the Lodge and to the brethren? Under no circumstances should we refrain from asking the brethren: what can the Lodge give the Candidate, respectively, what may the candidate expect from the individual brethren ?

Have we ever posed this question to ourselves? Maybe that doing so we shall find a reason for the many disappointments, dissatisfactions and even resignations.

(cont. next issue)



Footprints on the Sands of TIME

I wanted to be a Librarian in our Grand Lodge Library, just because it would give me the opportunity to browse through old Masonic books and magazines, something I longed for all my life. Unfortunately, I found out that there is very little time left for pleasant reading, if at all...

But, on reading through Masonic magazines of the 1700 and 1800, in articles or chapters describing the activities of the Brethren and their Lodges, I could not, but be impressed as we entered the 21st Century, by the steady, continuous passage of time.

TIME ! Everyone is aware of that little word – Time. It sums up one of the greatest mysteries of all. Time is immeasurable, inexplicable, unrestrainable, and unknown. It is and it is not. It passes away and it lives again. It has no '*beginning of years or length of days*'. It is both the cradle and the grave of man's personal existence. When we come to think of it, there is nothing more mysterious, more solemn, more full of marvel than –TIME.

TIME has witnessed the dawn of history, the rise of Dynasties, the development of peoples and languages such as Hebrew and Greek. It has watched the rise of the Roman Empire and looked down on its marching legions, revolutions and wars; the Dark Ages, followed by the influence of the Renaissance, Art, Civilization, Religion. It has seen the rise of kingdoms and Empires, and has seen them fade away.

TIME concerns each and every one of us, individually. The years pass: It seems that but yesterday we were young and full of vigour, looking forward to the journey of life. And then, all too quickly, we find ourselves looking back as in a dream, on the multitude of memories - the loving friends no longer with us, the joys and sorrows, the successes and failures.

We realize that we are moving on to the great ETERNITY of our moral being, which lies, somewhere beyond the "silent sea" And yet, as TIME passes, seemingly at an ever increasing speed, as Freemasons we will always realize that the principles of the Order : TRUTH, JUSTICE, CHARITY (though sometimes dimmed) will outlive the material changes of every era. I become more and more convinced that it is not the TIME we live but what we can Masonically achieve during this, our TIME is the most important ingredient of the Gift of Time that we have received.

What I mean is the Masonically employed TIME used to achieve the Masonic percept's and to leave behind us a Masonic Mark of our TIME. That is what is important .

I am reminded of some lines found in an old Masonic Magazine, written almost 90 years ago :

Lives of great men remind us
We can make our lives sublime.
And departing, leave behind us,
Footprints on the Sands of Time.

It is signed : Wor Bro H.J. Foreman Sec. of L.: Woollahra—1920

The New Working Tools

The name has more than one connotation and I often wonder , as I listen to our beautiful Rituals on Conferral of Degrees, if we do not accept the phrase "Working Tools" in too restricted a sense.

To me the working tools exemplified in our work are but symbolical of all working tools – all those working tools that can and must be utilized by us in chiselling into character the rough ash-lars that we all are.

And as no two ash-lars are alike, different tools should be used to make them perfect.

Not all blocks of rough stone can be of fine Italian marble, responsive to the slightest touch of the trained hand of the Craftsman.

Some of us are of pretty tough, resisting material, and must be given individual treatment by whatever means we find at hand.

Each can name a few working tools that lie at hand, ready for use...

A smile, is one that comes to my own mind and smiling becomes a habit.

Too many of us prevent the development of a full Masonic Character by an attitude of habitual suspicion of our brethren and their motives, often resulting in an ingrown moodiness.

We become known as such....

Let's adopt, all of us who tend this way, the smile as a personal working tool.

We'll soon find how powerfully it wins the hearts of others and especially we'll discover how it reflects in the Ashlar that we try to fashion...

Getting the other guy's point of view is another working tool that should be in every workman's cabinet .

Criticism of another , without putting yourself in his shoes, works more havoc on the critic than on the criticized.

This is another of these ingrown things and when the habit is thrown out the window, replaced by a willingness to look through the other fellow's bi-focals – then a new beauty will begin to appear in your own character.

By taking time out, you can make for yourself a long list of working tools that you can, with profit to yourself, add to your tool chest. And having put them there, take them right out again as often as needed and put them to work.....





Zedekiah's Cave – King Solomon's Quarries

According to a Masonic legend, some eighty thousand workers hewed the stones for the Temple from this cave. In fact the stone structure in this cave is identical with that of the stone remnants preserved from the era of King Solomon in the Wall.

For hundreds of years the cave was blocked. It is believed that it was blocked during the time of the Crusades out of fear that defence positions would be taken up there. It was by pure chance, that, while on a walk with his dog, near the Northern Wall, an American Brother, Archaeologist, discovered the Cave. The dog dug into the hillside and an opening was thus revealed. The Brother went into the opening with lighted candles and observed a spacious cave with a huge curved ceiling supported by numerous pillars. Hebrew and Arabic writings, difficult to decipher were discovered on the walls of the cave.

Many legends circulated concerning the cave – among others, that people entered the cave and never came out again. The authorities closed the entrance in about 1879, thus barring any further admittance.

Legends and beliefs abound to the effect that somewhere deep down in the cave treasures of the holy utensils and instruments of the Temple are to be found, having been hidden there at the time by the Priests, when the Roman Legions, led by Titus, placed Jerusalem under siege.

During the British mandate, and up to 1949, large chunks of stone were quarried from the rock in the cave and dispatched by sea to various countries throughout the world to be used as foundation stones for newly erected Masonic Buildings.

After the 6 days War (1968) when control over the area changed hands, the cave was reopened to the public by the Israeli Authority. Lighting was installed in the cave and stone steps were built. In one of the recesses in the far corner of the second hall, water issuing from a small spring situated in the high roof of the cave, keeps dripping into a small pool below. The legend says that these drops of water are the "tears of King Zedekiah", which he shed while escaping from the Casdites.

Zedekiah awakens hidden thoughts in the hearts of Freemasons. Masonic Rituals in various degrees were carried out there. King Solomon and the Temple in Jerusalem are revered symbols to all Freemasons throughout the world, irrespective of creed, colour or race.

Zedekiah's Cave is veiled in legends and respectful feelings and Masons, from all over the World gather in the cave to carry out their Masonic work and rituals in a very special atmosphere in the spirit of peace and fraternity to humanity.

I was advanced to the Mark Mason degree, in this cave and the Ceremony remains deeply embedded in my memory.

J.V.H.



We ever so often hear about the Tenets of Freemasonry and they are always just enumerated. Can you elaborate on the subject please?

In my view, the principal Tenets upon which our order is founded may be defined thus:

Brotherly Love is a state of feeling which arises from recognition of the attractive qualities of a Masonic brother, a disposition to judge hopefully of men and their actions and to make allowance for their shortcomings. All this is irrespective of the wealth or of the status of a brother's vocations.

Relief is the alleviation or lessening of some course of distress or anxiety, the deliverance from what is burdensome. Relief includes monetary benevolence but only to the extent that a brother's circumstance in life may fairly warrant, so that there may be no detriment to his wife or family. When I think of benevolence I am mindful of the Masonic charitable agencies that give help when and where it is needed. Like the Royal Freemasons' Benevolent Institution of NSW, the Masonic Youth Welfare Fund of NSW & ACT, and The Frank Whiddon Masonic Homes of New South Wales etc.

Truth has two modern meanings and one older interpretation.

To non-Masons, Truth means (1) something that is real, or (2) something that conforms with fact or that is correct. But Masonically, Truth has an older meaning, namely: the quality of being faithful to a principle, a course etc., e.g. I am true to the Tenets of Masonry. Thus, in a Masonic sense, Truth means not only being faithful to a principle but also fidelity, loyalty and steadfastness to all that is morally right.

Such is how I define the principal Tenets upon which our Craft is founded.

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What is meant by a "Stupid Atheist" or "Irreligious Libertine"

Previous to Anderson's time all the Old Charges were distinctly religious in character. They clearly enjoined that Masons be true to God and holy Church, and that they were to use no error or heresy.

Masonry now does not lay down any hard and fast rule as to what particular religious dogma is acknowledged by the candidate, nor does it require a belief in the Divine Authority of the Scriptures. One can define a libertine as one who lives without the restraint of conscience, licentiously violating the moral law, and paying no regard to the precepts of religion – a living at large without regard to the Divine will.

Libertinism again has been defined as a false liberty of belief and manners, which will have no other dependence but on particular fancy and passion, living at large or according to a person's inclination without regard to the Divine laws.

The term "Atheist" includes "Agnostic". It is on record that a brother under a foreign constitution was charged, tried, and disciplined for being an Agnostic. From this finding of his lodge he appealed. He explained that he was an Agnostic only in the sense of the word as used by Huxley, who, he said, defined the word Agnostic to be "one who is honest enough to admit that he does not know what, under the present condition of human knowledge, is impossible to be known." The brother also stated his belief in God, that God's will had been revealed, and that he would punish vice and reward virtue, and that he had no contempt of God or religion. However, the decision of the lodge was upheld and the brother was suspended.

Whether other lodges would be quiet as strict as that is a moot point, but the decision goes to show that masonry is not inclined to open her doors to those whose faith in God is lukewarm or uncertain. Such persons must to some extent be libertines.

I am not sure I understand the real sense of "Free Born". What does it really mean?

This term has not the same significance now as it had in the days of slavery. Indeed the word "born" is rarely meant today as it was originally.

When we read the expression as it should be read: "Are you free...?", then some explanation of the word "Free" is perhaps necessary.

A man may, in the bad old days, have been born in prison. In that case he was not free born, but the English Constitution of 1847 conceded that if a man be free, though he may not have been free born, he is eligible to be made a Mason. The term "free" implies that the Candidate is master of his own actions, that he is under no civil restraint, that he is not temporarily or permanently deprived of his freedom of will or his liberty, and as such is understood and defined by all Grand Lodges.

What is or who were the "Menatzhim"?

A very unfamiliar word, sometimes spelt differently to sound similarly. It is a Hebrew word used for Conductors (as in Orchestra Conductor). In the Ritual as in the Scriptures, it refers to prefects or overseers at the building of the Temple, and are referred to in connection with the death of Hiram. A Study of 1 Kings V.15 finds mention of them, Adoniram, we are there informed, being their leader. The word occurs in the traditional History as narrated in the Sublime Degree.

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