

**TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH
F. & A. M.
ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS**



2018—GARRISON

**2018 ANNUAL PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH
F. & A. M.**

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EDITORIAL NOTE: The Forum Section

The Forum Section of the Proceedings is included for the exchange of opinions and comments on matters of Tennessee Freemasonry or on the contents of the Proceedings. We invite your opinions and comments and will include them in the Annual Proceedings of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

Commentaries should be type written and titled and suitable for correction using standard Microsoft Word Processing. All comments should have the author's name and Lodge attached. They can be sent electronically to the Secretary at the following email address:

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The Editorial Committee

GUIDELINES FOR AUTHORS:

Articles submitted for publication in the *Tennessee Lodge of Research Annual Proceedings* should be type written in Microsoft Word or a compatible program. Margins should be 1 inch on the left, right, top, and bottom. Page numbers should be centered at the bottom without embellishments.

The entire document should be in 12 point Times New Roman font, including the title, which should be centered at the top of the page in **Bold**. The **By** Line should be centered and should contain the author's full **Name**.

All quoted or paraphrased material should be cited parenthetically, and all sources should be listed on a Works Cited page. Parenthetical citations, notes, and Works Cited should follow the guidelines found in *MLA Handbook, 8th edition*. An overview of general MLA guidelines may be found online at the "MLA Formatting and Style Guide" web page of Purdue University's Writing Lab:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/.

The Editorial Committee

CRAFT OR CRAFTY?

By
Lorne Norman Urquhart

Brother Urquhart is a member of Corinthian Lodge No. 63, Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia, Canada, and is also a member of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.



*“Oh what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive.”*

--Brother Sir Walter Scott

Through the interpretations of the ancient hieroglyphs found painted on the stone interior of the Great Pyramid of Giza, these knowledgeable and wise ancient people promoted the same principles that we find today in our Masonic teachings.

Freemasonry is said to be a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. For most Masons today, these words hold little value in the way of curious intellectual pursuit. This attitude is however not confined to just these words alone but Masonic education in general. Simply put, the *Craft* or should I say, most of the *Craft's* membership, no longer practice the deeper hidden elements so necessary in improving their positive mental development. Particularly troublesome is that many Brethren are not even aware of the *Craft's* concept of self-improvement, let alone how to apply it to their daily lives. I would suggest this is not their fault, however, it does bring into question why we, as responsible Masons, continue to *talk the talk!* Many have suggested that because our true *reason for being* has been compromised some time in our past and has gone unchecked for so long, that the *Craft* has morphed into something quite different. It has also been suggested by those who know the difference, that the loss of this practice has deemed the *Craft* dysfunctional! When in discussion with some Brethren and suggesting a return to our true *reason for being* they comment not only on how difficult this would be but feel strongly that most of the membership would not be in favor of such a move. In other words, Brethren, we mentally reside in a comparable region of outer space best described as the *event horizon*, a theoretical boundary around a black hole beyond which no light can escape! Many of our *Special Brethren*, those who understand our plight, generally refer to the status of present-day Freemasonry as *fake!* Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as saying, “Any fool can make history, but it takes a genius to write it.”

Brethren, I am not a genius, nor will I attempt to offer a historical account on how, when, and where this beautiful system that we have come to know and love as Freemasonry began to unravel, for this is not the focus of this paper.

To *not* recognize the *Craft(y)** we know today as but a mere shadow of its former self is certainly telling of the intellectual/Masonic educational level of our membership. In my humble opinion, based on many years of research and study I have concluded there are many reasons why this *erosion* has taken place, the least of which I believe to be the lack of *proper* leadership.

Imagine, that at some point in your profane life you acquired enough positive information regarding the *Craft* that you were desirous of petitioning for membership. Shortly after being raised a Master Mason, you found yourself accepting positions in your Lodge because you thought you were doing the *right* thing. As time goes by, your curiosity regarding that which is hidden in symbology remains ever so elusive. Confronting Brethren of rank, you ask questions so that you may grow intellectually but receive vague, unsatisfactory answers. You may even have been assigned a mentor, but other than lodge protocol and some Masonic history, you soon realize that this Brother lacks intellectually motivated knowledge as well. Much has been written, establishing without a doubt that ignorance is our enemy, yet lodges offer little to no Masonic education and when it does, it is but charitably tolerated. Soon you begin to ask yourself why you continue to *belong* to an organization that is being misrepresented! As your interest fades, you back away from lodge activities and like so many others who have gone this way before you . . . you simply fall silently from the rolls. You will often hear that these Brethren have fallen away due to old age or even ill health when the true reasons are that lodge does not offer them anything in the way of intellectual stimulation. Oddly enough, even when those in leadership positions are advised that Masonic education is wanting, there is little to no initiative taken to fully address these needs! Whether it is a lack of understanding, lack of open mindedness or simply the lack of interest that is required in broadening one's intellectual horizons, it is but a reflection of their own prejudices!

Reduction in our numbers is not our biggest challenge, however, it is what our numbers are quickly and programmatically becoming as a result of perpetuating the misinterpretation of *our reason for being*. The ongoing loss of our *Special Brethren* is akin to the knowledgeable stonemasons of ancient times gradually laying aside their working tools without teaching their *Craft* to those who would follow in their footsteps! One must consider that this may have indeed been another reason that led to their demise.

Intellectual health is so necessary in understanding what Freemasonry offers today, however; it is not being exploited in the true sense of its intended purpose. To understand "that which is hidden" requires not only the right attitude but the strength of character necessary in promoting our passion and fascination for education. For those who close their minds to esoteric philosophy, including the nature of the cosmos, cheat themselves of developing a higher consciousness. Those wishing to expand their minds but do not know where to begin, looking inward will serve as their passport to that "foreign country."

With the continuing decline of those *Special Brethren* who understand the *true* intent of our beloved *Craft* and how it is realized, so it goes that *Crafty* masonry continues to grow like weeds in a pristine garden, destroying that which should be our legacy!

For the few who know in their hearts what a tremendous gift the teachings of Freemasonry offer, you are indeed blessed. For the rest we can only hope that some will find their way.

Brethren, the following is a short list of some words used in Freemasonry that should spark one's interest in understanding *our reason for being*.

Adherence: Means *being faithful to* or sticking to your obligation as a Freemason to always be relentless in the search for Truth.

Alelity: Means to be devoted enthusiastically in fulfilling one's promises of searching for, and comprehending, Truth.

Aquaria: A word used in "The Message of Aquaria" which offers an explanation and connection with regards to the purpose of the Craft in the life process of perfecting one's *inner self*.

Arcane: Means understood by only a few.

Architect: One who designs, and in many cases, also supervises the building of structures. As the master stonemason of the Middle Ages drew his designs upon his trestle-board and supervised the work of bringing these magnificent stone structures to fruition, the Master of a Speculative Lodge, assuming the position of architect and taking his direction from the VSL, provides the proper masonic instructive education necessary for the Brethren to build their spiritual temples and in doing so become better men than they were before being initiated.

Ascend: Means to rise, to experience the understanding of the Masonic search for *Truth*.

Aspirant: Means seeker of knowledge.

Aspirant's philosophy: To study proper behavior and the search for wisdom.

***Craft**: Meaning skillful, cunning. A word that is often used to describe the meaning of the symbolism taught as a result of the study of masonic ritual; a lodge that confers the first three Degrees is referred to as a Craft Lodge.

***Crafty**: Defined in the English Oxford Living Dictionaries as “skill used in deceiving others.”

So Mote It Be!

Brother Urquhart is a charter member of the Nova Scotia Masonic Study Group—“The Intelligent Alternative to Masonic Ignorance”; meets monthly except for June, July and August for the purpose of disseminating Masonic knowledge not available at the lodge level.

CONTRAST OF FREEMASONRY AND ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

By
Robert Eugene Hart, 32° KCCH

Brother Hart is a Past Master of Mill Creek Lodge No. 775 in Nolensville and a Life Member of the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

This topic has been selected because both of these entities are spiritually based and have several similar attributes; however, the growth of these organizations deserves examination as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) has been prolific while Freemasonry has become somewhat stagnant in recent years. There are a number of Freemasons who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous, but these organizations are not feeders to one another. Both entities utilize spiritual principles as the basis for their creation, substance, and continuation. Freemasonry was first formally organized in England in the early 1700s and Alcoholics Anonymous was created June 10, 1935 in Akron, Ohio, USA. Although these dates give a point in time for the human to put his mark on, their substance has been present since the creation of mankind. There have been alcoholics since man first crushed grapes and man has attempted to capture the essence of spirituality since his first realization of God's presence. Freemasonry is deemed by many to be a derivative from actual guild groups at King Solomon's Temple, possibly evolving into the Essenes, Knights Templars, and secret esoteric groups possessing divine, scientific, and geometric knowledge. AA sprang out of a group known as the Oxford Group which originated from Christian religions. Prior to the Oxford Group, there was no specifically known entity that treated alcoholics.

Most Masons are not alcoholics; therefore, the information focus is being directed to AA. In general statistics, about 1 in 10 have a problem with alcohol consumption. There are numerous definitions of an alcoholic. For purposes of this presentation, if alcohol consumption creates a problem for one's vocational, personal, marital, financial, social, or spiritual life on a continual basis, then one is an alcoholic. In AA, an alcoholic is self-proclaimed. In the AA program, only the individual can make the judgment that he is an alcoholic. Health care professionals diagnose cases as acute or chronic when a person is admitted to a health care facility because of intoxication. Acute alcoholism is the identification of a patient's specific intoxication. When a patient has been repeatedly hospitalized for alcoholism, he is referred to as a chronic alcoholic. Alcoholism was proclaimed a disease by The American Medical Association in 1944. This was a very subjective decision, but there were enough cases of individuals who were not able to cease drinking of their own will after taking the first drink to justify making this proclamation. AA provided the AMA with numerous cases of alcoholics, some of whom never ceased drinking. These were taken into consideration by the AMA in making the disease determination.

An initial contrast with Masonry is the way **membership** is attained. In Masonry, a petition is filed by an applicant for membership, the lodge investigates the applicant and, if found worthy, he is elected by a unanimous secret ballot. In AA, a person who is looking for a solution to his drinking problem will attend a meeting and make such a proclamation that he is an alcoholic. This is sufficient for the group to deem him a member. However, verification of membership may prove problematic. In AA, the person usually gives his first name and last initial as identification. Masonry documents names, addresses, various dates, and possibly even criminal history. The "**common thread**" is that both are seeking affiliation of an organization that will "**improve their lives.**"

Another contrast is the question of the **secrecy** of both organizations. Masonic Lodges are much more public than AA facilities. The secrecy in Masonry lies in the content of the degrees. The secrecy in AA lies within the individual not identifying himself as a member of AA. AA clubhouses generally have a name such as Serenity House, or another name that lends itself to a positive atmosphere. You may see logos or the letters AA, but it is not generally spelled out.

The organization of the two entities is quite different. Both are considered to be not for profit entities as defined by the Internal Revenue Service of the USA. The details of these tax differences are not discussed in this presentation. Masonry has Grand Lodges that have subordinate lodges which are created and controlled by the Grand Lodge. They function financially through a dues structure assessed to members and lodges. AA is quite unique in its structure in that each AA group is autonomous. There are no dues or fees in AA. A hat is passed and generally a sober member will put in one or two dollars. This is not a requirement. Neither entity accepts contributions from outside enterprises. Although AA groups are autonomous, they generally follow the Twelve Traditions which were laid by the founders. In general, AA groups will not accept more than \$2,000 from an individual member of AA.

The co-founders of AA were Bill Wilson, a stockbroker from New York City, and Bob Smith, M.D., surgeon from Akron, Ohio. Bill Wilson was introduced to the Oxford Group in 1933 to help him with his chronic drinking problem. He was admitted to Towns Hospital in New York City in December 1934, where he experienced a spiritual experience of the room being filled with a white light, a vision of a mountaintop with winds enfolding him and the feeling God's presence declaring him free from the obsession to drink alcohol. December 11, 1934 was his last drink of alcohol. Bill studied the Oxford Group principles avidly in order to stay sober. One of those principles was the need to help other alcoholics. Bill went on a business trip to Akron, Ohio in May of 1935. Being alone in the lobby of the hotel, he glanced over at the bar which had an inviting appearance. Sensing his weakness, he thought about the option of helping another alcoholic. After studying a directory of churches and health institutions, he made some calls and was introduced to Dr. Bob Smith. Bill spent several days with Bob and explained his own dilemma with alcohol, his white light experience, and his connection with the Oxford Group. Dr. Bob was ready to try anything. He performed a scheduled surgery and had a couple of bottles of beer to steady his hands as he successfully completed the task. June 10, 1935 was his last drink. Thus, the date, later to be called the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is interesting to note that the Prohibition Act was in effect from January 17, 1920, to December 5, 1933.

The Oxford Group was a modern evangelical movement which flourished in the 1920's and early 30's, led by a one-time Lutheran minister, Dr. Frank Buchman. They put heavy emphasis on personal work of one member with another. The moral basis was absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love and practiced a type of confession they called "sharing" and making amends for harms done to others. They believed in their "quiet time," a meditation by groups and individuals alike seeking God's guidance. Their society saw the need to be strictly non-denominational. Bill and Dr. Bob became very active in Oxford Group practices of morning meditations and reading of the Bible. Essential passages were from the Sermon on the Mount, the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, and the Book of James. An associate compared their relationship as two brothers who loved and trusted each other. Both men were from Vermont, political conservatives, Bill opposed government intervention in business, Bob anticipated a dark future for doctors in an impending age of socialized medicine, they were both kind, compassionate, and generous in sharing what they had. Both were swayed toward spiritism and extrasensory phenomena. Both men were highly intelligent, had simple tastes, were good listeners, and disliked any pretense or phoniness. In contrast to each other, Dr. Bob was like a fly on the wall at meetings while Bill loved the limelight. Bill was a writer and a planner while Dr. Bob furnished ideas and sound judgment. The Oxford Group was drawn into public controversy because of a statement made by Dr. Buchman stating what it would mean to the world if Hitler surrendered to God. The New York World Telegram charged that he was pro-Nazi. Because of this controversy, Oxford University requested the group to change its name. This was done and now the group's name is Moral Rearmament (MRA). It was moving from small intimate groups to large gatherings. The leaders of the Oxford Group were not enthused by the focus Bill and Bob were putting on alcoholics.

Bill Wilson believed that alcoholics needed to work with their own kind because recovery from this illness is a life-or-death matter. This caused him to abandon the Oxford Group; although, he gave them credit for saving his life. He submitted a detailed letter to a member stating specific reasons for leaving the group. These consisted of eliminating "aggressive evangelism," eliminating excessive personal publicity, eliminating the use of the word "absolute" in front of principles (honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love), and eliminating any form of coercion. Instead, Wilson suggested a new group needed to be formed devoid of any religious adherence, which instead would emphasize spiritual preparation with guidance, tolerance and love, even allowing the atheist to deny God while reporting on how they have been helped in other ways.

Visions of grandeur were on the horizon. Bill could see paid missionaries, special hospitals, publishing literature, and solicitation of millions of dollars. Dr. Bob tried to temper Bill's enthusiasm. Bill listened to Bob who was 15 years his senior. They did contact John D. Rockefeller Jr. who set up a meeting. A small amount of money was given for their endeavors. Rockefeller was impressed with their goal but pointed out a financial truth. If this thing is going to work, you will have to make it happen of your own accord. This created AA's tradition of self-support. It also streamlined their mission not to be of the medical profession.

In 1937, AA had about 40 cases of alcoholics who had recovered through the principles laid out by the Oxford Group and the intimate meetings with other alcoholics. Small groups were growing. At first the growth was somewhat better in the Akron area than in New York City. Now that Bill Wilson had gotten his feet planted back on earth, it was time to move forward with publication of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, referred to as "The Big Book." It was called this due to the

shortage of money—thicker paper was cheaper than the thinner paper used in most newly published books.

Energy was thrust into this endeavor; as chapters were written, they were reviewed by other members of the Alcoholics Anonymous groups. Although it was a group effort, Bill Wilson had significant input. After the forward, the Doctor's Opinion was written by William Silkworth, M.D., the Medical Director of Towns Hospital where Bill Wilson had been admitted a number of times. Chapter 1 was Bill's story who served as an officer in World War I, started drinking in 1917, got married in 1918. Bill studied law at night, and got immensely involved in business in 1919. He was a tremendous salesman, vivid leader, investigator of businesses, and successful stockbroker whose alcohol consumption brought him to utter despair. Bill also wrote the next chapter which is: "There is a Solution." Because some newcomers were of an agnostic or atheistic nature, the chapter called "We Agnostics" was written. Although anyone with a desire to quit drinking was welcome in the program, the basic theme was we could not get sober without the power of God. Chapter 5 was "How It Works" which was heavy with Oxford Group Principles and ideals gleaned from Dr. William James, a famous psychologist, and Dr. Silkworth. There were six steps identified in the Oxford Group. Because truth is always sought, an open mind was kept about religious or spiritual views. Up through 2007, there has not been a case identified by AA of an individual who maintained sobriety without the use of a Higher Power. Due to the traditions which were accepted, AA will not argue the definition of what is more powerful than man. Thus "God as we understood him" was used to appease non-Christians. Bill knew that this book had to be powerful to reach all alcoholics and could have no loopholes. The steps were rewritten, and some new ones added. All of these were based on actual experience, not theoretical debate. Thus, the twelve steps were written and became a part of Chapter 5. A copy of these steps with a Biblical reference and Masonic reference is attached to this writing. Four other chapters were added, "Into Action," "Working with Others," "To Wives," "The Family Afterward," "To Employers," and "A Vision for You". The rest of the book was personal stories. The basic text was 164 pages, and the remainder of the Third Edition was 397 pages.

Now, what has all of this got to do with Freemasonry; especially those masons, the majority of whom are not alcoholics? These 12 steps are spiritually based and derived from the Holy Scriptures. Now there are well over 200 Twelve Step programs, each relating to a different calamity other than alcohol. Due to the apparent growth and success of Alcoholics Anonymous, Masons might want to examine the similarities they may have with AA to see if there is any avenue that might make Freemasonry more prolific. Obviously, the requirements are necessarily different. Is discrimination such as the exclusion of women and Prince Hall Masons an issue in Freemasonry? Certainly, AA had to deal with the issue of women and blacks? In the 30s and 40s, women were not generally going alone to places at night without being pegged "from the wrong side of the tracks.". At the same time, it was unusual for blacks to be gathering in small groups with whites. The co-founders were very concerned about these issues but made the case that anyone who had a desire to stop drinking was welcome.

In the search for Truth about oneself, the fourth step is crucial. It encompasses more than the identification of specific events (sins) in their lives, but the exact nature of their wrongs. Step 4 has the individual identify his resentments because eliminating these is necessary to keep the alcoholic from turning to the bottle. To arrive at the exact nature of his wrongs involves an analysis of the four basic human desires: the need for recognition, affection, new experience, and security. The imbalance of these desires can lead one to selfish behavior. What was going on with one before the wrong action took place? The depth to these steps has been identified in a later publication called the "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." A copy of the Twelve Traditions is attached with a notation contrasting Freemasonry's use of each tradition.

When this paper was being contemplated, the author, who is a mason, did not know that Dr. Bob Smith was a mason. Per the Grand Secretary of Vermont, he was a member of Passumpsic Lodge No. 27, Johnsbury, Vermont with EA 1-29-1903, FC 2-5-1903, and MM 2-12-1903. He was suspended for nonpayment of dues in April 1934, and reinstated September 23, 1942. He was in good standing at time of his death November 16, 1950.

AA is referred to by many as an ego reduction program. The anonymity is to protect the program rather than the individual. Bill Wilson turned down six honorary degrees from Ivy League Universities because he did not want to risk injury to AA. Traveling was somewhat difficult after AA became well known because someone from the press was always wanting to take his picture. Dr. Bob Smith could have well been published in Masonic literature by being a co-founder of AA. The AA program has grown to be in over a hundred countries and has an estimated population of four million.

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Dr. Robert Hemfelt and Dr. Richard Fowler

Thomas Nelson, Inc
Nashville, Tennessee

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Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age: A Brief History of A.A.

Copyright 1957.1985 by Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing, Inc. (now known as A.A. World Services, Inc.)

Alcoholic Anonymous, Third Edition.

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PASS IT ON The story of Bill Wilson and how the A.A. message reached the world by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., New York, N.Y. Copyright 1984

TWELVE STEPS and TWELVE TRADITIONS

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.
New York, N.Y. Copyright 1952.1953.1981

The *MESSENGER* Middle Tennessee Central Office
Intergroup Nashville, TN 37211

Twenty-Four Hours a Day

HAZELDEN

Copyright 1975, Hazelden Foundation

First published 1954, Revised edition 1975

As Bill Sees It (Formerly *The AA Way of Life*)

Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.,
New York, NY Copyright 1967

The Power of Positive Thinking

By Normal Vincent Peale

Prentice-Hall, Inc.,

New York Copyright 1952

Twelve Steps

- 1 Admitted we were powerless over alcohol and that our lives had become unmanageable.
- Bible Yes, I know that nothing good lives in me. I mean nothing good lives in the part of me that is earthly and sinful. I want to do the things that are good, but I do not do them. I do not do the good things I want to do but I do the bad things I do not want to do. So, if I do things I do not want to do, then I am not the one doing them. It is sin living in me that does these things. Romans 7:18-20
- Masonic What came ye here to do? To learn to subdue our passions and improve ourselves in Masonry. The compasses teach us to limit our desires in every station.
- 2 Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- Bible I have come as light unto the world so that whoever believes in me would not stay in darkness. John 12:46
- Masonic Why did you leave the West and travel toward the East?
- 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
- Bible You mean that you have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God. It was not the result of your own efforts, so you cannot brag about it. God has made us what we are. Ephesians 2: 8
- Masonic As a rational and accountable human being in Whom do you put your trust?
- 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- Bible If anyone thinks he is important when he really is not, he is only fooling himself. Each person should judge his own actions and not compare himself with others. Then he can be proud for what he himself has done. Each person must be responsible for himself. Galatians 6:3-5
- Masonic The common gavel is an instrument made use of by speculative masons for the purpose of divesting our minds and consciences of the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting us as living stones for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
- 5 Admitted to God, ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- Bible Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so God can heal you. When a believing person prays great things happen. James 5:16
- Masonic Truth is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue. Honesty and plain dealing distinguish us
- 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- Bible So put out of your life every evil thing and every kind of wrong. Then in gentleness accept God's teaching that is planted in your hearts which can save you. James 1:21
- Masonic Freemasonry is a beautiful system of morality. Are you willing to proceed?

- 7 Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
- Bible But God gives us even more grace, as the Scripture says, God is against the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. James 4:6
- Masonic Humility is threaded throughout all the masonic bodies.
- 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- Bible Brothers and sisters, do not tell evil lies about each other. If you speak against your fellow believers or judge them, you are judging and speaking against the law they follow. And when you are judging the law, you are no longer a follower of the law. You have become a judge. God is the only Lawmaker and Judge. He is the only One who can save and destroy. So it is not right for you to judge your neighbor. James 4:11-12
- Masonic Duties you are charged to perform. To your neighbor, by doing unto him what, under similar circumstances, you would have him do unto you.
- 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- Bible But the wisdom that comes from God is first of all pure, then peaceful, gentle, and easy to please. The wisdom is always ready to help those who are troubled and to do good for others. It is always fair and honest. People who work for peace in a peaceful way plant a good crop of right living. James 3:17-18
- Masonic Let us here promise each other to forgive all wrongs or injuries that may have been inflicted upon us by any of the brethren of the Order, and to atone and make reparation for any wrong or injury that any of them may have endured at our hands.
- 10 Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- Bible A gentle answer will calm a person's anger, but an unkind answer will cause more anger. Wise people use knowledge when they speak, but fools pour out foolishness. Proverbs 15:1-2
- Masonic Let us be happy ourselves and endeavor to promote the happiness of others and improve in all that is good, amiable, and useful.

- 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out.
- Bible Do what God's teaching says. When you only listen and do nothing you are fooling yourselves. Those who hear God's teaching and do nothing are like people who look at themselves in a mirror. They see their faces and then go away and quickly forget what they looked like. But the truly happy people are those who carefully study God's perfect law that makes people free and they continue to study it. They do not forget what they heard but they obey what God's teaching says. Those who do this will be made happy. People who think they are religious but say things they should not say are just fooling themselves. Their religion is worth nothing. Religion that God accepts as pure and without fault is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence. James 1:22-27
- Masonic The square, level, and plumb teach us to regulate our actions by the plumb line of truth; to level our pride with the plane in God has designed us to move, and to square our conduct by the precepts of Holy Writ and the dictates of enlightened reason.
- 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
- Bible As Jesus was getting back into the boat, the man who was freed from the demons begged to go with him, but Jesus would not let him. He said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you." So the man left and began to tell the people and they were amazed. Mark 5: 18-20
- Masonic Show the Light to the world by our actions. What was I taught by the demand for a small coin or piece of metal?

Twelve Traditions

- 1 Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends on AA unity.
Masonic The common welfare and unity are absolute parallels; the personal crisis is not the focus.
- 2 For our group purpose there is one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscious. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
Masonic The leaders do govern, but promise not to make innovations in the body of Masonry.
- 3 The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
Masonic There are several requirements—a belief in God, no mercenary motives, must have an anonymous vote of acceptance
- 4 Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
Masonic Each group is subordinate to the Grand Lodge.
- 5 Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
Masonic Each lodge provides degrees for Masonic education and endeavors to promote good character.
- 6 An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend its name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
Masonic Financial matters are maintained independent of other organizations.
- 7 Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
Masonic Masonry is self-supporting and does not solicit outside contributions.
- 8 Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service boards may employ special workers.
Masonic Masonry maintains a body of knowledge (somewhat esoteric) sufficient to be considered a profession.
- 9 AA as such ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
Masonic Masonry is organized and creates committees as needed.

- 10 Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be brought into public controversy.
- Masonic Masonry does not allow the controversy of religion or politics to be discussed during stated meetings.
- 11 Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the lever of press, radio, or films.
- Masonic Membership is not solicited. Hence, attraction is the primary reason for any growth.
- 12 Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.
- Masonic The principles are based on pure morality. Spirituality truths are veiled in symbolism and allegories.

REFLECTIONS ON BROTHER HARRY S. TRUMAN

By
Brother Thomas Stephen Henley

Bro. Henley is a retired high school History teacher and Past Master of Hendersonville Lodge No. 359. This talk was given at the June 9, 2018 meeting of the Lodge of Research held at Ionic Lodge No. 254 in Nashville.



Harry S. Truman represents what all of Masonry is about. He was born May 8, 1884, on a little farm in Lamar, Missouri. He went on to become, of course, President of the United States.

He attended grammar school in Independence, MO, one of nineteen students. When Truman got to the fifth and sixth grades it was discovered that he was very badly near-sighted, which required him to wear very thick glasses. His mother would not allow him to “rough house” and play with the other boys for fear of his breaking these expensive glasses.

His teacher was a young woman by the name of Miss Tilley Brown. Of the nineteen students in the class, Charlie Reynolds was the favorite in the class. Charlie was always picked to do everything. Truman would fuss. “Miss Brown, some of the rest of us could do that.”

Miss Brown replied, “If I ever think you can, I’ll let you do it.”

Well, when they graduated from high school, all nineteen of these students walked across the stage and got their diplomas. When it was Charlie Reynolds’ turn, Miss Brown got up and kissed him. The “boy with the thick glasses” complained “Miss Brown, we’re all graduating. We all deserve a kiss.”

Miss Brown replied, “I’ll kiss you if you ever deserve it.”

On April 12, 1945, down below in the U.S. Capitol Building, Senator Everett Dirksen, House Speaker Sam Rayburn, Congressman Lyndon Johnson, and Truman had argued over legislative matters all day upstairs. They had gone downstairs to share a shot of bourbon. They came to Truman and said “Mr. Vice-President, Mrs. Roosevelt wants you to come to the White House, right now. Mr. Vice-President, do you want us to drive you, or do you want to walk?”

He said, “I’ll walk.”

He walked to the White House and went in. Mrs. Roosevelt grabbed him and said “Harry, the President has died in Warm Springs, Georgia.”

Truman replied “Mrs. Roosevelt, is there anything in the world that I can do for you?”

Mrs. Roosevelt said “Oh no, Harry—that’s not the question. What can we do for you? The world has just fallen on your shoulders.”

The first thing that he did was to be sworn in as President of the United States. He then went over to the White House procurement officer and told him “I want you to call the Chicago Tribune in Chicago Illinois and tell Charlie Reynolds that he is now the President’s Press Secretary and tell

him that I said his first job is to call Miss Tilley Brown and tell her to come to the White House—the President thinks he deserves his kiss now.” Fellows, she came and kissed him!

Truman had sort of a roundish face. He stood five feet ten inches tall. He weighed 185 pounds most of his adult life, except his last year as President he got down to 175 pounds.

Truman was somewhat famous for his salty language. That was a problem of his—I don’t think he saw it as a problem, but he “called things like they were.” He and Mrs. Truman liked to grow flowers. One time he was asked to speak at the Washington, D.C. Botanical society. You can imagine the well-dressed wives of politicians and prominent officials. Truman told them, “When I plant my roses and plants, I put manure around them and water them really well.” He must have used the word “manure” twelve of fifteen times in describing his botanical practices.

One of the head ladies of the Botanical Society got one of Truman’s Secret Service agents and whispered to him, “Would you please tell the President not to use that word, ‘manure,’ with all these fine ladies in here.”

The Secret Service agent said “Oh, Ma’am—you don’t know how much trouble Mrs. Truman had in getting him to use the word, ‘manure.’”

On February 9, 1909, Truman became a Mason. He started in the Lodge in Belton, MO, at Belton Lodge No. 450. That Lodge split, and he eventually became the Worshipful Master of Grandview Lodge No. 611 in Grandview, MO. Truman was the epitome of what I think a Mason should be. He had many accolades—he was a Mason for over fifty years. Although he was President of the United States at that time, he said, in 1945, “The greatest joy in my life, was being elected Grand Master of the State of Missouri.”

In 1911 he joined the Missouri Guard, which was just a few years before World War I. By the time the war started, he was a lieutenant. Right after the United States entered the war he was promoted to captain. He went in to address his artillery brigade wearing his thick glasses (he might not have qualified for today’s Army) and one of his men said “We’ve already run off one captain and two lieutenants. What do you think we’re going to do with you?”

Truman said, “I don’t think you boys understand. It ain’t whether you like me or not—it’s whether I like you.”

They went into the Argonne and began to set up their artillery. Down below them the Germans were coming in with their artillery and began setting up. Truman’s men came to him and said, “Captain Truman, we need to open fire on them.”

Truman replied, “No. If we open fire now, all they’ll do is disperse. If we wait until they set up, then they can’t go anywhere, and we’ll have them at our will.” Those men began to realize whom they had as their commander.

When Truman became President, politicians thought they had a pushover in office, but it did not take them long to find out they had run up against a solid rock. His daughter said “My Daddy never looked back on decisions. When he made a decision and made up his mind, that’s the way it was.”

He became a senator in 1934. Just before that he had lost money in the haberdashery business, which he had gone into with some of his buddies from World War I. Because of the Great Depression, he lost everything, including the store and their credit. They tried to get him to file bankruptcy, and he refused. It took him twelve years to pay all those debts. The records show that after he became a senator, every trip he took, every airplane flight, every meal out, he always paid his own way. Wouldn’t that shock politicians today?

Before becoming vice president, Bro. Truman had been the procurement officer in the Senate, and by 1944 he had saved the government some fifteen million dollars from refusing to pay

vendors who built shoddy equipment during World War II. His boyhood friend, Charlie Reynolds, came to him and asked him, “Harry, what is this thing that they are talking about, ‘The Manhattan Project?’ I keep hearing stories about that. Can you find something out about it?”

Truman went into the Senate and asked, but his question was, “What kind of little whore-house is Franklin Roosevelt building at a place called Oak Ridge that costs the government 275 million dollars?”

General Groves and some of the senators got him and said “Senator, don’t ever mention that name again. Don’t ever say anything about that. It is top secret.”

Well, on April 12, 1945, after he told the procurement officer at the White House to call Charlie Reynolds about becoming the President’s press secretary, General Groves and some officials from the Defense Department said to him “Mr. President, we need to see you.”

They took him to the Oval Office and told him that they had built and were building the most terrible, awful bomb that the world had ever seen. They informed him that was what he had asked about when he inquired about the Manhattan Project, and that was what was being built in that place called Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

Then it became Truman’s duty to make the decision to drop that bomb. They told him at first that it would kill 40,000 people. In the event, it killed 115,000. He didn’t like that because they had told him the much lower figure. He never regretted his decision to drop the two bombs, except for the number of people that it actually killed. The two bombs should have killed between 80,000 and 90,000, but they ended up killing upwards of 200,000 people.

Truman became Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Missouri in September of 1940 and went out in October of 1941. During that time, he was a United States Senator—he did both jobs at the same time. They still today revel at the job he did.

After he became President, Truman, in common with President Kennedy, was really bad about sneaking off from the Secret Service. President Kennedy would go to army bases and the Secret Service would not know where he was. Bro. Truman would sneak off and go to the Lodge in Washington, D.C. The first time he went, it turns out the gardener at the White House was the Worshipful Master.

The Secret Service got wind of where he was and went immediately to that Masonic Lodge, where they demanded to be let in. The Tiler and two other officers came to the door and said, “You can’t come in here. Yes, the President is in here, but you cannot come in.” They demanded to see President Truman.

Bro. Truman came to the door and said, “You boys don’t have to worry about me. I’m with my Brothers.”

Because of that, some of those Secret Service agents said, “If this place is that great, we ought to be members of it, too.” Several of them became Masons because of this episode.

On September 2, 1945, in the presence of Brother General Douglas McArthur on board the USS Missouri, the Japanese signed the surrender. That wasn’t supposed to happen. The battleship USS Kentucky was to be completed and put to sea. Its front end had been completed, the Missouri’s had not. So, instead of completing the USS Kentucky, they put its front end on the USS Missouri. That is how the Japanese surrendered on board the USS Missouri.

When Bro. Truman was six years old, he met the girl that he would love for the rest of his life. He asked her to marry him twice. The second time she accepted, but her mother did not want her to accept because “he won’t ever amount to anything.” He always said that the only boss he had was the boss’s boss, which was his daughter, Margaret, born in 1924.

I am probably missing some things that I ought to tell you, but does anyone have any questions?

Wasn't there a famous slogan: "Give 'em hell, Harry?"

Bro. Truman said that this slogan came from the fact that he always told the truth, "and because I always tell the truth, they think I'm giving them hell."

He had that little sign that sat on his desk that said, "The buck stops here." I think he is even the one that coined the phrase, "If it's too hot for you in the kitchen, it's just right for me."

Bro. Truman did not pull any punches. When he got into the army, and he gave orders for the first time, he used several curse words, which shocked his troops. They thought, "if he's that rough, we'd better do what he says." So, they did. They really learned to respect him after he told his artillery brigade not to fire at those Germans until they were completely set up. If you think about it, that makes all the sense in the world.

Bro. Truman retired, of course, in 1953 when he was out of the presidency. During his term Truman, a 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, fired another 33rd Degree Scottish Rite Mason, General Douglas McArthur.

Along about 1966 Bro. Truman started having gastro-intestinal problems, and he was in and out of the hospital for the next five or six years at different times for that condition. It finally weakened his cardio-vascular system so much that at 7:50 AM on the morning of December 26, 1972, we lost him. He went to meet his Lord at the age of 88.

No other president that was a Mason ever amounted to or did the things that Bro. Truman did. I was born near the end of his first term, near the time when he ran against Thomas Dewey in 1948. Dewey received some 21,970,000 votes to Truman's 24,105,000. Truman got 303 of the electoral votes, Dewey only got 189, Henry Wallace got 39.

His name was Harry S. Truman—the "S." did not stand for anything, being a compromise, because Bro. Truman had one grandfather named Solomon Young and the other named Anderson Shipp Truman. They did not want to hurt one grandfather's feelings by naming him after the other one, so Truman's parents just left the initial, "S." My initials, T. S. H., happen to be the reverse of his.

Are there any other questions?

One of the stories that I have heard about President Truman is that after he became president he went back to his Lodge and the Worshipful Master or someone asked him "Mr. President, how do you want to be addressed?"

"Brother Truman, of course," was his reply, which was in character for him.

You know, when he left office, he had a 14% approval rating. He had tried to get national health care and different things, and when Lyndon Johnson got Medicare approved, Truman went to Johnson and said, "Mr. President, we've got Medicare approved now, and you are responsible for it."

Bro. Truman did not have any money—he borrowed \$5,000 to purchase an old black Chrysler (which is in the Harry S. Truman Museum in Independence, MO). When he died, he left \$600,000 to be split between Bess and Margaret, \$15,000 to his nephews and a few cousins. But he left a sizable chunk of land, worth a lot of money, to his Masonic Lodge. Fellows, never having met him, I can assure you that he loved Masonry.

I read in a biography of Truman that one of his friends was being buried. Truman had not attended the funeral, but toward the end of the burial Truman drove up in his car. It was pouring down rain. One of the workers asked, "Mr. President, what are you doing here?" Truman replied,

“I never forget a friend.” Even though Truman was not able to attend the funeral, he did make it to the grave site to pay his respects.

That was Tom Pendergrast. In Missouri Pendergrast got Truman appointed as a judge and several other things over the years. Pendergrast had a questionable reputation. Pendergrast could never get Truman to be part of corrupt activities. When Pendergrast died, Truman was told by advisors that he should not attend the funeral. Truman’s response was “He’s my fiend. I can assure you I’m going to his funeral.” And he did, albeit late.

Truman said what he meant and meant what he said, and this was why people didn’t always agree with him.

As I said earlier, he left the White House with a 14% approval rating. He had no money—he borrowed \$5,000 to buy that Chrysler. He and Bess drove back to Washington, and people in traffic would pull aside them and stare in amazement, wondering if that was him.

Every man who has been President since Truman has been compared to him at some time. Of all the Presidents, he is listed as being the 9th greatest, above John Adams and just below James K. Polk in the listings.

President Nixon once called Truman a hillbilly to make fun of him, and Truman said, “You got it right—I’ve been a country boy all my life.”

What drew you to your fascination with Truman?

I have always liked for a man to make his decision and stand his ground. Think what a different world we would live in if men actually meant what they said and stood by what they said and prayed. The greatest weapon you and I have in the world is getting down on our knees.

Was the 1948 election the one where they proclaimed Thomas Dewey the winner in the morning newspaper?

Leading radio announcer H. V. Kaltenborn had Dewey winning. Truman got up the next morning and made fun of Kaltenborn on the radio, holding up the Chicago Tribune whose headline read “Dewey Defeats Truman.” (<https://www.history.com/news/dewey-defeats-truman-election-headline-gaffe>)

It was 24,105,695 votes to 21,969,170. (<https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-1948>)

Was there any kind of hoopla or recount like what occurred in the 2000 Election?

There was no argument whatsoever. Truman had 303 of the electoral votes. Dewey only had 189.

If you remember, Dewey died not long after that election. Dewey had been a great lawyer in New York prosecuting gangsters. The fact is Franklin Roosevelt thought a lot of Dewey.

Was Truman a very religious man, overall? Didn’t he walk to church every Sunday while he was President?

He did. He was a Baptist—he may have been an Episcopalian at one time.

Thank you all for inviting me to speak.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

By
Richard Earle Kretz

Brother Kretz is a member of Kingsport Lodge No. 688 and the Tennessee Lodge of Research.

Richard P. Feynman is quoted as saying:

Trying to understand the way nature works involves a most terrible test of human reasoning ability. It involves subtle trickery, beautiful tightropes of logic on which one has to walk in order not to make a mistake in predicting what will happen. The quantum mechanical and the relativity ideas are examples of this.

I'm confident this applies to the Philosopher's Stone as does his blackboard quote at the time of his death—"What I cannot create I do not understand".

Legends pertaining to the Philosopher's Stone are shrouded by the mists of time. Zosimos of Panopolis, also known as Zosimos the Alchemist, was an Egyptian alchemist and Gnostic mystic who wrote about it in circa 300 CE. Other alchemists, such as Elias Ashmole, claim its history originates with Adam who obtained it from God. It is also alluded to in Psalm 118:22 of the Bible as the rejected cornerstone of King Solomon's Temple.

Zosimos described creation of the Philosopher's Stone as working with *prima materia*, or first matter. *Prima materia* is the primitive formless base of all matter like chaos. It is the material that fills the celestial world above the terrestrial sphere. Esoteric alchemists compare *prima materia* to the concept of *anima mundi*, also known as the universal soul or breath of God. *Anima mundi* suggests that there is an intrinsic connection between all living things as the soul is connected to the body. The process of working with *prima materia* is known as the *Magnum opus* or great work. In the Hermetic tradition it describes spiritual transmutation as chemical color changes occurring in a laboratory. Birds such as ravens, phoenixes, and swans are symbolic of progression through the colors of black, red, and white aspects of the Stone.

The Philosopher's Stone is also referred to as the elixir of life. Symbolizing perfection and enlightenment, it is used for rejuvenation, to achieve immortality, and to turn base metals into gold. As such, the Philosopher's Stone is a symbolic alchemical marriage of our celestial mind to our terrestrial physical body bound by the energy of our spirit. This alchemical marriage requires change, transmutation, attained during a quest for perfection. Our quest is for unity, peace, and harmony of mind, body, and spirit so that in death our soul is resurrected to live eternally.

Alchemists encrypt their quest for the Philosopher's Stone using metaphor and allegory. We find pursuit of the Stone described using a variety of cryptic illustrations and mathematics. Two examples are those of Sir George Ripley in the *Ripley Scroll* and Count Michael Maier in *Atalanta Fugiens*. Ripley describes his quest for the Stone using symbolic illustrations. In contrast, Maier's approach uses Sacred Geometry.

Alchemy, Hermetics, sacred geometry, Kabbalah, gematria, astrology and other esoteric arts and sciences all allude to the Stone in their own vague way. Left to speculation, it's difficult to empirically

describe what the Stone really is. I believe I have identified a key in Masonry that quantifies and qualifies what the Stone is. This key unlocks the secret of the Stone!

A quest for the Philosopher's Stone is a quest for the "holy grail," a search for truth. What we seek is elusive because it appears as an intangible idea, since it appears to be an intangible idea we have difficulty visualizing it and may not recognize it for what it is. To recognize the Stone we must have "eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that understand."¹ This is to say we must shift our paradigms and seek it with an open mind without constraint or construct. We must use what knowledge we have of the Stone as an intangible idea to develop a tangible model.

What do we know about the Philosopher's Stone? We know its name. Philosopher translated from the Greek literally means "lover of wisdom." So, we know it has something to do with wisdom. In general, a stone is defined as a hard substance formed of mineral matter that can be shaped for building or carving. Therefore, the name Philosopher's Stone could allude to shaping the wisdom of one's body and mind. We know that working with the Stone involves the elements of fire, water, earth, air, and spirit in three stages alluded to in the colors of black, red, and white. We also know that the Stone involves geometric forms such as circles, lines, triangles, and squares. Our challenge is to figure out how to combine what we know to develop a functional model that we can see.

An Oblong Square

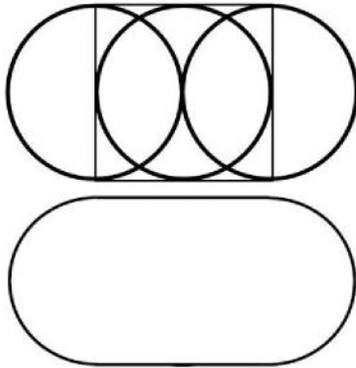
There is a Masonic reference to a geometric form known as an "*oblong square*." Some think it alludes to a rectangle, specifically a golden rectangle. But perhaps it is something else, something significant with broad implications. Perhaps an oblong square is a master key that unlocks the mystery of the universe. Perhaps an oblong square is the Philosopher's Stone.

When we consider the term "oblong," an ovoid shape, a geometric form with rounded edges like a racetrack, comes to mind. A square by its nature is formed by straight, not rounded, lines. Logically then an oblong square must be a square that has rounded sides. But how do we compose such a form?

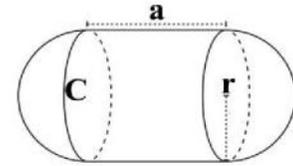
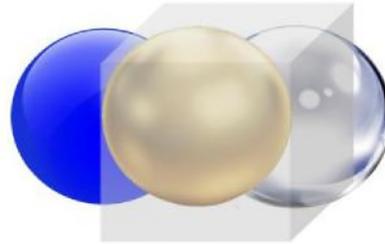
In Masonry we are taught that "the form of a Lodge should always be an oblong square, in length, between the east and the west; in breadth, between the north and the south; in height, from earth to heaven; and in depth, from the surface to the center." The question remains: What is an oblong square? Whatever an oblong square may be, our Masonic description suggests that it's three-dimensional.

To create an oblong square, or the Stone, we begin with a point within a circle. We then square the circle and add circles on both sides. As a two-dimensional form an oblong square appears as a "racetrack".

Let's advance this idea of an oblong square through application. If we take our two-dimensional oblong square and make it three dimensional, what does it look like? Without removing the interior lines, we have three spheres within a cube; a central sphere bounded by a cube conjoined by spheres right and left dissected by the cube. As a singular unit this configuration is akin to a capsule.

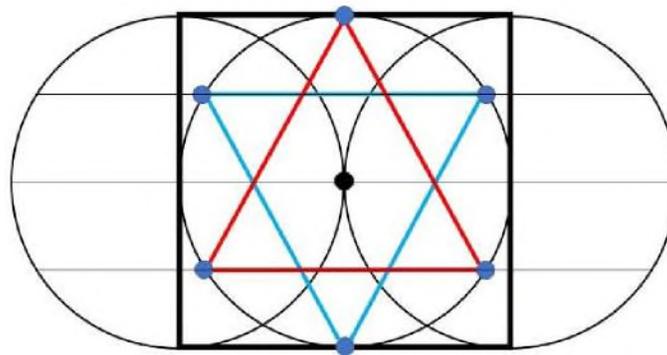


2-D Oblong Square



Capsule

How is an oblong square applied to the Philosopher's Stone and Masonry? Alchemists claim that the Stone is white and has dual aspects in accordance with hermetic principals. The colors red and white differentiate these aspects. Red symbolizes the physical, terrestrial, tangible nature of the Stone: our body, represented geometrically by a square. As such, the Red Stone is referred to as the "Lesser Work." The White Stone is referred to as the "Greater Work." White symbolizes the mental, celestial, higher intangible nature of the Stone; our mind, represented geometrically by a triangle. The triangles found within the Stone aren't discerned until we connect the points of contact between the circles divided into fourths and the square at which time we find a hexagram.



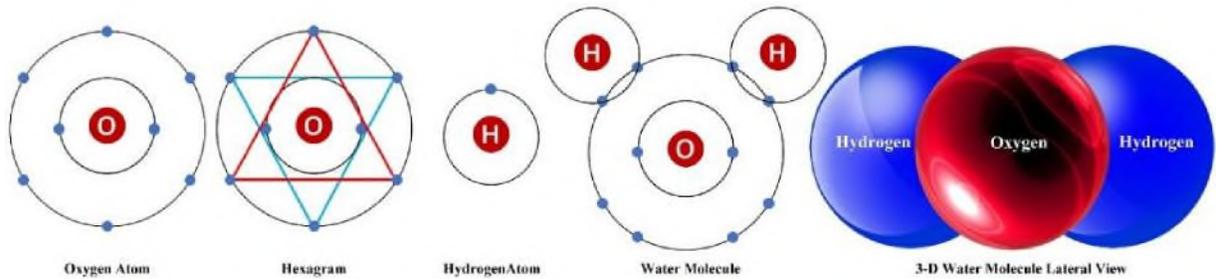
Hexagram located within the squared circle of an Oblong Square

In describing the process for creation of the Stone two components stand out: water and salt.

Water

Water is a molecule composed of one oxygen atom and two hydrogen atoms. An oxygen atom has eight electrons orbiting its nucleus: two electrons in the inner shell and six in an outer shell.

Hydrogen has only one electron orbiting its nucleus. A water molecule is composed of three interlocking spheres as is an oblong square.

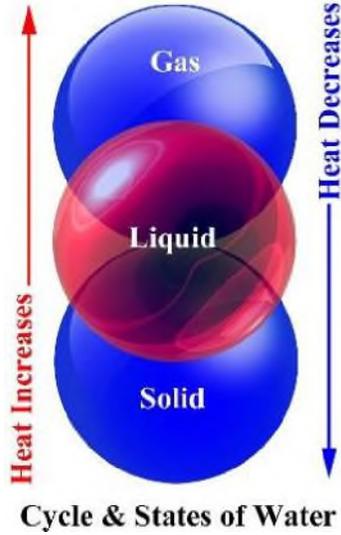


Water is the largest, most powerful, and sublime elemental force. Water covers approximately two-thirds of Earth's surface and comprises approximately two-thirds of an adult human body. Our bodies require water to function and survive. In the brain water is needed to manufacture hormones and neurotransmitters. It allows our body's cells to grow and reproduce. It's used to deliver oxygen throughout the body, for digestion, regulation of body temperature, flushing waste, lubrication and shock absorption.²

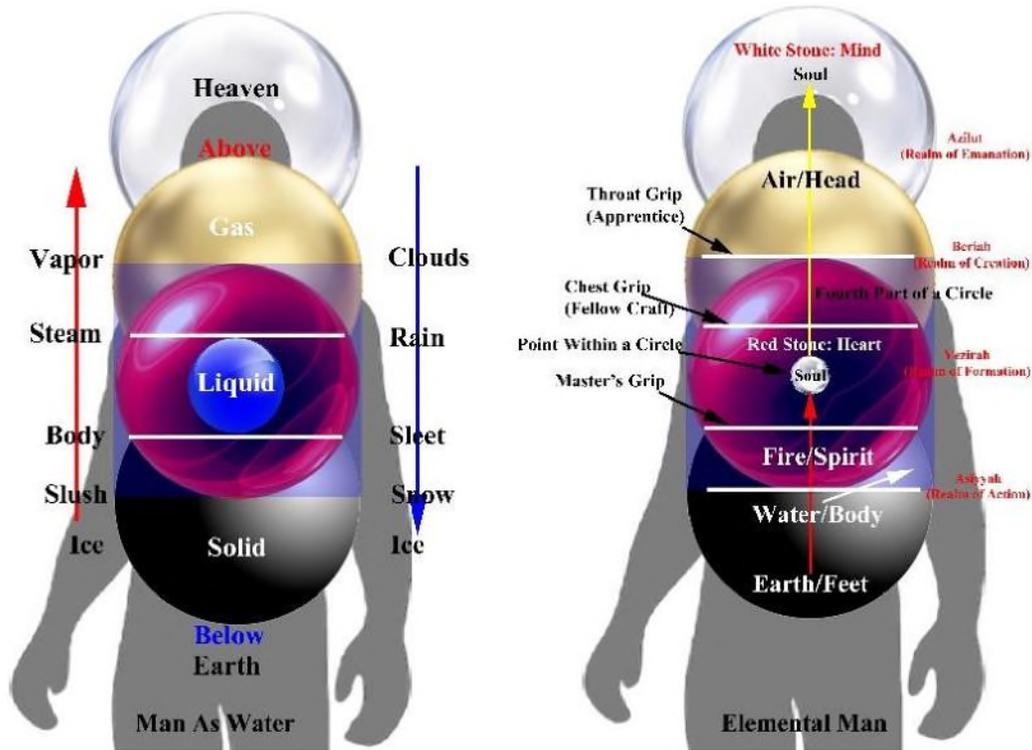
Water is cyclical, existing in the three states of the alchemical recipe for the Philosopher's Stone: solid, liquid, and gas. Water rises into the air above the Earth as a gas and returns to Earth below as either a liquid or solid precipitant. As such it is found coming from the heavens above as rain and snow and emanating from the ground below from springs and streams. In the human body water is comparably consumed, circulating within, and expelled without.

Oceans are bodies of water that cover the Earth. The oceans are where life began on Earth. We gestate in and are born from a body of water. Water satisfies the Hermetic axiom: "As within, so without, as above, so below." Water has no beginning or end. Water is part of life; life is part of water. Water is life! Having three components and existing in three states, water represents a downward triangle. The energy required for water to exist in its three states is influenced by the element of fire. Fire is represented as an upward triangle formed by the triad of heat, fuel, and oxygen. Oxygen binds water and fire as exemplified in a hexagram created by the electrons of its atomic structure.

It's interesting that hydrogen is extremely flammable, and oxygen is an accelerant, yet when combined they form a third entity that doesn't burn and can extinguish its individual components. Esoterically we could say that a water molecule is the monad plus the dyad that creates the triad.



With the above in mind, we can create a model of man as water and in an elemental form that includes the Red and White Stones, heart and mind.

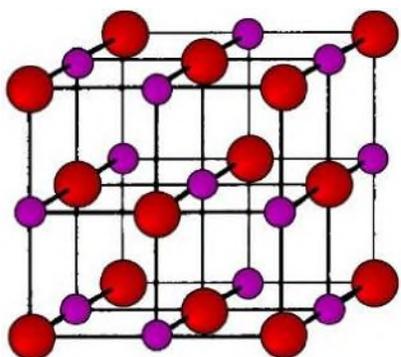


Salt

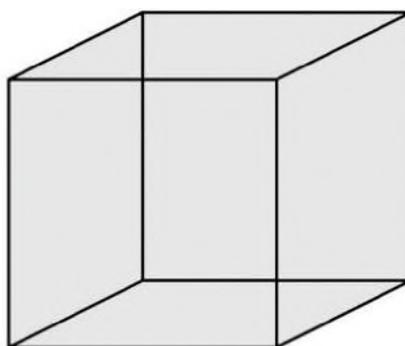
Salt, or salts, is frequently referred to in the Philosopher’s Stone alchemical process. Salt is a compound created by combining sodium and chlorine to create sodium chloride. Sodium chloride dissolves in water and is what makes our oceans “salty.” Salt is necessary for life and is found in the extracellular fluids of multicellular organisms. Since ancient times salt has been obtained through the evaporation of seawater to obtain “sea salt” or mining in quarries to obtain rough ashlar of “rock

salt”. In ancient times salt was considered more valuable than gold, and often alluded to as the white powder of gold.

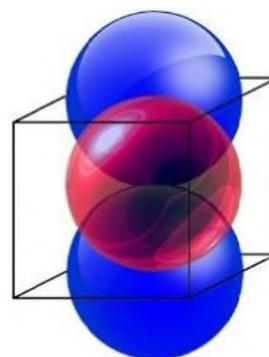
Sodium and chlorine form ionic bonds. As a crystal these bonds create a two-atom based cube three bonds in height, three bonds in length, and three bonds in depth—a perfect ashlar. In *Atalanta Fugiens*, Maier could be describing salt as the Philosopher’s Stone when he quotes Rhasis.³ “‘The Stone,’ says he, ‘is a Triangle in its essence, a Quadrangle in its quality.’”⁴ Indeed, a salt crystal is a triangle in its essence, and a quadrangle in its quality. When a salt crystal is combined with a water molecule it takes the form of an oblong square.



Salt Crystal Atomic Structure: 3x3x3



Salt Crystal: Perfect Ashlar

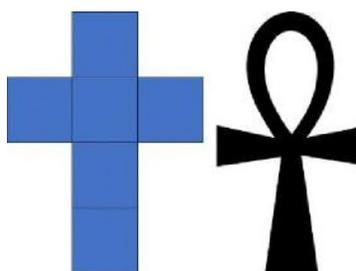


Oblong Square: Salt & Water

Salt dissolved in water isn’t visible to the naked eye, yet it’s hidden in plain sight. If water containing dissolved salt is distilled completely an experienced alchemist will find that a few small cubical grains of a white stone remain—perfect ashlar. An inexperienced person would not be able to see these stones if any water remained in the vessel during distillation. He would therefore unknowingly heave these stones over into the rubbish pile. Salt, like water, is necessary for life. It could be argued that salt is the Philosopher’s Stone in a physical, terrestrial, sense.

A *hexamer* (six molecules) of water is the minimum volume required to dissolve one molecule of salt.⁵ When dissolved, salt’s molecular structure of sodium and chlorine separate to combine with water. In our body sodium regulates blood pressure by attracting and holding water in our blood. Muscles and nerves require sodium for the electrical currents they generate to properly function. The amount of salt in our body must be balanced. Too much or too little salt can cause health problems.⁶

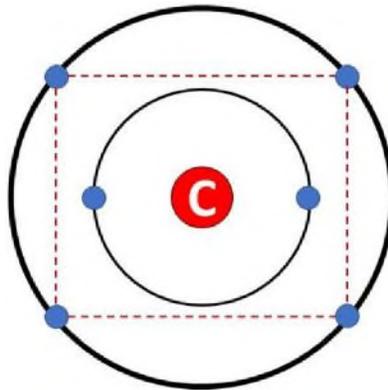
One other fascinating aspect of a salt crystal as a cube. If a cube is unfolded as a two-dimensional form, it creates a Latin Cross. Combined with a water molecule as an oblong square it appears as an Ankh. Both the cross and ankh symbolize life and resurrection.



Latin Cross and Ankh

Carbon

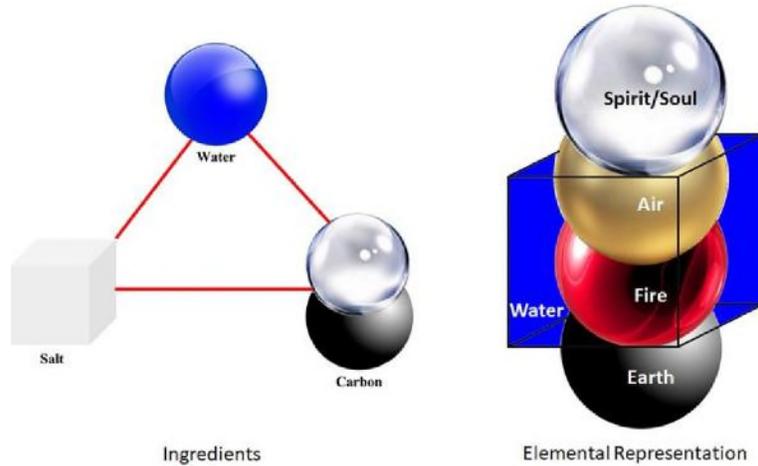
The combination of salt and water appear a likely candidate as the Philosopher's Stone, but there is another—Carbon. Another key component of life on Earth is carbon. The most important characteristics of carbon as a basis for the chemistry of life are it has four valence electrons, and the energy required to make or break a bond is at an appropriate level for building molecules that are stable and reactive. Carbon atoms bond readily to other carbon atoms; this allows the building of long complex molecules. Complex carbon molecules also readily bond with other elements, especially oxygen and hydrogen. Again, we find reference involving oxygen and hydrogen. For example, carbon dioxide; one carbon atom and two oxygen atoms.



In addition to its chemistry carbon's ability to conduct electricity varies with its hardness. In its soft state of graphite, it's black, is used in pencils to draw and write with, and conducts electricity. In its hardest state as a diamond created under immense pressure, carbon is clear and a very poor conductor of electricity. As such, alchemically carbon could be considered a contender as the Stone since it begins as a soft black slab, changing color and hardness with pressure until it becomes a small white diamond.

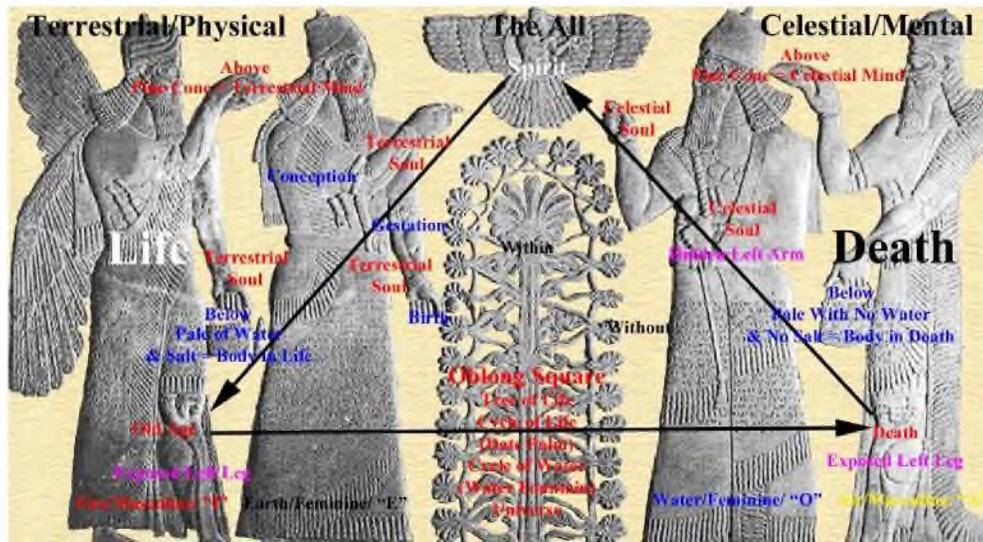
Carbon's four valence electrons form a square and its atomic number is six because it has a total of six electrons. So, while carbon has attributes of the Philosopher's Stone, it's not the Stone itself, nor does it singularly support an oblong square. However, carbon could be part of the Stone. As with water and salt, carbon is necessary for life on Earth. Carbon appears to satisfy the alchemical process of the Stone. Geometrically and numerologically it also supports aspects of the Stone as it readily bonds with oxygen and hydrogen and forms a square. Carbon provides an explanation for having a fourth circle or sphere found in Kabbalistic, Chakra, and Hermetic models. It also supports sacred geometry and numerology. The Stone, therefore, is about life and is composed of life's three key ingredients: water, salt, and carbon.

We can now create a visual model of the Stone that addresses the five elements and their interaction in an alchemical process that does indeed support Masonry's oblong square.



Model of the Philosopher's Stone

Ancient Mesopotamians expressed the idea of the Philosopher's Stone representing water and salt, life and death, as an oblong square in reliefs. In this relief we see the oblong square in the center symbolizing the cycle of life as a fountain representing the universe.



The original Assyrian alabaster relief wall panel dated 865 BC–860 BC is thought to represent King Ashurnasirpal II. It was excavated from the Throne Room of the North West Palace, Nimrud (Kalhu), in northern Iraq in 1846 and was acquired by the British Museum in 1849.⁷

In Egyptian legend an oblong square is also featured as the Philosopher's Stone. In this graphic Isis and Thoth resurrect Osiris who is kneeling at an Acacia tree. The Acacia tree symbolizes the Tree of Life and life everlasting.⁸ We also find that the Egyptians used an oblong square to identify Pharaohs as enlightened beings related to the gods by placing their name within a cartouche.

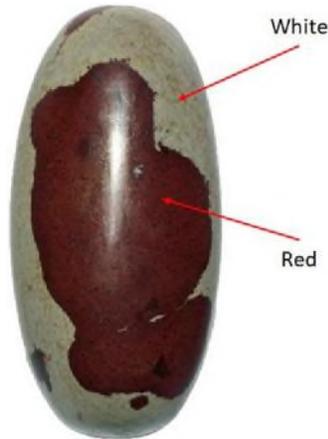


Thoth & Isis Resurrecting Osiris



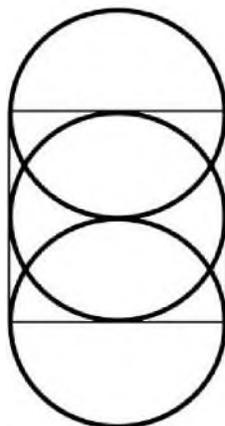
Cartouche

In the Hindu culture of India, we find an oblong square represented as a Shiva Lingam Stone. According to the *Linga Purana* a Lingam is a column or oval stone that symbolizes the universe and the Hindu god Shiva. Shiva is said to be timeless, formless, pure consciousness, power, and the primal substance of all that exists.⁹

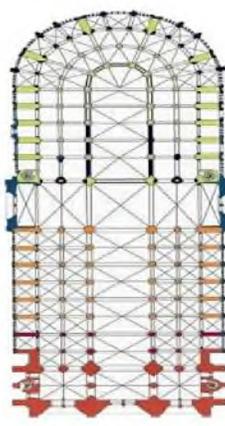


Shiva Lingam Stone

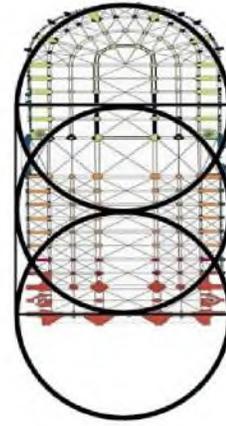
In medieval times an oblong square was used as floor plans for cathedrals such as the Cathedrals Notre Dame in France.



Oblong Square



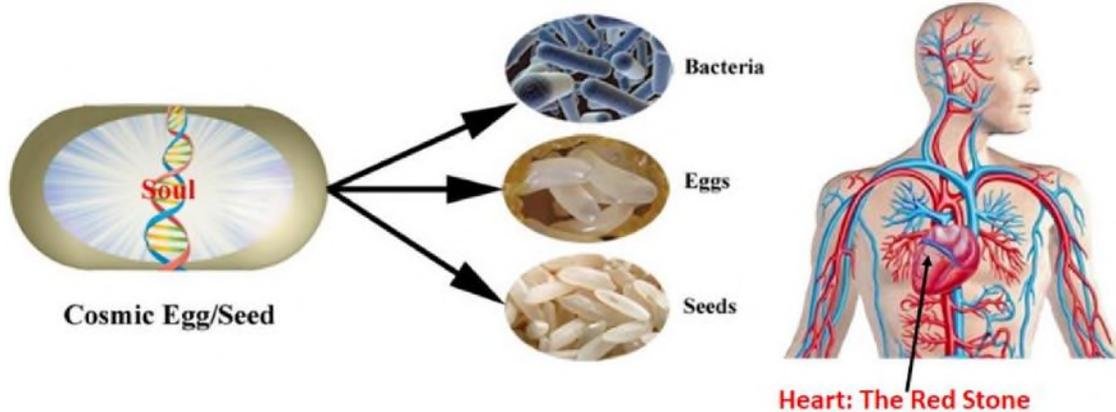
Notre Dame, Paris



Overlay

Life: The Red Stone

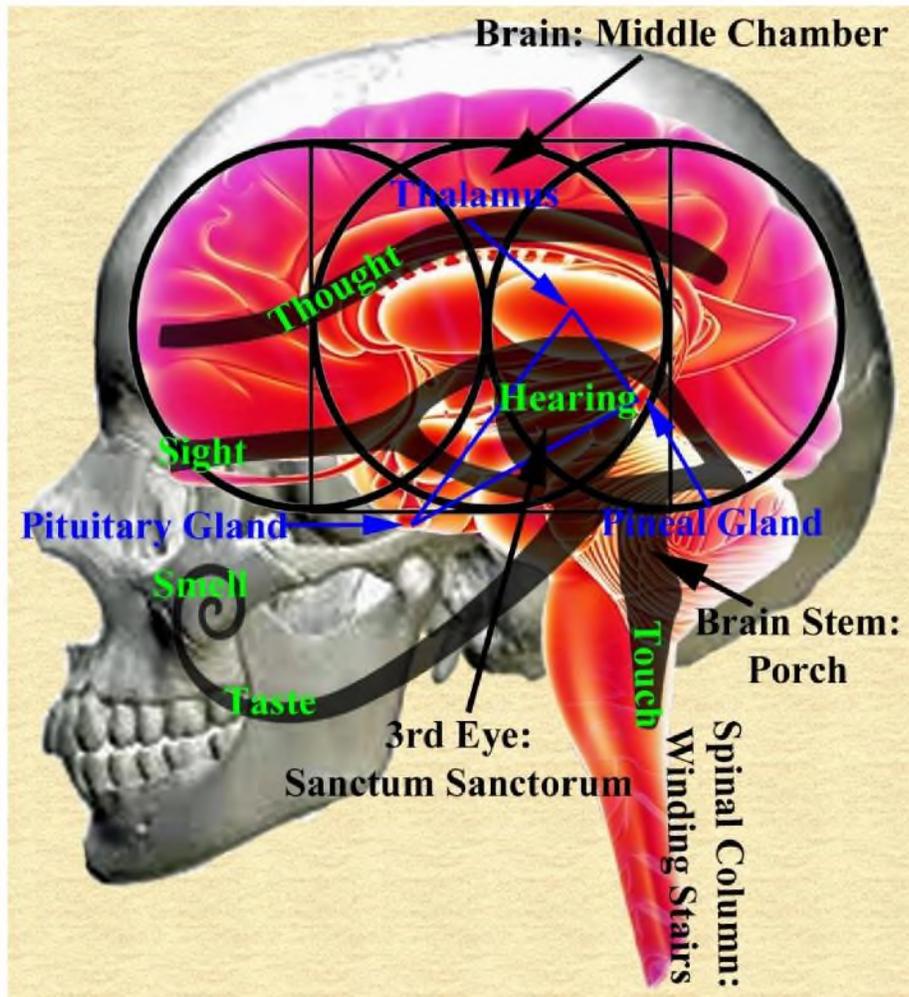
Water, salt, and carbon are necessary for life. Together their molecular structures form an oblong square, a capsule. In nature an oblong square is found in the form of bacteria, eggs, and seeds. When an egg or seed is fertilized a divine spark occurs at conception creating a soul; this is when life begins. In this way an oblong square, the Red Stone, satisfies physical principles of nature and Hermetics,¹⁰ and the Laws of Thermodynamics.¹¹ When a seed or egg is fertilized energy is converted, a soul is created in accordance with the first law of thermodynamics, the Law of Conservation of Energy. The second law of thermodynamics, the Law of Entropy, says that energy disperses creating chaos. For chaos to perpetuate, order is required. Nature creates pockets of order through life. Life disperses energy; the more life the better energy is dispersed. Life obeys and exists because of the Law of Entropy. Life as the Red Stone represents our heart and circulatory system—the first of our organs to develop.¹² We are first made a Mason in our hearts.



Death: The White Stone

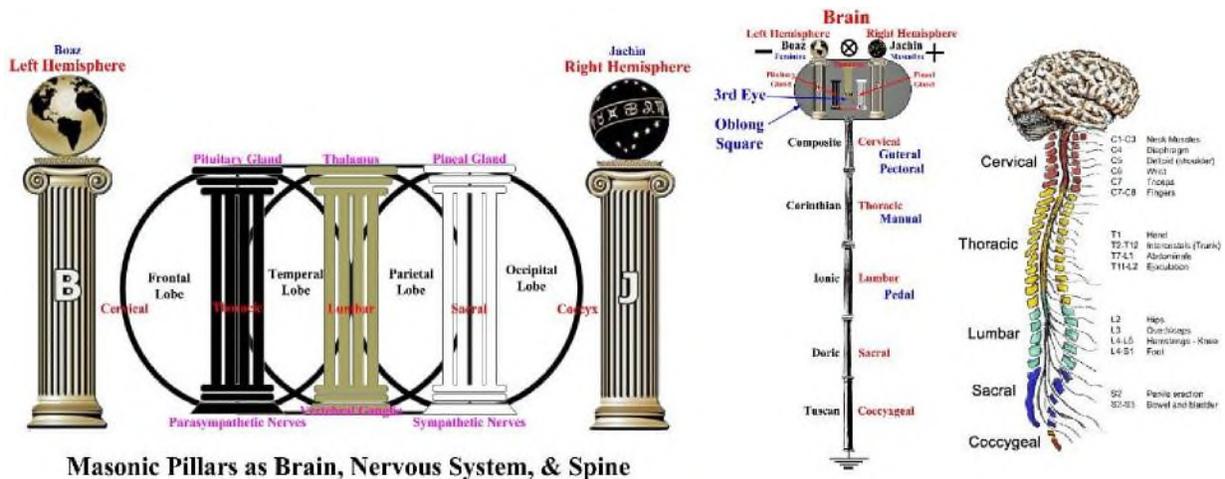
An oblong square encapsulates the celestial principles of mathematics, geometry, and vibration, and addresses the soul. The White Stone, symbolized by the skull and spinal column, represents our brain and central nervous system, our mind. Our brain and central nervous system develop once our heart and circulatory system are established.¹³

When we overlay an oblong square and the Eye of Horus on our brain Masonic correlations begin to appear in their relationships.



Correlation between the brain, Eye of Horus, oblong square, and Masonry

In Masonry, pillars and the oblong square are used to represent the brain and spinal column. The pillars of Boaz and Jachin symbolize the left and right hemispheres of the brain. The three pillars of Masonry represent the thalamus, pineal gland, and pituitary gland contained within the brain symbolized as an oblong square. The five pillars of Masonry placed atop one another signify the spinal column. In the context of the FC degree the winding staircase refers to the spinal column, the porch is the brain stem, the middle chamber is the brain within the skull, and the sanctum sanctorum is the third eye comprised of the thalamus, pineal gland, and pituitary gland.



Masonic Pillars as Brain, Nervous System, & Spine

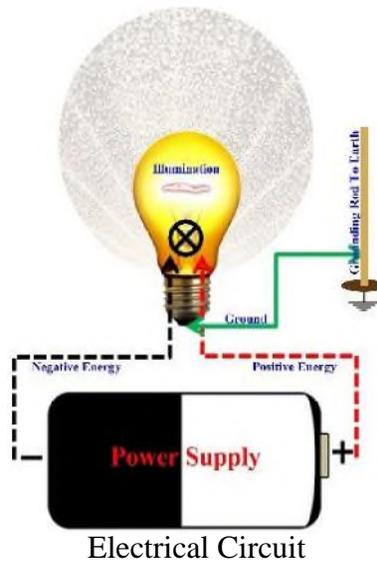
The Stone, via an oblong square and columns, is a path to resurrect and perpetuate our soul. This path, known as The Way, is addressed in Masonry, the staff of Hermes, the Chakras, and the Kabbalah. The Way is found within us. The Way is a means of harmonizing our mind, body, spirit, and soul with the universe. Attainment of universal harmony, oneness, is referred to as enlightenment. An enlightened person is often said to have seen the “Light” or is depicted wearing a halo representing light. In this regard the Stone is the celestial “Elixir of Life” that offers immortality.

The Stairway To Heaven

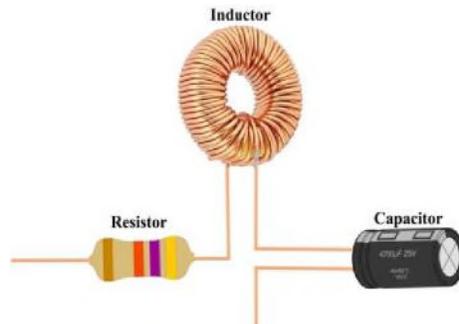
Now that we know what the Philosopher’s Stone and Oblong Square are, the question is how do they precipitate change? How are they used to convert our mind and body from lead into gold? The answer is meditation. Meditation is a vehicle for us to change. Meditation harmonizes our mind and body. Performance guidance for meditation is provided in the metaphor and allegory of Masonic lectures. Masonic lectures incorporate instruction for the application of Hermetic principles and concepts of Sacred Geometry. These principles and concepts provide that the brain and central nervous system perform as an electrical circuit¹⁴ having correlation with the caduceus, chakras, and the Kabbalistic Tree of Life through the Pillars of Masonry as an Oblong Square.

An electrical circuit processes and transmits information. A power source, our brain, provides electrons for the circuit. Electrons have positive and negative charges. Movement of electrons within an electronic circuit creates energy.¹⁵ Three principles of a charge created by electrons and their movement are¹⁶ voltage, current, and resistance.

An electronic circuit is considered “closed” or “on” when its circuit is complete and uninterrupted. It is “open” or “off” if there is a break in the circuit. For a circuit to operate correctly it must be closed and the amount of voltage, current, and resistance balanced so that positive and negative electrons flow properly into a component in accordance with its tolerance, such as a lamp, and back out along a neutral route to ground. When a lamp is illuminated by an electrical circuit it emits photons that we perceive as visible light.



Electronic circuits use components such as inductors, capacitors, and resistors.¹⁷ An inductor provides a capacitor a constant charge while the resistor reduces decay of the current flowing to the inductor. Together they create an electro-magnetic frequency that vibrates known as resonance. When such a circuit is tuned and balanced so that it functions at optimum vibration it becomes a *simple harmonic oscillator*¹⁸ that generates electrical waveforms.¹⁹

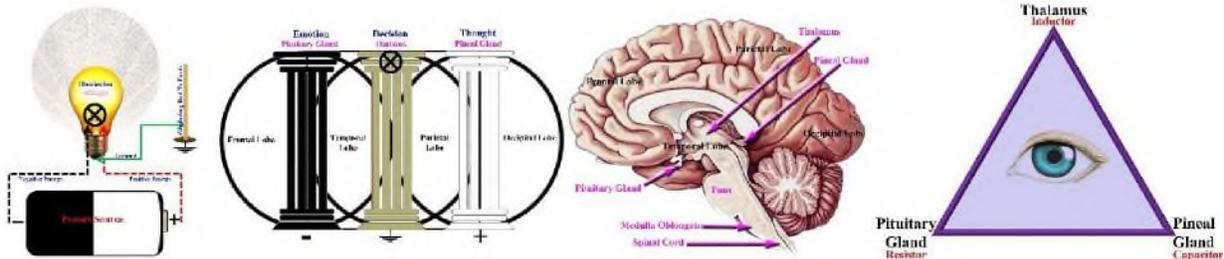


Harmonic Waveform Generator Circuit

Our brain represented as an oblong square is comparable to the capsule-like symbol of a servomechanism.²⁰ In fact, our brain functions as a servomechanism. A servomechanism is a feedback control system in which the mechanical position of an object is automatically maintained using error-sensing feedback to correct the action of a mechanism. It usually includes a built-in encoder to ensure the output is achieving the desired effect. A harmonic generator is a component of the encoder. Our brain is our power source of electrical force while our nerves act as the wires along which the electrical force flows within our body. As a harmonic generator our brain's third eye, our thalamus, pineal gland, and pituitary gland, regulates and coordinates ALL functions within the body. Our brain uses feedback to adjust just like a servomechanism.

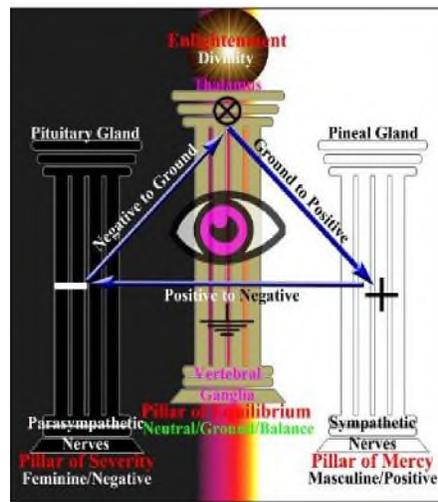
The Thalamus²¹ performs as an inductor controlling consciousness, sensory and motor signals that maintains equilibrium—*decision*. The Pineal Gland²² acts as a capacitor to store and modulate patterns and rhythms—*thought*. The Pituitary Gland²³ functions as a resistor regulating the flow of physiological and psychological processes—*emotion*.

As a triad these components form our “Third Eye.” We attain enlightenment when our “Third Eye” is balanced and resonates as a harmonic waveform generator; about 110 Hz. Opening and closing of our Third Eye is simulated in the opening and closing of the Royal Arch degree by “we three do agree this royal arch to raise or close.”



Our brain as an electrical system

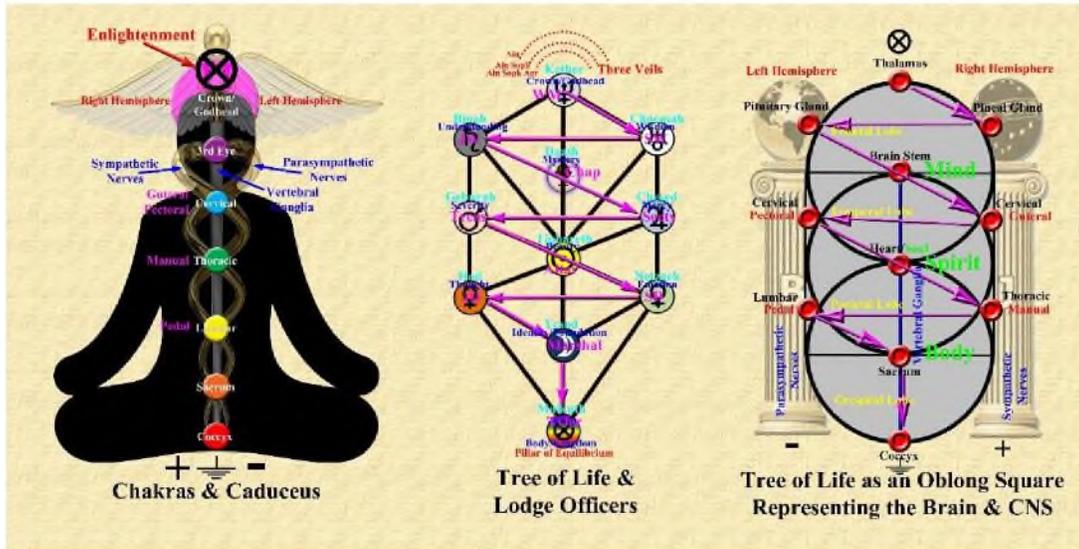
Our spine consists of thirty-two vertebrae divided into five areas: cervical, thoracic, lumbar, sacral, and coccyx. If we include our skull, it makes thirty-three skeletal components. It equates to the Five Pillars of Masonry, Caduceus, and chakra points and houses the central nervous system. The central nervous system is the wiring harness that connects the brain to the body. It is comprised of sympathetic nerves that are positive energy, parasympathetic nerves that are negative energy, and vertebral ganglia that provide a neutral return path to ground. Peripheral nerves from all parts of the body join the central nervous system along the spine where they are controlled and coordinated by the brain. These positive and negative electrical forces crisscross through neutralizing ganglia of the spinal cord to various parts of the body. This is exemplified in the Kabbalistic lightning flash and chakras and is illustrated as a system using a caduceus. The completed circuit runs from the Thalamus to the Pineal Gland to the Pituitary Gland and returns to the Thalamus where it is discharged.



Our central nervous system as an electrical system

The vehicle for enlightenment is meditation. Knowing that our body is much like an electrical circuit, we now know that we must be grounded to benefit from meditation. We must be grounded so that we can properly conduct the electrical energy within our body. We must be grounded for our body’s electrical system to work. To do this we must be sitting directly on the ground making

contact with our buttocks or sitting unshod in a chair with our feet on the ground. If we sit on a pillow or have something else between our buttocks and the ground it acts as an insulator, and we're not grounded. If we sit in a chair wearing shoes it's the same thing, we're insulated and not grounded. If we're not grounded our electrical system doesn't work properly.



Comparison of the Chakras, Caduceus, and Tree of Life.

Nikola Tesla is quoted as saying: “If you wish to understand the Universe, think of energy, frequency, and vibration.” Vibration is a principle of Hermetics.²⁴ Vocalization, called a mantra, is a crucial meditative vibratory ingredient. Vibration created by our vocalized mantra helps synchronize the rhythms of our body, mind, and the energy force of our spirit that binds them together. Our mantra is like a tuning fork. When tuned to the proper frequency our body, mind, and spirit vibrate harmoniously as one.^{25 26}

Meditation begins with relaxation and clearing the mind of all thought and emotion. An oscillating mantra is provided in Masonry as the secret word of a Master Mason. The sound and vibration of our mantra emanate from our four Masonic points of entry: throat (guttural via the instructive tongue heard by the attentive ear), residing in the faithful breast (pectoral), traveling outward via the central nervous system to our hands (manual) and feet (pedal). It's the vocalization of the mantra, the sound and *vibration* of it, that harmonizes our mind and body. When our mind and body harmonize, our spirit harmonizes; we experience three-part harmony. Enlightenment occurs when we attain perfect pitch, experiencing four-part harmony of mind, body, and spirit synchronized with and resonating in our soul. When we meditate, we are tapping into a higher level of energy awareness, becoming one with the universe. Once we attain the perfect pitch of enlightenment we are not and cannot be as we once were. We are forever changed!

Meditation is the stairway to heaven, to resurrection and enlightenment. A reminder is found in the altar of a Masonic temple where we again encounter an oblong square. The altar of a Masonic temple is a cube situated in its center. If we take a close look at the altar, we observe that its sides contain an indented tessell outlining a second cube, indicating that there is an inner cube bound by a life force within an outer cube. Symbolically this inner cube is the smooth ashlar of perfected man within the rough ashlar of imperfection. Atop the altar rest the Three Great Lights in Masonry: a book containing the Holy Bible, Square, and Compasses, symbolizing mind, body, and spirit. These we are able to perceive with the aid of the Three Lesser Lights: emotion, thought, and

decision. This is a reminder that by perfecting our emotions, thoughts, and decisions we distill imperfections of mind, body, and spirit that encapsulate the blazing star of our soul, our character, symbolized as a grain of salt dissolved in water.

We too are altars of a sacred temple; a temple commanding reverence and respect, one meriting continual maintenance and improvement. Only with continual effort in pursuit of unity, peace, and harmony of mind, body, and spirit may we walk uprightly before God and our fellow man. Only with continual effort may we change our minds, deeds, and character. When we attain perfection, we rise from the ashes of what we once were as a phoenix, the bird of Hermes, an enlightened soul eternal in the heavens. We, each and every one of us, are a seed for change, an oblong square, a Philosopher's Stone if we choose to be.

In closing, an oblong square is a geometric form containing the wisdom of the ages. It reflects the omniscient attribute of God—all that is known, or will be known, has been known.

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End Notes

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CORN, WINE, OIL, MILK, AND HONEY

By
Gerald Odell Leek, 33°

Brother Leek is Secretary of the Memphis Valley of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. This talk was delivered at the Rededication of Unity Lodge No. 95 on March 10, 2018.

Symbols are a very large part of Masonic history. The mythological explanations that are contained inside the history are used to transmit symbols which explain the teachings and history of Freemasonry as part of this ageless doctrine that we profess. Symbols are the history of Freemasonry. The adepts and magi of the ancient tradition of philosophy that we embody as speculative Freemasonry transmitted through the teachings of our initiates—through ritual, symbols, and allegories—as these methods are associated with a tradition of which Freemasonry is a custodian.

In discussing the 13th Degree of the Scottish Rite, Albert Pike tells us,

Enoch, we are told, walked with God 300 year after reaching the age of 65—he “walked with God and he was no more, for God had taken him.” His name signified in the Hebrew, INITIATE or INITIATOR. The legend of the columns, of granite and brass or bronze, erected by him, is probably symbolical. That of bronze, which survived the flood, is supposed to symbolize the mysteries, of which Masonry is the legitimate successor—from the earliest times the custodian and depository of the great philosophical and religious truths, unknown to the world at large, and handed down from age to age by an unbroken current of tradition, embodied in symbols, emblems, and allegories.

The legend of this Degree is thus, partially, interpreted. It is of little importance whether it is in anywise historical. For its value consists in the lessons which it inculcates, and the duties which it prescribes to those who receive it. The parables and allegories of the Scriptures are not less valuable than history. Nay, they are more so, because ancient history is little instructive, and truths are concealed in and symbolized by the legend and the myth (De Hoyos 279-280).

That’s a long way to tell you that no matter what the story says in many of our degrees, what is more important is the symbols and the lessons therein. History is simply used as a backdrop for instruction.

We are here today to celebrate the Rededication of Unity Lodge No. 95. The Dedication of a Lodge is a very real and concrete action. Yet, it is also a symbolic act which is used here to remind us of our purpose, to reorient our travels, and to celebrate our achievements. I will endeavor today to shed a little light on the symbols of Dedication, their meaning and purpose, and, hopefully, to give us something to contemplate and improve us.

As I was preparing for this talk, I was reminded of an obligatory feast of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, the Feast of Tishri, celebrated in the Fall. This celebration coincides with the Feast of Tabernacles, but also reminds us of the celebrations of the completion and dedication of the Temple of Solomon. The rich legend of the Temple’s dedication, held in connection with the Feast of Tishri, is an essential part of the 14th Degree. The Symbolic details of the Temple’s position, design, construction, furnishing, and decoration carry special meaning as they apply to the

metaphorical Temple of Freemasonry, built in the heart of every Brother. Through the symbols of the Temple we learn to re-commit ourselves to building Freemasonry in the hearts of men and among nations.

Today we are rededicating Unity Lodge No. 95 of Free and Accepted Masons under the Grand Lodge of Tennessee just when we are taught to celebrate the completion and dedication of the Temple. The good Brothers of this Lodge have dedicated many men to our cause over the years. They have dedicated themselves repeatedly to great moral virtues which are laid down on our Masonic Trestle Board, and they have struggled and labored to shape their rough ashlar into perfect ashlar and have been dedicated to building a Temple of Love in the hearts of their members.

To rededicate means that this Lodge has been dedicated before. When this Lodge was originally built, they would have had a Cornerstone Ceremony to dedicate it to the cause of Truth, Morality, and Brotherly Love. By the practice of Freemasonry, they were given a foundation on which to erect their Spiritual Temples, as well as that of the Lodge. We read in Isaiah 28:16 “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.” The Most Worshipful Grand Master at that time would have, with the assistance of his Grand Officers, tried that stone, and when it was found to be well-formed, true, and trusty, it would have been blessed, consecrated, and dedicated to the cause of our great fraternity. The items of consecration would have been corn, wine, and oil, and I believe you are going to see some corn, wine, and oil in just a short, little bit in this rededication ceremony. It is these symbols that I will endeavor to explore today.

Psalm 104:15 speaks of “wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.” In Albert Mackey’s dissertation on Corn, Wine, and Oil he writes,

Corn . . . the staff of life: In the processions, the corn alone is carried in a golden pitcher, the wine and oil are placed in silver vessels, and this is to remind us that the first [corn], as a necessity and the “staff of life” is of more importance and more worthy of honor than the others, which are but comforts (Mackey Vol. 1, 244).

Wine: . . . as a symbol of the inward refreshment of a good conscience is intended, under the name of the Wine of Refreshment, to remind us of the eternal refreshments which the good are to receive in the future life for the faithful performance of duty in the present (Mackey Vol. 2, 1110).

Oil: The Hebrews anointed their Kings, Prophets and High Priests with oil mingled with the richest spices. They also anointed themselves with oil on all festive occasions, whence the expression in Psalm 45:7: “God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness (Mackey Vol. 2, 731).”

Yet, there is further symbolism here. We must look to the ancient Hebrews and promises made by God to that nation to understand why we chose these symbols of blessing. Israel was a nation dedicated to serving the Lord, who were given the Law, and who later built the Temple of Solomon, which is familiar to all Masons as symbolic of the Lodge that we rededicate today.

When God was leading the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt to that Promised Land, he spoke to Moses and said, “I have come down to rescue them from the hands of the Egyptians and to bring them up to that land and to a good and precious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (Exodus 3:8).”

Later, we have a record of the “ten faithless spies” who were sent into the Promised Land by Moses, and the ten spies disagreed that Israel would be able to conquer the land, but they did agree on this: that it was a land “flowing with milk and honey.” For they gave Moses this account: “We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with mik and honey; and this *is* the fruit of it (Numbers 13: 27).”

But in Deuteronomy 7 we find a slightly different description of the Land of Israel. God tells Moses that,

“Therefore, ye shall keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments which I am commanding you today, to do them. Then it shall come about because you listened to these judgments, you kept them and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you his covenant and his lovingkindness he swore to your forefathers. He will love you and bless you and multiply you: he will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain, your new wine, and your oil. He increaseth your herd and the young of your flock, in the land which he swore to your fathers to give to you (Deuteronomy 7:11-13).”

There is a difference in the description of the Land here. Israel is no longer the “Land of milk and honey,” but is also now a land of “corn, wine, and oil.” Why is this different? Where did this change?

Biblical historians believe that one of the reasons the descriptions of Israel begin to change is the date in which they were written, and they reflect a difference in the nature of life for the nation of Israel. “Milk and honey” are wealth that is attainable by an unsettled people. Shepherds who live a nomadic life may have plenty of milk if they properly care for their flock. Honey can be found in the wild. Corn, wine, and oil are the products of agriculture and a developed and civilized nation that is no longer wandering in the wilderness.

This Lodge is not wandering into an unsettled, wild land. It is the product of many years of Masonic tradition. It has practiced and earned a Master’s wage. It is that of a developed system and a reliable and ancient Fraternity. So, we should view the blessing of the Cornerstone and its consecration with Corn, Wine, and Oil as not just a beginning, but a reward for labors performed well.

Unity Lodge No. 95 has a strong history, and a reputation for practicing Masonry and keeping its tenets safe in the repository of the breast of its members. As we observe this rededication here today, I want to congratulate you on many years of hard labor, and I implore you to enjoy the symbolic pouring of Corn, Wine, and Oil on the Cornerstones of your hearts, not just of this Lodge, as not only a reward for many years of true work, and of good work, but also as a Rededication to the Labors of a Master.

I hope I have shed a little light on why we use the symbols of Corn, Wine, and Oil here later today. I hope that when you watch the ceremony it is not just an act, that we are not just saying words and marching in processions, that we are just not here to shake hands and be seen; but that we learn the meanings of these symbols so that they can teach us the rewards of good Labor, for we know how they should be performed, for they are given to us in that Masonic Trestle Board which has been presented to Master Masons when the Lodge is well tiled.

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UNDERSTANDING THE ROYAL SECRET THROUGH THE PYTHAGOREAN MONAD

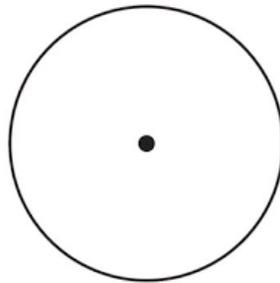
By
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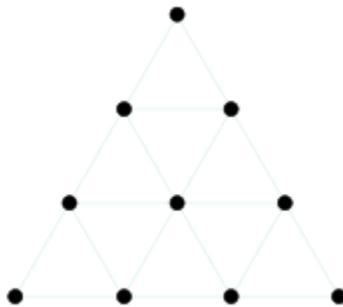
If a man has received the 32nd Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, then he has earned himself a most auspicious title: that of Master of the Royal Secret. As so many of us know, undergoing the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is quite like quenching your thirst from a firehose. Subsequently, I've yet to be acquainted with a Master of the Royal Secret who, immediately following the conclusion of the ceremony, would ever say he actually felt like one. On the contrary, a man will likely have a great many more questions at the conclusion of the 32nd Degree than he ever had at the beginning of his Masonic journey. This does not however mean that a man should abandon so easily the substance of the title he has just received. As those of us who have stayed the course for many years within the Rite are aware, ever so greater bits of wisdom become available after every instance a degree is witnessed. Thus, it is that a Master of the Royal Secret is *made* during the 32nd Degree, however he is not *realized* as such until he gives serious contemplation to what this degree teaches us. By and large, the meanings of the symbols remain veiled in mystery, and the explanations proffered sometimes seem to point toward something that upon scrutiny is more of a red herring than Masonic truth. So what does it all mean, then? This author will humbly provide his own insights in the hopes that other readers might yet build on what he has divined and create an even clearer picture of the esoteric value of the coded teachings we've been given.

In the last few centuries of the age before our Common Era, those who followed the philosophy and teachings of Pythagoras held many interesting metaphysical ideas. One of these ideas is the Monad, or the fundamental substance of all things. Pythagoras is said to have believed the Monad directly represented Deity. Ancient Hellenic and Italic peoples were as enamored of creation myths as we are today. As such and having been steeped in a rich tradition of rationalism, they were quite fond of using mathematics to illustrate their ideas and the Monad was no different. An argument can be made that this represents one of the earliest true cosmogonies since it is based on abstract reason and devoid of superstition. It follows that in the beginning, there must have been one *thing*. And this *thing* must have had *substance* as part of its essential *thingness*. We are still of the same opinion today, though we now call it the "Big Bang" and have considerably refined our mathematical explanations thereof. The Monad then begat the Dyad: the first binary. The Dyad continued then to create the Triad, and finally the entire "World of Numbers" as it was called, though it was all still *of* the Monad. It was the same substance, simply expressed in a special and limited manner. This limiting ironically allowed for the complexity of the modern universe, yet as complex as it can possibly become, the Monad still lies at the center of it all according to the Pythagoreans. "Infinite diversity in infinite combinations," as the Vulcans from Star Trek would say, though all composed of the same *stuff*. This is an enlightened view even if taken only from the perspective of modern science. Is there more to this than pure rationality? Is there perhaps a more ineffable spiritual quality to the Monad, as Pythagoras thought? I believe there is, and I believe it to be one of the most valuable of all the treasures buried in Freemasonry.

When a man is made a Master of the Royal Secret, he is told that he now has the Holy Doctrine and to “think, if he can think”. In truth, he does possess the Holy Doctrine, and he has been quite dramatically instructed on just what the Royal Secret really is, though he likely does not yet realize it. The knowledge is abstract and requires thinking outside of the boxes in which we so often find ourselves, whether they be political boxes, religious boxes, or societal boxes. This should come as little surprise to any Mason who has ever given consideration to the plethora of symbolism found within our order. They inspire within us a need to understand. We begin to study and then to interpret. We begin to uncover the keys of interpretation in archaic religions, in the realm of philosophy, and even in modern science. The Monad of the ancient Greeks is one such key, and it helps us understand many of the deeper meanings behind some of the symbols of Freemasonry. I will attempt to demonstrate.

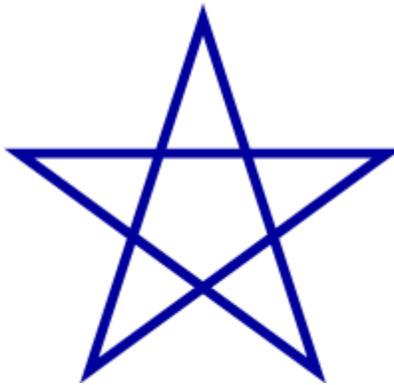


Behold in your mind a familiar symbol: the Point Within a Circle. This is an ancient symbol of our Craft and well-known to Blue Lodge Masons. Perhaps less well-known is that the Pythagoreans understood this symbol to be that of the Monad itself. The point at the center was said to represent Deity and the walls of the circle to represent the totality of Creation. We may extrapolate the idea further to imply that everything circumscribed within the walls of existence exists as elements created of the substance of Deity and is thusly divine. This idea is expressed repeatedly throughout Masonry, though it is particularly visible in the 32nd Degree. Practically every symbol refers us straight back to the concept of the single Divine substance radiating out into the ether and creating us and the world around us.



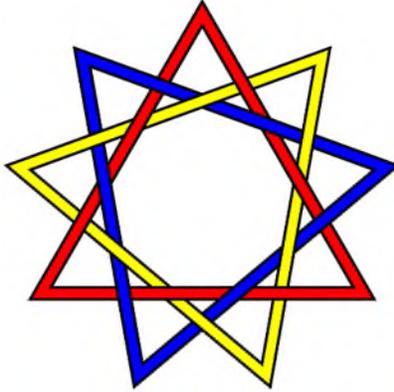
The Tetractys (Greater and Lesser) is the one of the clearest examples of this. Not only is the Tetractys attributed to Pythagoras, but also directly symbolizes the Monad. Furthermore, this is explicitly explained to the candidates by the Minister of State during the lecture of the 32nd Degree, though without using the word “Monad.” He informs us that the point at the apex of the

Tetractys represents the Divine Light, Deity in His purest and most primordial form. The two points below the apex represent the Divine Light and the Divine Wisdom within the Divine Light, or the Dyad. The three below this represent the Divine Light and the Divine Wisdom radiating out as the Divine Word, or the triad. The Lesser Tetractys ends with four points which are said to represent the four male emanations of Deity: an idea leading us right back to the concept of one single substance emanating outward and composing all things. The Greater Tetractys includes the three female emanations further extrapolating this same idea.



Another of the Pythagorean symbols found within the 32nd Degree is the Pentad, or the Star of Five Points. This is said to represent Ahura Mazda and the four male emanations, plainly referring us back again to Deity as the source and substance of things. The Pentad could then be understood as having the same meaning as the Lesser Tetractys. We find the same corollary in the Star of Seven Points with its arms showing the seven colors of the rainbow. This is said to represent the four male and three female emanations with Ahura Mazda at their source. If the Pentad is analogous to the Lesser Tetractys, then the Star of Seven Points is analogous to the Greater Tetractys. That these symbols, seemingly different on the surface yet identical in meaning, are used as such in this degree seems to suggest that their redundancy is itself a symbol of the interconnected oneness of the substance of all things. Masonry here is teaching us that the same substance can take many different forms, and it is teaching us this by using many different forms to teach the same lesson.

There exist many other symbols throughout the 32nd Degree which point us back toward the idea of the Monad. The Trimurti for instance symbolizes to Scottish Rite Freemasons the trinity of Divine Light, Divine Wisdom, and Divine Word. Since this trinity is synonymous with the aforementioned emanations of Deity, we know it can now symbolize the Monad as well.



Another of these symbols is the Triple Interlaced Triangle which forms the Star of Nine Points. Again, this refers us back to that same Divine trinity, though this time with a twist. Each triangle is one and each is three. This is just another way of repeating the same idea that seemingly different elements are in fact of the same substance. This figure also represents the sacred number nine, or the square of three, which *always* refers us back to Deity. There is a mathematical device known as the Pythagorean Talisman (yet another reference to Pythagoras) in which a square is drawn with nine equal squares within it. The numbers one through nine are added to each square in a specific order, which when summed up across any given column add up to fifteen. When the number fifteen is applied to Hebrew numerology, it represents the letters Yod and He, or the first two letters of the Sacred Name of Deity. Therefore, within this symbol, we have Zoroastrian, Pythagorean, and Hebrew spiritual truths represented, *yet again* reinforcing the idea that though things may appear separate on the surface, they are in fact of the same substance.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6
י		10
ה		<u>5</u>
		15

יהוה

Analyses of so many symbols yield the same result. It is my opinion that Freemasonry is constantly admonishing us through its use of allegory and symbol to seek further and further until we reach the first substance, the Monad. So many clues lead to this conclusion. So many that I assert it is entirely too much to be disregarded as coincidence, but there remains one very impactful question to be asked.

Why?

What actionable purpose does any of this knowledge serve? It does not seem to stand up to any kind of performative criterion in the world other than our own psychic edification. Is it enough to simply possess this knowledge? Just what, if anything, can we *do* with it? If this is such a great gift from the deep, esoteric Masonic underbelly, how is it going to substantively change my life? The answers are profound.

One of the most important changes is the immediate realization that our bodies, minds, and spirits are made of the Divine Substance. We are part of God. The seven emanations are allegories

for *us*. We are the emanations. The things we do, the processes that sustain us, the cycles of life, death, and rebirth, all things, everything that *exists* is part of God. When this realization fully roots in the conscious mind, we are no longer bound by the chains of spiritual tyranny. We come to terms with the fact that there is no intermediary between ourselves and Deity. Thusly if so inclined, we may choose to see ourselves as belonging to all religions and to none. We are linked inextricably to each other as we are all of the same substance, that substance is the substance of Deity Himself, therefore we are all simply different emanations from the same source learning how to interact in this physical world. The role of the priest who understands this knowledge is altered, as is the role of the king who knows the same, and as Masters of the Royal Secret, we are all anointed priests and kings. This knowledge is dangerous because it undermines religions and political bodies. It breaks the control of authoritarian spiritual despots. Indeed, it makes perfect sense that the oaths of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite would include sections in which we swear to fight against tyranny, fanaticism, oppression, injustice, etc. These things are absolutely antithetical to the purposes of those initiated into the Royal Secret. When a man sees the Divinity within everyone and within all things, it becomes impossible to oppress or truly be oppressed. In this sense, the Royal Secret concerns itself with true personal freedom. It is true emancipation of the soul. It is the ultimate expression of Masonic harmony, which as we know so well is the chief strength and support of all well-governed institutions, *most* especially this of ours.

TRANSLITERATING THE SACRED SYMBOLIC NAME

By
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Freemasonry in its purest form is a Mason's journey to discover his relationship to his Maker. From the first word uttered in Lodge through his advanced explorations, his experiences are about his trust, recognition, and understanding of who he is, from whence he came, and whither he is traveling. The ritual points toward the path to be traveled with numerous symbols and allegories to help aid in his travels. Some are quite overt and obvious while others are obscure and require some understanding of correlating signs, symbols, and numerical values to alpha characters consistent with the framework of the rituals. In this way numbers are often correlated to Hebrew letters revealing the Sacred Symbolic Name of Deity. This is the business of transliteration. The following will be a guide to help all interested to discover the Sacred Name in each of the degrees.

Triads are abundant throughout Masonry. Examples include the Three Stationed Officers of the Master's Lodge, three columns, wisdom, strength and, beauty, three knocks, three steps, three degrees, triangles, triple verbal repetitions, triple claps, and Brotherly love, relief and truth among many others. Three is taken to be the number of Deity, and in perfect harmony such as in the equilateral triangle, it represents the first three Divine emanations. From the Christian perspective they are represented as Omniscience, Omnipotence and, Omnipresence. (Grand Chapter...) These are important for every Mason to contemplate over the course of his Masonic journey, and it is from a recognition of this early lesson in Masonry that we build further in our awareness of the Divine in our temporal lives.

In the first degree we learn who we are and from whence we came; descended from Light and returning to Light. In the second degree, insight is gained into our principal working tool and the uses thereof; our mind! Used productively, we learn the wages of our labors, but we are made to first climb a flight of winding stairs consisting of three, five, and seven steps, or fifteen in all.

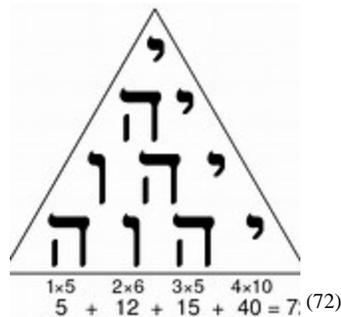
It is here that a hidden story is given in numerical form. First, it is important to understand the wages of a Fellowcraft Mason. The fifteen steps take us to the Middle Chamber. The Middle Chamber is that place symbolic of our deeper secluded self, wherein we commune with God. The wages of a Fellowcraft are corn, wine, and oil.

Corn is a new world plant and might just as well be supplanted by wheat or any other multi-grain plant. The symbolism is that of repetition as the repetition of kernels on the cob. Our labor, (a form of prayer or request, or simply adoration) for which we are rewarded (wages), must be repeated consistently and with continuity to achieve the re-creative ends intended. One swing of the axe does not fell the mighty oak, but consistent repetition in continuity of one swing after another causes the oak to fall. Through the imaginative mind (prayer) of man (the Fellowcraft) lumber will be harvested and used in the re-creative process of the material temporal world.

Wine is a symbol of relaxation or easiness. We speak and socialize more freely when we've had a sip or two of wine. The meaning here is that our communion with Deity (prayer) should be free flowing and easy, not stunted nor erratic. Not formulaic nor mindlessly repeated over and over absent conscious thankfulness and appreciation for the request already fulfilled within the dimension of time.

What of oil? Oil is used in consecration of Lodges to God, churches, and other holy edifices. In certain Masonic degrees Masons are anointed with oil; the meaning of which is that they are consecrated in some way to the service of God in their temporal capacities. Oil then is representational of the consecration of the communion with Deity, thereby suggesting the sacredness of such action and the holiness of the request already fulfilled.

What is there in the numerical value of the fifteen steps to corroborate the symbolism as stated above? Through the process of transliteration, the number fifteen is simply broken down into its two most readily noticed components. That would be ten and five (10+5=15). Transliteration then allows us to compare those numbers against the ancient Hebrew alphabet, which is consistent with the cultural framework of the allegory. There the number ten (10) correlates to the tenth Hebrew letter Y, or YOD. The number five (5) correlates to the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet which is the letter H, or HEY. YOD HEY are the first two letters of the Sacred Symbolic Name and are represented in the first and second lines in the Tetragrammaton which, when completed, yields the seventy-two names of Deity.



Through transliteration of the Fellowcraft stairway it is apparent that the Middle Chamber is a sacred place where something special transacts. That transaction concludes in the receipt of wages. The Middle Chamber is not the Pay Master’s office and it has nothing to do with fashioning blocks of stone, but rather the re-creation of a material reality which can be measured either in length, width, and height, or in time as the wages of recreation in the present or in a time to come. Wages in this allegory are, metaphorically, the material constructs of temporal man through the application of his inner self interacting with Deity. The wages of a Fellowcraft are an important allegory in understanding our relationship to the Creator, and a means by which we are to interact with the Divine as re-creators in the deepest recesses of our inner being.

Throughout Masonry we encounter the number nine in a variety of ways. In certain Chapters nine is a predominant number, often demonstrated in raps, circumambulations, number of officers, and certain symbols and sometimes various gestures. It is prominent in the Royal Arch and is visually paramount in the Thirty-second degree of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite as the triple interlaced triangle or nine-pointed star.

It is important to recall that in ancient times the Hebrew people were not permitted to pronounce the sacred name of Deity. Pronouncing means speaking the name. So, if the name of God could not be pronounced how else might it be indicated? It might be gesticulated! And, that is exactly what happens in “balancing 3x3” or in giving a battery of nine raps of the gavel, claps of the hands, or knocks at the door. The number nine can be seen in the façade of some Masonic structures. Hiram Lodge #7 in Franklin, TN is a very good example of this (photo on the following page).



The number nine, arithmetically, is the square of three ($3 \times 3 = 9$). To diagram the square of three, one would simply draw a square and divide it into a grid of nine smaller squares within one large square. A single digit between one and nine placed in each of the nine boxes would satisfactorily diagram the square of three. However, there is more to this than meets the eye.

Carefully placing certain digits between one and nine in particular squares within the large square will generate what is known as the Pythagorean Talisman shown below.

4	9	2	...	15
3	5	7	...	15
8	1	6	...	15
∴	∴	∴	∴	∴
15	15	15	15	15

It is readily seen that the middle row of numbers is the same as the number of steps to the Middle Chamber as discussed above. Again, three, five, and seven total fifteen. Furthermore, the sum of each row, each column, and corner to corner is also fifteen. This was a sacred talisman in ancient times, and supposedly, people carried it with them as a talisman for God's protection as it depicts the Sacred Symbolic Name of Deity. (Mackey, A.G.)

Therefore, it can be readily seen that whether gesticulating the number nine or rapping the gavel nine times, knocking nine times, or counting the number of officers in a Chapter, etc., the number nine is a strong hint drawing our attention to some interaction with Deity, since nine transliterates to the Hebrew letters YOD and HEY as discussed in the Tetragrammaton above.

From both foregoing examples it is clear that three is a number of Divine importance. Five is the number of human characteristics that most closely permit our practice of brotherly love, just as “God so loved the world...” This is well demonstrated in the Five Points of Fellowship.

Seven is seen as the number of completions with there being seven days in a week, seven combined primary and secondary colors, seven notes in the diatonic scale; the Seed of Life contains six circles within a seventh and there are seven seals in the Book of Seven Seals well demonstrated in the 17th degree of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite. (Pike, A.)

Three, five, and seven are amongst the Sacred Numbers, each having its own significance with respect to Deity. However, taken together they are especially important because they transliterate to the Hebrew letters YOD and HEY as previously discussed.

There are times when numbers are not directly referenced in the underlying references to Deity. Sometimes the story is told using characters or emblems such as the ancient Hebrew tribes. When viewing Masonry through the modern lens of Christianity we will hear the names of the Christian evangelists. Interestingly, the four principal tribes of Israel correlate very well with the four Christian evangelists even though the time and place of the Masonic allegory may be vastly different.

Both the ancient principal tribes of Israel and the Christian evangelists are correlated together through the use of a common emblem which is the key to transliterating their relevance in the story of our search for our attachment to the Divine Essence.

The ancient Hebrew tribe of Judah is correlated to the Christian evangelist, Mark. Both Judah and Mark are represented emblematically by the lion.

The Hebrew tribe of Ephraim and the Christian evangelist, Luke are both emblematically represented by the ox. An ox is a castrated bull.

The tribe of Rueben and the evangelist, Matthew are both represented by a winged human or a man, while lastly, the Hebrew tribe of Dan and the Christian evangelist, John were both then and now represented by the eagle, as in ancient times. It was through the Egyptians that the eagle or hawk became synonymous with the snake and scorpion. Today the scorpion is the more common astrological emblem, but Masonry continues to use the reference of the eagle.

There is still a little further to go in the transliteration process here. Both tribes and evangelists led us to the emblems associated with them. The emblems of the “Lion, the Ox, the Man, and the Eagle” further lead us to another correlation with the fixed signs of the zodiac, which is the basis for an entire field of Astro-theology, a subject far afield from our subject of transliterating aspects of the ritual to the Sacred Symbolic Name.

All signs of the zodiac have a fixed numerical position numbered one through twelve, and each of the signs is represented by its unique emblem. Those emblems correlate with the tribes and the evangelists.

Judah and Mark associated with the lion correlate to the astrological emblem of Leo. Ephraim and Luke being represented by the bull correlate to Taurus, while Rueben and Matthew represented by a man or an angel fit nicely with the sign of Aquarius. The Tribe of Dan and the evangelist John emblemized by the eagle or scorpion are then tied to the astrological sign of Scorpio.

Since there are twelve signs in the zodiac and since those signs hold fixed positions, they have a numerical value associated with them in that position. That value is a number between one and twelve. As such, Judah and Mark as Leo the Lion, hold the fifth position and represent number five (5). Ephraim and Luke are represented by the ox or bull and therefore, as Taurus the Bull, represent the second (2) zodiacal sign. Rueben and Matthew as the figure of man correlate to

Aquarius and hold the slot at number eleven (11). Lastly, the tribe of Dan and John the Evangelist as the Eagle or Scorpio would occupy the eighth position of the zodiac (8).

By taking the sum of these four numerical positions in the zodiac we can transliterate to the ancient Hebrew alphabet once again. The sum is twenty-six (26). When the number twenty-six (26) is broken down into four parts as ten (10), five (5), six (6) and five (5) the correlation to alpha characters becomes YOD HEY VAUV HEY or (JHVH) in the Christianized version (Jehovah) of the Sacred Symbolic Name of Deity. (יהוה), HVHY, Yahweh in the Hebrew. (Driber, T.J.)

In conclusion, as we continue to seek after that luminescence of Deity, we must continually look beneath the obvious outer layer of allegory to realize the truth for which we seek. Transliteration yields the Symbolic Name of God in numerous ways through the multi-faceted and rich allegorical rituals of Masonry. Always, everywhere, in everything there is God whether by letter, number, or note, and since Masonry is all about you and your relationship to the Creator, that which is sought must be right at hand, perhaps buried right beneath the altar of your temple. (Tap, Tap, Tap)

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“ARE YOU A FELLOWCRAFT MASON”

By

Nick Gatlin, 32° KCCH

Bro. Gatlin is a member of the Society of Masonic Orators and Litterateurs, of the Nashville Valley of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, and of Hiram Lodge No. 7 in Franklin, TN.

Every Fellowcraft Mason knows the answer to this question, having been taught the answer as he learned his lecture for the degree. His next few responses include quick answers that when contemplated, encompass a huge portion of the most important lessons in all of Masonry.

Most Masons who have had their Third degree would respond to the question by pointing out that they are Master Masons. While it's probably not intentional, the insinuation might be that they're somehow "better" than a Fellowcraft Mason. In cases where this answer is intended to make such a claim, I think that they're making a grave error.

Considering the rather obvious lessons taught in the Second degree about its working tools, it's clear that this degree provides two facets related to Masonic conduct and how a Mason represents the Craft to the outside world. The Square is unique among all of the implements of Masonry because it is the only tool which we are explicitly taught to apply to both ourselves and one another. The other tools are primarily for "internal" application. The Trowel may be considered only for external use in a sense.

So, what is being conveyed in the lessons of the working tools in the Fellowcraft degree? I believe that they can be summarized in three words; how to act. With regard to the Square, it's not only how you act, but your invitation (expressed in the lecture) to all other Masons to judge your behavior. As each Fellowcraft makes this invitation, we all are given blanket authority to judge the behavior of our Brethren. At least in a social sense, this is perhaps the most important teaching in any degree. There is nothing that we do that affects the world around us more than how we act and treat one another, and it's not only Masons who will judge us, but everyone with whom we interact. This same lesson is conveyed to the Entered Apprentice in the charge of the First degree, and its emphasis in the Second should draw our attention to its importance.

There is another aspect to the degrees (including those of the appendant bodies) that newer Masons often seem to misunderstand. As the Mason advances through each of the degrees, he does not really rise to higher levels in the Craft. In actuality, he broadens his understanding of the "scope and purport" of the Fraternity.

It was once explained to me that students of Oxford University must take examinations for not only the classes in which they're currently working, but repeat the examinations for previous classes as they advance. This ensures that they retain that earlier knowledge and demonstrate that they have not abandoned the information that forms the foundation on which higher learning is built. If this is true, I believe that this is the exact model on which Masonry should operate.

It is important to understand that the teachings of Masonry are designed to be cumulative, not taken as stepping stones to get to the next level or degree. None of the lessons are ever to be discarded simply because we have advanced to what we think of as a higher level. Each one should be taken as another foundation on which to build and expand our minds and opportunities to broaden our understanding of who we are and what we're supposed to be doing. I would assert that the Fellowcraft degree not only builds on the lessons of the Entered Apprentice degree, but sets forth a wealth of new tools, instruction, and information that is absolutely essential to our

development in Masonry and life. There are explanations concerning how our minds and senses work, how to improve our skills at learning and teaching, how true enlightenment manifests itself in our behavior, and how we are to look after one another's interests.

The Second degree seems to do this so plainly and succinctly that it should be easily understood by anyone who receives it. While the symbolism may be abundant and potentially complex, the lessons are so obvious that the value of this degree may not be overstated.

Regardless of how many degrees and honors I might receive in Masonry, I will always answer the question, "Are you a Fellowcraft Mason?" with a resounding, "I am. (etc.)" While there may be higher degrees in Masonry, there is no higher duty than that of being a well-informed Fellowcraft Mason who can apply the instruction in the ritual and lecture. Brethren, may our work, especially in this degree, never be discontinued.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, JANUARY 2018**

THEREFORE—A TRIANGLE OF 3 DOTS

By Elliot Chikofsky

This essay was submitted by R.:W.: Elliot Chikofsky, Chairman, Information Services of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.

--STB Editor

Every symbol in Freemasonry has a story to tell and lessons worth learning, even one so trifling as a punctuation mark.

If your lodge has its meeting notice produced by a traditional print shop, or if you look at old notices in the lodge's archives, it is likely that you will see honorifics of rank abbreviated with 3 dots forming an equilateral triangle:

W.: R.:W.: M.:W.:

The "W.:" prefixed to a brother's name states that this brother is to be addressed with the honorific "Worshipful." He is the current Master or a Past Master of a lodge. A brother honored with Grand Rank by his Grand Jurisdiction has the honorific "Right Worshipful," abbreviated "R.:W.: ." And, the high office of Grand Master is usually recognized with the honorific "Most Worshipful," formally abbreviated as "M.:W.: ."

These days, we often see typewritten forms of abbreviations for these honorifics, as "Wor.," "R.W.," "M.W.," with simple periods replacing the 3-dot symbol. These forms are mostly a very modern phenomenon in the long history of the Masonic Craft. Typewriters in the 1960s and '70s, leading into word processing keyboards of the 1980s and 1990s, limited the characters provided. A triangle of 3 dots was not one of the symbols available. Though, the user of a "golf ball" style typewriter, such as the IBM Selectric series, could change to a symbol ball for special characters. While this was simple, changing for one character mid-sentence was cumbersome. So, the 3 dots symbol was left to knowledgeable printing shops to insert.

Why three dots?

The triangle of dots comes from mathematics, in particular: geometry, algebra, and logic. A proof of a target equation or proposition begins with an initial observation statement or a "given" starting point. Successive changes apply known, or previously proven, rules to modify the equation. The rule allowing each change is documented, enabling the reader of the proof to follow and verify the reasoning used. The last statement of the proof is its conclusion.

In formal proof writing, the conclusion reached—the target equation or proposition—would be prefixed with the Latin phrase "*quod erat demonstrandum.*" This literally says "*that which was to be demonstrated.*" You might recognize this phrase by its abbreviation "Q.E.D."

The triangle of three dots (∴) is the symbolic representation of Q.E.D. and is often used to flag the conclusion of such proofs. This symbol is read in English as if it were the word "Therefore." For example, in the design of logic circuits in computer engineering technology, an analysis to reduce the complexity of a circuit design for a computer chip might have a proof such as:

$A + AB$ given
 $A(1 + B)$ distributive law
 $A(1)$ dominance law
 A identity law
 $\therefore A + AB = A$

Or, in an algebra problem:

$4X - 28 = 0$ given
 $4X = 28$ add 28 to both sides
 $X = 7$ divide both sides by 4
 $\therefore X=7$

The use of the 3-dot triangle to mean “Therefore” at the conclusion of proofs has been traced back to the publication of algebraic texts in German in 1659. It is likely older than that.

The 3 Dots as an Honorific

The 3-dot triangle is a very appropriate symbol for accomplished leaders of the Masonic Craft. A brother attains the honorific rank “Worshipful” when he becomes the Master of his lodge. To rise to this station, he must have served as a warden and has typically advanced through the officers’ chairs of the lodge. He is to have demonstrated his knowledge and proficiency with the working tools and practices of the Craft. He was already a Master Mason and has further demonstrated his appreciation of the noble arts and sciences. Finally, he has shown moral leadership in directing the work of the lodge’s craftsmen. Thus, he has accomplished and demonstrated what is needed: Q.E.D.

The 3 dots in a triangle, like many uses of the number 3 in symbolic Masonry, has further allusions. The number 3 in many cultures alludes to deity and cardinal virtues. To Masons, it reminds us of our key principles of brotherhood, relief, and truth—all of which a brother with the title “Worshipful” should continue to exemplify as a role model.

We show the triangle as “pointing up”—with one of the dots above the row of the others. A triangle with one point up has long represented both fire (driving force) and manhood in numerous cultures throughout the world. As with other symbolic uses in Masonry where one point is elevated, it represents that one must learn more to advance and lead. However, that dot is not meant as better or way far ahead. Rather, it is opening a trail that the others can follow as the dots travel on together. While he may serve as one selected to lead, that brother is always a part of the Craft and his lodge.

The use of the 3-dot symbol for abbreviations in Masonic writing has been traced back as far as 1774 in France. It was sometimes also used for brethren who were not lodge Masters since, as Master Masons, they have demonstrated moral growth by their mastery of the lessons of the three degrees. Masonic diplomas in Blue Lodge and Scottish Rite often use this symbol.

It is interesting to note that Albert Mackey, in his 1873 Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, contended that the 3-dots character was “not a symbol, but simply a mark of abbreviation . . . not accepted by the English Masons.” But he noted its adoption elsewhere and that its use in the United States was “gradually extending.” In another entry of the work, he cited 84 kinds of uses in French Masonic documents.

Return of the 3 Dots

The growth of typewritten materials for the Masonic Lodges caused a decline in the use of the honorifics with 3 dots. The symbol was not on the keyboard, so “W.” or “Wor.” supplanted

“W:.” Some attempted to imitate the triangle by using a colon-period combination. But “W:. ,” a rough sort of oblong square, never achieved widespread use. However, technology has brought us circling back to use of the 3-dot equilateral triangle symbol. In modern web pages and word processing software for PCs, tablets, and cell phones, the use of symbols and emoji characters is easy, accepted, and considered cool. It is now easy to use the 3-dot triangle.

For a web page, the HTML symbol code is “∴” (recall its name “Therefore” above) or “∴.” So, one types the string “R∴ W∴” to print on the web page screen as “R:W:.”

In Microsoft Office, the Unicode U+2234 character can be used by entering Hex value 2234 and selecting Unicode on the Insert Symbol dialog. After inserting it once, the 3-dot character can be copied and pasted anywhere in the document.

Q.E.D.—Any Lodge’s modern web page, or its meeting notice printed by desktop publishing, can use the traditional and proper honorific abbreviations “W:.”, “R:W:.”, and “M:W:.”

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, FEBRUARY 2018**

BLESSINGS OF THE MASONIC FAMILY

By Jennifer Maynard, OES

This is a story about how the Masonic family reaches out to help one another. Jennifer Maynard, an active member of the Order of Eastern Star in Ohio, having served as Worthy Matron several times, an OES district association president, and currently, Grand Representative of Tennessee in Ohio, didn't know what to do when her daughter, miles away needed help. Here is her story.

--STB Editor

Many times I am asked by nonmembers why I participate in the Order of the Eastern Star. It is usually coworkers that see me working through my lunch hour so I can leave an hour early, running to the bathroom in office attire and emerging in a formal gown and glittery silver shoes. I love when I am asked because it gives me a chance to share one of the greatest love stories I have ever experienced.

In May of 2009, I had the honor of being the Conductress of Hillsboro Chapter No. 441 for the initiation of my daughter, Madalynn. A few months later I became a "Bobcat Parent" as I moved my daughter into Foster Hall on the South Green of Ohio University (OU) in Athens, Ohio. What a day! She was so excited. OU was her first choice of universities, and she was excited to have been accepted. That fall happened to be the largest class of incoming freshman to date. Many of the freshmen had to be mixed into upper-class housing, including Madalynn who was assigned to a private room at the edge of campus.

It was a bittersweet moment when I gave her that final hug and began the three-hour drive home. Yes, I cried all the way. I missed her terribly the moment I pulled into my driveway.

About a month into the quarter, I received a sobbing phone call from my daughter. "I hate it here. I want to come home. I'm starving! Come get me!"

My mind was racing and my heart was sinking. I thought to myself, "You chose to go there! You couldn't wait to leave! How could you be starving? We bought a meal plan!"

I had received specific "parent materials" during New Student Orientation that included a warning that we should not let our students come home during the first quarter if we wanted them to be truly successful. What a dilemma! As I hung up the phone, I began to cry. It was a weeknight evening. I was working 12-hour days at the time and was a three-hour drive away from the campus. I had commitments that weekend that would make a quick visit nearly impossible. How could I get to her? I cannot remember the last time I had felt such pain and conflicting agony.

I did not want to call OU and risk being labeled as one of "those" parents. And I did not want to call her RA (resident assistant) and cause her to be labeled as one of "those" students. Not knowing what else to do, I called my chapter secretary and asked if there was an Eastern Star Chapter anywhere near Athens.

"Why yes," she said. "There is actually one in Athens." She gave me the phone number of the Athens Chapter secretary, and I called straight away. I began the conversation with, "You do not know me, but I am the Associate Matron of Hillsboro Chapter. My daughter is a new OES member

and a freshman at OU. She is struggling with some issues. Would someone be willing to check on her for me?" The secretary was more than happy to help and took down Madalynn's contact information. She assured me that someone would check in on her.

The next day, my daughter called me and in a bubbly, enthusiastic voice said, "Mom! Did you know there is an Eastern Star Chapter in Athens? Can you overnight my dues card? The Worthy Matron called me, and someone is going to pick me up on Monday and take me to the meeting! She gave me a list of people I can call if I need anything and said I was really going to love it here in Athens!"

And pick her up they did—for that meeting and every other after that. What a difference! With one phone call, my daughter went from being an anonymous face in a crowd of 30,000+ students to being known by people who truly cared for her. Help went from being three hours away to being three minutes away.

Athens Chapter became the hug I was too far away to give and the comfort of a family connection right around the corner. Many of the members were, or had been, faculty or staff at the University. They helped her learn the ropes—for example, she could use her meal card at any cafeteria on campus, not just the one in her dorm. On holidays and breaks, my daughter came home to me. When classes resumed, she confidently went back to OU and her Athens Star family.

I can never repay the sisters and brothers of Athens Chapter or express the deep love and gratitude that I feel for them. I can only pay it forward and be the hug and help for some other sister or brother in need.

Whenever I share my story, I ask why anyone wouldn't want to be a part of something like that.

During her years at OU, Madalynn became a dual member of Athens Chapter and even served as an officer in 2012 and 2013. She made the Dean's list every semester except the first. She learned what true sisterhood is from the members of Athens Chapter, how to be an officer, and the importance of ritualistic excellence.

Fast forward to 2017, when Ohio's Worthy Grand Matron chose the theme "Unforgettable Eastern Star Stories" for the year. I was serving as Worthy Matron of her chapter at the time and, in keeping with that theme, told this story at our inspection meeting, where a large group of members from all over the state were in attendance. A few months later, at our annual Ohio Grand Chapter session, I was approached by a member of a chapter across the state who had attended our inspection. She told me of a member in her own chapter who had recently moved to New Mexico. Her friend was a new mother who was struggling in a new area. The member was inspired by my story to look up Eastern Star chapters in her area and contacted one. Our sisters and brothers in New Mexico did not disappoint! Another Star sister has been wrapped in the loving embrace of a chapter far away from home.

The really beautiful thing about this story is that it is not at all unusual in our Order of the Eastern Star, or in any of the organizations in our Masonic family. We are all familiar with the Masonic tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. I have heard other stories that give examples of how our Masonic family has responded to the needs of its members, but it was my own experience that brought home the true meaning of fraternal love. We are that beacon of light and hope for one another wherever we may roam. We shine our brightest when we reflect each other's light, and we happily shine for those who need us, when they need us. What a blessing to be a part of the Order of the Eastern Star and the Masonic family.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, MARCH 2018**

MASONIC VICE-PRESIDENTS

By Michael L. Castroll

Our late Brother Michael L. Castroll researched this interesting article for Connecticut Freemasons.

--STB Editor

There are many debates over the so-called secrets of Masonry. Among these debates is the number of Presidents of the United States who were brothers in our craft. Two of our Presidents were Grand Masters in their jurisdictions, but did you know that several of our Vice Presidents were Grand Masters of their Grand Lodge? Eighteen Vice Presidents were brothers.

This list of patriots starts with Brother George Clinton. Born in 1739, this brother served in the Continental Congress, and was Governor of New York and became our third Vice President serving both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. He was a brother of Warren Lodge No. 17, New York City and served as Worshipful Master. His legacy was to have lodges named for him in various places along the Hudson.

Next was Elbridge Gerry, whose Masonic history is no less speculative than his infamous Gerrymander, a short-lived redistricting plan put in place while Governor of Massachusetts. He was an alleged member of Philanthropic Lodge in Marblehead, but for this signer of the Declaration of Independence the minutes accounting for his initiation have yet to be found.

Daniel D. Tompkins was our sixth vice president, the son of a farmer and a Columbia alum went on to bigger things. He was raised in Hiram Lodge No. 72, Mount Pleasant, New York. He served several lodges before being seated as Grand Master of New York. He served as Governor of the state, and in 1813, he was honored by becoming the first Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite's Northern Masonic Jurisdiction.

Blue Grass native Richard M. Johnson was born in Bryant's Station, Kentucky. Martin Van Buren's vice president was raised in Hiram Lodge No. 4, Frankfort, Kentucky, and Mount Vernon Lodge No. 14. He seemed to be swept up by the tumult of the Morgan Affair. In 1836, he was described as an "adhering Mason."

George Mifflin Dallas was a native of Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love. In 1818, Brother Dallas was initiated into Franklin Lodge No. 134, Philadelphia, and served as the lodge's Worshipful Master in 1821. In his second term as Master, he presented lectures on the origin, benefits, science, and principles of Masonry. He was later to become Grand Master of Pennsylvania. It is no wonder Brother James Polk chose Brother George Dallas to serve as our eleventh Vice President.

William Rufus King was born in rural Samson County, North Carolina and became Vice President under Franklin Pierce. He knelt at the altar of Masonry at Phoenix Lodge No. 8, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

John Cabell Breckinridge served as our Vice President in the administration of Brother James Buchanan. Another Kentucky native, he was raised at Des Moines Lodge No. 42 (now No. 1) in Burlington, Iowa, while sojourning there. After spending four years as Vice President, with growing tensions moving toward the Civil War, he walked out of the Democratic Convention to head his own

ticket and garner 72 electoral votes. He was well loved by his Companions and Sir Knights and was given a Knight Templar funeral.

Andrew Johnson was born in the rural Smokey Mountains of Tennessee, where he apprenticed to a tailor. When the southern states seceded to form the Confederate States of America, Andrew Johnson was one of the few southerners remaining. Brother Johnson became our seventeenth Vice President and, with Lincoln, forged the Union Party to encourage Democrats who would not vote for a Republican. Five weeks after inauguration Brother Andrew Johnson was hurriedly sworn into the presidency after the assassination of President Lincoln.

Schuyler Colfax served as President Grant's first Vice President. A native of New York City, he moved to Indiana with his family in 1836. He was initiated in Lebanon Lodge No. 7, Washington, District of Columbia, but he was passed and raised in St. Joseph Lodge No. 45, South Bend, Indiana. His greater notoriety was as a major icon with the International Order of Odd Fellows.

Adlai Ewing Stevenson was born in Christian County, Kentucky. After his schooling, the family moved to Bloomington, Illinois in 1852. He was Grover Cleveland's Vice President during his second term. He received his Masonic degrees in Metamora Lodge No. 82, Metamora, Illinois, and later affiliated with Bloomington Lodge No. 43. He served both of his lodges as Worshipful Master. During his vice presidency, he was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Illinois.

Garrett A. Hobart was the first of Brother William McKinley's vice presidents. He was raised in Falls City Lodge, in Paterson, New Jersey, and was very active in all of the York and Scottish Rite bodies. His term as Vice President was cut short by his untimely death in 1899.

When President McKinley was shot, it was a week of waiting before Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., our twenty-fifth Vice President was to be sworn in as our twenty-sixth chief executive. Shortly after becoming vice president, Brother Roosevelt knelt at the altar of Masonry and took his Masonic obligations in Matinecock Lodge No. 806, in Oyster Bay, Long Island, New York.

Thomas R. Marshall was our twenty-eighth Vice President to President Woodrow Wilson. During the 1912 campaign, he coined the phrase, "What this country needs is a good five-cent cigar." He was raised in Columbia City Lodge No. 189, Columbia City, Indiana. He served as Active in the Scottish Rite's Northern Masonic Jurisdiction.

Henry A. Wallace was the son of Brother Henry C. Wallace, who served the Harding and Coolidge administrations as Secretary of Agriculture. He found himself in Brother Roosevelt's New Deal as Secretary of Agriculture, then Secretary of Commerce, and in the third term as Vice President. He was a brother of Capital Lodge No. 138, Des Moines, Iowa.

Harry S Truman was born in Lamar, Missouri and educated in Independence, Missouri. In 1909, he took his first Masonic steps at Belton Lodge, then charter Master of Grandview Lodge. In 1940, he was elected Grand Master of Missouri. He was Bro. Franklin Roosevelt's Vice President for only 82 days, before being sworn in as chief executive. During his presidency, he served as Worshipful Master of The Missouri Lodge of Research, while his sister was Grand Matron of Missouri Eastern Star.

Next on the list is Lyndon Baines Johnson. From the Senate, he wound up as John F. Kennedy's Vice President. He became our thirty-sixth President on November 22, 1963. He was an Entered Apprentice Mason, being initiated in Johnson City Lodge No. 561, Johnson City, Texas. Brother Johnson's Vice President was Brother, Sir Knight, and Noble Hubert Horatio Humphrey and took his Masonic degrees in Cataract Lodge No. 2, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The last in the list is former President Gerald R. Ford, Jr. He was initiated on September 30, 1949, in Malta Lodge No. 465, Grand Rapids, Michigan, with his two half-brothers. He took his Fellowcraft and Master Mason degrees in Columbia Lodge No. 3, Washington, D.C., on April 20

and May 18, 1951. As luck would have it, the only leadership position he really wanted he never got to be, Speaker of the House.

Betty got that one!

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, APRIL 2018**

LEADERSHIP THROUGH RITUAL

By L. Arby Humphrey

The Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons in Wisconsin Brother L. Arby Humphrey has an interesting perspective on how our ritual can help develop our leadership skills. We thank MW Humphrey for his permission to reprint this article from the March 2018 Wisconsin Masonic Journal.

--STB Editor

Leadership seems to be a very popular topic these days. Amazon offers over 100,000 books on leadership. I read that new leadership books have been coming out at a rate of more than four per day and so far this year over 1,000 books have been published with the word “leadership” in the title, to say nothing about all the magazine and internet articles. I recently “Googled” leadership articles and in just under half a second I received 426 million results.

As someone who spent most of his life in one type of leadership position or another, I’ve read countless books and articles, attended several thousands of hours of leadership training, and taken numerous leadership seminars.

All that said, the very best leadership lessons I learned were taught in Lodge, and one of the best books on leadership is our Masonic Cipher. Here are just a few examples of Masonic lessons that will serve you well in any G leadership role:

In our ritual, we discover critical traits; not only of good Masons but also of great leaders. Masonic virtues such as truth, fortitude, prudence, and justice are also highly respected leadership qualities. In our ritual we learn that we should judge with candor, admonish with friendship, and reprehend with justice—that’s great advice for any leader.

As Masons, we learn that it is important to put people to work and give them proper instruction. Idleness and wasted time creates dissatisfaction and leads to unrest. People who are busy and have direction are happier because work brings an increased sense of self-worth. Productive work helps us contribute to the world in which we live and gives people a sense of worth and satisfaction.

Our ritual uses the example of the beehive to promote industry and cooperative labor. Every time we open and close a Lodge, the Senior Warden stresses that harmony is the strength and support of all institutions. We know how easily discord can creep into an organization. Arguments and power struggles cause discontent and will quickly weaken and destroy an organization.

Disagreement and debate will occur, but Masonry promotes a positive atmosphere where these discussions occur without resorting to personal attacks or derailments. “Peace and Harmony” should always prevail. Whether or not an agreement on the issue is reached, the option to agree or disagree amicably should always remain.

The instructive tongue receives the sound from the attentive ear is another important leadership lesson. It teaches that it is important first to understand, and then to be understood. Listening is a powerful leadership and communication skill. When we listen with the intent to

understand, rather than with the intent to reply, we begin the process of true communication and relationship building. Listening with an attentive ear takes skill and patience, but it leads to understanding and earns trust. Once we truly understand another's point of view, we can then seek to be understood by the skillful use of grammar, rhetoric, and logic.

Leaders with an attentive ear gain high admiration and respect. Our symbolic Masonic tools are perfect additions to any leaders toolbox. Our level reminds us to stay genuine, straight, and true. The plumb keeps us honorable and upstanding, moral and ethical while the square reminds us to stay fair and honest, squaring our actions by the square of virtue. The compasses keep us within due bounds, freely choosing to do the right thing, thereby setting a good example.

I've touched on just a few of the many great leadership lessons and traits we learn in our Masonic ritual; there are many more. It comes as no great surprise that so many great leaders have been, and still are, Freemasons. So the next time you find yourself in a position of responsibility, try adapting a Masonic leadership style.

I guarantee that it won't fail you.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, MAY 2018**

WE SALUTE BROTHER HARRY W. COLMERY (VETERANS ADVOCATE)

by Simon R. LaPlace

Armed Forces Day in the United States falls on the third Saturday in May. It is a day to honor all the military serving our country. Our Brother Harry W. Colmery (1890–1979) not only transformed military benefits, but he transformed our country as well.

Since the beginning of the Revolutionary War, some military Veterans were allowed retirement compensation for their service. First officers, then disabled and poverty-stricken enlisted men and widows qualified. Finally, in 1828, the law was expanded to include any soldier who served. The last Revolutionary soldier to die was Daniel F. Bakeman, who passed on April 15, 1869, at the age of 109 years. Esther S. Damon, the last Revolutionary War widow on the pension list, passed away November 11, 1906, 123 years after the end of the War.

“Old Soldiers Homes,” also known as Veterans retirement homes, sprang up in various states to care for veterans of the War of 1812 and the Mexican American War.

The Civil War resulted in so many disabled Veterans that states set up Veterans Homes. Many eventually evolved into Veterans Hospitals supervised by the by the national government, the first being in 1868 in Togus, Maine.

The Pension Building in Washington, D.C., now the National Building Museum, opened in 1887 to accommodate over 900,000 Union pensioners. In the 1880’s nearly a third of the United States budget was consumed with pension-related expenses. Anticipating the influx of soldiers who had lost a limb, it is perhaps the first building designed for the disabled. Stairways have deep treads and short risers to accommodate those on crutches.

Today, there is still one daughter of a Civil War soldier who receives a pension. There are sixteen widows and children of soldiers who fought in the Spanish-American War of 1898.

In 1921, Congress created the Veterans Bureau to consolidate programs managed by three agencies—the Bureau of War Risk Insurance, Public Health Service, and the Federal Board of Vocational Education. The consolidation still left two other agencies administering veterans benefits—the Bureau of Pensions of the Interior Department and the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. In 1930, all the departments were combined under the new Veterans Administration.

In 1932, thousands of World War I Veterans, the “Bonus Army,” marched on Washington demanding redemption of bonus certificates issued them by Congress but not due to mature until 1945. In 1936, Congress voted to redeem nearly two billion dollars of certificates and thus diffused the situation.

Fearing a similar problem would occur at the end of World War II, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars favored a broad-reaching plan. Brother Harry Colmery of Swissvale Lodge No. 656 in Swissvale, Pennsylvania, led the charge. He was a past national commander of the American Legion and a life-long advocate for Veterans.

Between World War I and World War II, he served on the American Legion’s national legislative board and helped to expand Veterans benefits to include non-service related illnesses.

At the Mayflower Hotel, using stationery and napkins, he wrote the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the "GI Bill of Rights." It provided returning Veterans with college tuition, low-cost mortgages, and business loans, as well as unemployment compensation.

His testimony before the Congressional Committee explained that "first we believe it to be the duty, the responsibility, and the desire of our grateful people, to see to it that those who served actively in the armed services in the War, not only shall not be penalized as a result of their war service, but also that, upon their return to civil life, they should be aided in reaching that place, position, or status, which they normally expected to achieve, and probably would have achieved had the war service not interrupted their careers."

Brother Colmery's legislation had far-reaching effects that probably weren't even imagined at the time. It has been found that for every dollar expended for Veterans seven dollars was returned to the government in the form of economic growth and a deeper tax base.

In 1962 when John F. Kennedy announced that America would put a man on the moon, his challenge was to engineers and scientists educated through the GI Bill. Veterans built homes in the suburbs and started businesses and gave them opportunities they might never have had. Before the War, the Depression was a constant fear. After the War, prospects for success gave hope for a brighter future. The GI Bill has been credited with creating the American middle class.

Within a consolidated VA, a separate department of medicine was created to provide for outpatient services, research, and affiliations with medical schools. VA researchers developed the nicotine patch and other therapies to help smokers give up the habit. VA pioneered electronic health records as the largest healthcare system in the United States. The first heart transplant was performed by VA surgeon, Dr. Michael DeBakey, and the aspirin regimen was developed by VA researchers.

Harry Colmery took 640 resolutions and combined them into a ten-point bill. The ten points were:

- Educational opportunity
- Vocational training
- Readjustment compensation
- Home and business loans
- Discharge review
- Adequate hospitalization
- Prompt settlement of disability claims
- Mustering-out pay
- Veteran employment services
- All Veteran Services under one roof

The *Washington Post* recently listed five myths about VA care.

1. *The claims process is slow because of VA bureaucrats.* The truth is there are 75,000 veterans waiting for VA to decide if they qualify compared to 600,000 five years ago.

2. *Wait times to see a doctor at VA are an exceptional problem.* Surveys and studies indicate the average American waits five to seven days to see a doctor while most VA Medical Centers offer same day urgent care.

3. *VA delivers mediocre care or worse.* "VA offers specialized polytrauma and rehabilitative care for veterans that cannot be obtained at any price elsewhere."

4. *VA should offer patients a maximum choice of doctors.* The VA has addressed this with the Choice program and, while not perfect, it is far less expensive than having every Veteran seek care from any doctor.

5. *Allowing Veterans to see private doctors means 'privatizing' VA.* Dr. David Shulkin, the outgoing secretary of Veterans Affairs, recently wrote: “privatization is a political issue aimed at rewarding select people and companies with profits, even if it undermines care for Veterans.”

On Southwest Topeka Boulevard in Topeka, Kansas, where he moved to practice law, is a Memorial to Harry Colmery. The America Legion recognized his contribution to the American way of life and how it fundamentally changed the face of our country.

The Memorial shows a statue him saluting six uniformed Veterans, each representing a branch of the armed services. Behind him is a relief of those same Veterans in the different occupations they transitioned into, thanks to his GI Bill.

Brother Harry Colmery said, “in a true sense we are not giving anything to the Veteran. We are making a token payment on a debt we owe him.”

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, JUNE 2018**

**THE ORIGIN OF THE MORTORBOARD HAT, A SYMBOL OF
GRADUATION**



By Russell Herner

Russell Herner of Bellevue, Ohio is the author of Cathedrals Built by the Masons. Brother Herner is a Past Master of Roby Lodge No. 534, Monroeville, Ohio, and a 33° Scottish Rite Mason.

--STB Editor

We participate in many customs and traditions without knowing their original purpose. Millions of students have worn the mortarboard hat at graduation is a case in point. Research convinces me that the centuries-old tradition of wearing these funny-looking hats at graduation originated in the Middle Age stonemason apprenticeship schools of Europe. This tradition may have occurred when the stonemason apprentice graduated to the degree level of “Master Mason.”

A stonemason’s mortarboard is a flat piece of wood measuring about twenty-four inches square. It is usually placed on a stand on the scaffolding near the wall being built. The mortarboard held the wet mortar until the stone setter applied it to the stones with the mason’s trowel. The setter then placed the mortared stone into the wall. After the mortar dried around the stone, a strong solid wall was formed.

A skullcap was a brimless cloth cap typically worn in the ancient stonemason’s day. Taken together, the mortarboard and skull cap look exactly like a modern graduation cap. Today’s graduation caps are even called “mortarboard hats.”

During the Middle Ages in Europe, the Master Masons conducted schools to teach the young apprentices the craft of stonemasonry and “The Art of Geometry.” The apprenticeship training program was very intense and completed over several years of hard work and study. It was a combination of both practical (hands-on stonemasonry), as well as theoretical (architectural and engineering) training. Geometry and masonry were synonymous terms in the stonemason’s training program. Geometry and building craft secrets were passed down through the generations by word of mouth in the program. The stonemason schools were certainly the top-notch schools of the day.

Bright young men in their early teens, who showed potential for learning and demonstrated good manual skills, were selected to enroll in the apprenticeship program. The Master Mason and apprentice's parent signed an official document called an indenture (contract) that confirmed the Master Mason would train the apprentice in the stonemason's craft. It specified the number of years of the agreement and bound both parties to a set of disciplined work rules and conduct.

Not all of the stonemason apprentice students who were selected continued in the program, but rather stopped when the requirements of the program exceeded the skill level of each mason. The masons then continued working on the project at their own skill levels.

The operative stonemason apprenticeship program was a system of three degrees. The plain Apprentice degree required one year of training, the Entered Apprentice three years of training, and the traditional Fellow of the Craft/Master Mason degree seven years of training. Upon completion of his demanding eleven-year apprenticeship training program, the Master Mason could take on stonemasonry projects of his own, or it was customary for him to go on a Journeyman's tour for an additional three years of training to other cathedral or major construction sites.

The Journeyman's tour was also called Wanderyears or Wanderjahrs in German. On this tour he would visit cathedrals in his own country, as well as foreign countries, to observe the most up-to-date design techniques being used. These visits greatly broadened his knowledge base and provided him with new ideas for future projects. After fourteen years of intense apprenticeship training, coupled with experience and observation from other major cathedral structures, the Master Mason was then well equipped to take on a building commission of his own.

After a Master Mason received a commission to design and build his first major project such as a cathedral, he essentially became a "Master Builder." Not surprisingly, the graduate Master Masons from the apprenticeship schools were some of the most highly educated people in the community at that time. The Master Builder's brilliance is reflected in the magnificent European Cathedrals!

A cathedral is a work of art, and the Master Builder, in an amazing display of talent, designed and constructed the cathedrals with a mission to replicate heaven on earth, and to please God in every small detail. He was the architect, general contractor, engineer, artist, sculptor, surveyor, draftsman, teacher of the apprentices, and supervisor of the craftsman. He was generally literate in English, French, and Latin, which allowed him to travel from country to country to different building sites and properly communicate architectural and stonemasonry construction techniques with other masters, craftsman, bishops, and patrons. He was a highly educated professional architect, influential in the community, and enjoyed the respect and esteem of his peers.

The Master Masons and Master Builders were essentially the early school teachers and professors of the stonemason students in the apprenticeship schools during the Middle Ages. I maintain the stonemason apprenticeship schools played a very big role in the early formal educational systems in Europe.

What if the modern graduation cap came into being as a result of medieval Master Masons graduating from apprenticeship schools? Consider the following scenario:

Richard just graduated from the Apprenticeship school after many long years of intensive training, achieving the degree level of "Master Mason." Wanting to celebrate this milestone with the masons and fellow workers in the lodge, he invited them to a festive gathering with food and

drink. This is how the conversation might have gone. “Let’s crown Richard ‘King of the Master Masons’ with a King’s crown, “said one of the guests.

“No, we can’t do that. He’s not a King.”

“Well, then let’s crown him with his own mason’s mortarboard and use it as a crown of our craft and authority.”

So, the old mortarboard was washed and tacked to Richard’s skullcap and placed upside down on his head. “King of the Master Masons!” they all cheered and toasted their drinks to him in celebration.

From that day on, all the other graduates from the stonemason apprenticeship schools celebrated their graduation ceremonies with a mason’s mortarboard hat crowned on their heads. The mortarboard hat then became the traditional symbol of graduation for schools around the world.

Over time, colleges and universities embellished the mortarboard hats with modifications and decorations such as adding tassels and a variety of colors to distinguish different branches of education and degree levels. Robes and gowns were added some years later to the mortarboard hat dress, elevating the intellectual status of the graduate.

The mortarboard hat is a symbol of graduation and, I believe, had its origin in the stonemason apprenticeship schools of Europe when the “Master Mason” graduated!

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, JULY 2018**

THE MEDICINE MAN AND THE SENIOR DEACON

By Jim Tresner, 33°

This essay by Brother Jim Tresner is contained in “Shared Spirit: Freemasonry and the Native American Tradition.”

--STB Editor

He is long dead now, and according to the traditions of the People his name is neither to be spoken or written. He was a Medicine Man, a Shaman of the Ute peoples, and among many other things, he taught a young boy how to see truly.

My family had a summer cottage in the Colorado Rockies. Another cottage nearby was the summer home of the Pinkneys. She was the head librarian for a large school district in Kansas. He taught social studies, although his area of specialty was Native American ethnology. I spent countless hours there, learning from both.

One day, I found a third person there—a most remarkable person. His face was old, older than anyone I had ever seen, and very dark. His hair was grey-white and long, worn in two braids. But his eyes were very young, the eyes of a child, and they glittered as though there were gold flecks in the soft dark brown. Mr. Pinkney told me that the man was a Medicine Man, a Shaman, who had taught him many things (which astonished me, because I thought Mr. Pinkney had always known everything there was to know).

He taught me as well, especially how to look beyond the surfaces of things and find meanings in everything. “If you will look truly and listen wisely,” he said, “the world itself will teach you.” And, in some way I can’t really explain, he redefined my goals. Even as a very young urchin I had always wanted to know everything, but I learned there was a goal beyond knowledge—there was wisdom.

The terms “Medicine Man” and “Shaman” are often misunderstood. Some think of the role as being like that of a priest, but there really is no similarity. A priest or minister is a functionary of a religion, an intermediary of some sort between God and man.

A Medicine Man is not an intermediary. His authority comes from his own mystic spiritual experience. He helps others walk the path he has walked himself. Medicine involves the process of awakening the spiritual potentials within the person and/or attuning the perceptions of the individual to be more receptive to the spiritual forces which surround him. Such an awakening may be involved at initiation into the tribal structure or into one of the men’s societies of the tribe or clan, or in a ritual of healing either physical or emotional/psychical ills.

One of the major responsibilities of the Medicine Man or Shaman, then, in addition to his role as counselor and advisor in matters which affect the spiritual life of the clan, is to serve as the guide during the initiation and spirit quest or vision quest of the young man.

The Medicine Man helps to explain, to guide and, to some degree, guard the candidate as he is learning to approach the central mystery of his own existence. He helps the candidate make sense of the experiences, which are often overwhelming both to the emotions and to the senses.

In Freemasonry, the role is taken by the Senior Deacon. It is he who oversees the preparation of the candidate, including the emotional preparation represented by the “usual interrogatories.” It is he who then greets the candidate at the door of the Lodge room and who conducts him through the ceremonies of initiation. The Senior Deacon leads the candidate through the mythic journey, represented in Freemasonry as it is in many Indian traditions, as following the path marked out by the sun.

Among many tribes, the bat is considered the special symbol of the Medicine Man because it is a symbol of rebirth. (It lives in a cave, representative of the womb, and sleeps upside down, the same position as a child just prior to birth.)

The task of the Medicine Man is to facilitate the “rebirth” of the young Native American, leading him from the darkness of the cave/womb into the Light. One can easily substitute the symbolism of the Preparation Room for that of the cave, and the role of the Senior Deacon for that of the Medicine Man.

While it is the Master of the Lodge who provides the instruction in the mysteries, he does so through the agency of the Senior Deacon. It is the Senior Deacon who adapts it to the individual candidate by giving him the working tools and helping him learn the signs and tokens.

In the Fellowcraft Degree, it is the Senior Deacon who shows the candidate the path to self-transcendence, conducting him up the winding stairs in which the information received through the five senses and operated upon by the rational processes of the mind (the 7 liberal arts) is replaced by insight and intuition.

One can think of the principal role of the Medicine Man, Shaman, or Senior Deacon as helping the candidate find a workable definition of reality which is in some way different from the one he has at the beginning of the encounter.

This can be a little difficult for us to understand today. Starting in the 1800s a new concept of reality took hold in European and American culture and spread rapidly. It is perfectly knowable, and it is the same in all places and at all times. Any uncertainty simply means that we have not yet done enough research.

For an example, take illness. When a new illness appears, we have set methods of finding out what causes it and how to treat it. We “know” that it has a specific, identifiable cause, and that there is a specific, identifiable treatment, and that if our knowledge is good enough, we will have a means of diagnosing and treating the condition which will work.

When we are forced to accept the fact that non-physical elements can play a role—when, for example, we are confronted with the fact that acupuncture produces results, or that some people recover more rapidly when others pray for them, or that faith-healers of many traditions affect cures, or that mental attitude seems to be a predictor of survival rate in cancer, or even that chicken soup does make us feel better when we are feeling unwell—we become very uncomfortable and mutter about “placebo effect” or complain that, instead of being “real,” it is “all in the mind.”

Of course, it is “all in the mind.” Our entire concept of reality is in the mind (where else could it be?). Both our religious expressions and our daily speech are filled with instances in which we acknowledge that it is the mind which controls.

“Be careful what you wish for.”

“The most important step in being successful is to believe that you will be successful.”

The insight of the Medicine Man is that there are many ways to view reality—many worlds, each equally “real”—and that to be aware of those many realities is not to be mentally ill or self-delusional, it is merely to be awake and aware.

The candidate, whether he be a young warrior or a young Entered Apprentice, comes hoping to find deeper truths, greater spiritual enlightenment, and a more acute sense of himself and the worlds of which he is a part.

He searches for a vision of the world, of reality, which will fulfill his needs. And, in that great and universal quest, the Medicine Man or the Senior Deacon, is his guide.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, AUGUST 2018**

“CAN YOU SEE ME NOW?”

By MW Casey Hood

*At the October 2017 Grand Lodge of Kentucky Annual Communication, Grand Master Todd Jones asked **Tennessee Grand Master Casey Hood** to bring the traditional greetings on behalf of the visiting distinguished guests.*

His comments are reproduced here with the hope they will be read at every lodge.

--STB Editor

Thank you for allowing us to be here this morning. It is a wonderful day to be part of your Grand Lodge.

Most Worshipful sir, before I start, I have a problem I need to bring up. For you Brethren who don't know when there are certain affairs of state, it is not for the individual members to talk to another Grand Lodge. It's one of these crazy things where the members must talk to the Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge to the Grand Lodge, etc.

I had a little problem. I was all over Tennessee last, couldn't get anywhere I wanted to be. I was at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville one day; I was at the University of Chattanooga, so you have to be a little bit of a UT [*University of Tennessee*] fan. I come in here; I park, I have a little UT sticker on my truck. I go out there this morning, and there's some wet paint on my truck, it is not UT it says UK [*University of Kentucky*]. I talked to the Valet, asking him if he had any idea who did that. No sir, I don't know exactly who he was. He was a small fella, and he was wearing a Masonic t-shirt.

So, I'm officially informing you, when I find that member of yours who has done this to my truck I'm going to have a little talk with him. If you know who it is, I'd appreciate it if you would tell me. [*Response and laughter from the craft*] Here's my message, that first coat is dry, so you can put that second coat on any time you want to.

Your Most Worshipful Grand Master gave me this courtesy, so I asked him what he would like me to speak about. He said to make them laugh and make them think. I just made you laugh now it's time to make you think.

How many of you have seen Todd's camouflage tuxedo? Masonry teaches us by allegoric symbols, and I think I know the message he was trying to convey to you and I'm going to do my best to put it into words.

Several years ago, my father and I went into a sporting goods store, and he was looking at a camouflage outfit, getting ready to go hunting that winter. He kind of liked it; he didn't know. The salesman was real pushy. Real pushy! Dad didn't really want to buy it and kept looking. The salesman finally said to him, "Just try it on." So, to shut him up my dad tried it on. Then the salesman said you need this and you gotta have that. My dad, tired of hearing all this, said: "How do I look in this?" The salesman said he looked real good. My dad took everything off, threw it on the floor and said he won't have it; we're leaving here. The salesman said "What's wrong? I said you looked good." My dad said, "It's camouflage! If you can see me, it don't work."

My message to you today, gentlemen, is can you see me now? That's the truth. You brothers have extended one of the warmest welcomes I ever have had in my life over the last couple of days. You have treated me with the utmost courtesy and respect as the Most Worshipful Grand Master of the state of Tennessee. You have shook my hand. You have thanked me for being here. You have treated me; I cannot put it into words, it would humble you to have men treat you this way. But it's because I hold a title, I hold an office. But gentlemen, I will tell you, as well as any of these men up on this stage, we are not any better than you.

I ask you, every day when you go into your community, would you treat me the same way if you met me on the side of the road working as a construction worker? Would you see me as the same man? In a month or so when you decide to go deer hunting on your favorite farm and there's another man up the way, and he killed your deer. He may be a good man, but would you see him for that good man or would you see him for something else?

Every day of your life you run into someone who is a friend, and you have neglected to talk about Masonry to him. Can you see him for who he is? Can you see the benefit this Fraternity would have for him? Can you see how this Fraternity would benefit from having him as a member?

You heard from the young man from DeMolay speak about how he kept waiting for his father to ask him or give him a petition, and it never happened. Finally, he had to ask his dad, "Hey, what's the problem?" His dad informed him, to be one you have to ask one.

Gentlemen, we have kept the secret of what this Fraternity means for far too long. You are a part of the most moral institution in the world. You are the people that are the backbone of this country. Every one of you sitting in lodge in the last week, month or year have heard a knock at the door, and some young man or some older man just comes in and say they've been waiting to see someone here, can they have a petition? You would run all over each other to get them one and sign your name to it, not knowing them or where he came from. You would figure that out later.

But every day, there's a man you went to school with, there's a man you work with, there's a man at church, there's a man in your social group that would make a good Mason and you have neglected to talk to him about this Fraternity and what it means to you in your heart.

I challenge each one of you. You have a lapel pin of some type or a coin with a Masonic emblem. If you've got that man in your life and you don't know how to talk to him, I don't care if he's 18 or 80, present it to him. This is my gift to you! What is this? It's my Masonic pin. You know, I've heard about that, tell me what it means. Open the door.

You can't tell the esoteric secrets.

You can't tell them how to become a member. You can't tell any of the transactions in the lodge when the Bible is open, but you can most certainly tell them that you are a part of the most moral institution in the world. You can tell them how they can benefit from this Fraternity and the fellowship and the brotherhood that they find.

I'll leave you with this, can you see me now? Can you see me for who I am? See that man who is close to you; brother, friend, cousin, simple work companion. See him for who he is and tell him about this fraternity, and I promise you we will all reap the benefit.

It is a custom in the great state of Tennessee, when a Grand Master travels, to present to the sitting Grand Master a knife. I would like to present to Grand Master Todd Jones, one of my knives. You have been taught many times about the symbolism of this box, but I do not present

you this because you are sitting Grand Master. I present you this because you have become my friend. I hope that when my year is done, we can find a way for our friendship to grow.

Most Worshipful Grand Master, on behalf of each dignitary here, we wish you a most successful Grand Lodge Session.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, SEPTEMBER 2018**

**COMMUNICATING MASONRY
OR
SOME THINGS I NEVER HEARD IN LODGE, BUT WISH I HAD**

By MW Conrad Hahn

MW Conrad Hahn (PGM-CT), Executive Secretary of MSA 1964–1977, authored many Short Talk Bulletins. This is a digest of a paper recently found in the archives that he wrote May 22, 1971.

--STB Editor

In the last two decades, we have frequently been told that one of the reasons for poor attendance in lodges is television. Q.E.D The “boob tube” has captured the average Mason’s mind; you can’t expect to see him in lodge. “Telly” knows that allurements result from a combination of excitement and satisfaction. Stir the blood, but never the intellect.

But television communicates—have no doubt about that! Some Masonic leaders and organizers are fully aware of that, too. So they find extravaganzas, colorful parades, etc., the answer to Masonry’s problem of poor attendance.

But what does it do for the brother with a serious modern malaise, the feeling of a loss of individuality? The assumption, of course, is that the average Mason is a boob who needs the tube.

But what consideration is given to the individual brother’s need for Masonic communication? Treat him the way the siren Television treats him. Seduce him with excitement, but for heaven’s sake, don’t stimulate his intellect.

If Freemasonry is truly a speculative art, it must challenge such an adversary with its principal tools, philosophic examination and illumination. First, we should challenge the denigrating assumption that the average brother is a “tube addict” with no higher interest in life than to be sold things.

But when have you heard of a Masonic lodge offering as a counterattraction a discussion of the “price you pay for television viewing?” The mere act of telly-watching is a passive act. Such passivity and its resultant powerlessness are among the most dangerous epidemics in our society today. This is one of the things against which many young people are protesting today. They sense the fact that if a man or woman is to develop the rich individuality and full potential of which a human being is capable, he needs more than the hollow values and perishable products of “consumerism,” the basic mode of behavior which television teaches and inculcates.

So what has Masonry had to say about this crassly materialistic means of communication? Not much—except to blame it for poor attendance. Yet Masons know—or should know—that the individual needs not only meaningful productive work but also love, beauty, creativity, contemplation, contact with nature, and participation in support of his own lifestyle.

In that list of words I can see a whole year’s program of Masonic education for “good and wholesome instruction” but I have heard of very few Masonic lodges which have tried to meet the

challenge of the salesman's medium of communication with that kind of Masonic communication. Communicating Freemasonry is communicating ideas. Masonic lodges should communicate ideas, especially ideas about the world in which they exist.

Another idea about which Freemasonry could have something to say, but rarely does, has been introduced by a phrase which I used a moment ago—one's lifestyle, which results from one's values and aspirations.

One of the insidious cancers of our American way of life is the competitive urge which drives too many men to an early grave. They call it "the rat race," but what is the prize they strain to attain?

How do you help a man to be wiser and happier if he struggles incessantly to accomplish too many things in too little time developing within himself a frantic sense of the urgency of time; or if he struggles too competitively with other individuals all the time?

Perhaps the approach for Masons to communicate with such men is through the little-used tool of enlightenment—education, and philosophy, to be specific.

Style of life? The values by which men live? The enduring satisfactions? These are certainly subjects by which we can communicate Freemasonry, but the trouble is, we have not maintained our Masonry as a school of life. Masonic lodges should communicate ideas, especially ideas about the world in which they exist.

Freemasons have always prided themselves on the way in which they have practiced the second great tenet of their profession—that of Charity. In the simpler, bygone eras that virtue was exemplified directly and effectively by the relief of distress of unfortunate individuals within the local community. When a brother's widow and children were in want, the members of the lodge flew to their assistance with practical gifts of cash, food, and clothing.

But with the tremendous increase in Masonic membership in the 20th century, and with the universal urbanization and mobility of our population, the modern Mason is no longer oriented to a single community or to one local lodge. Masonic Charity, to continue its effectiveness, had to be organized on a wider basis, like the Grand Lodge; and in the process, it was necessary to institutionalize Masonic benevolence.

While I acknowledge gratefully all the Masonic generosity which maintains these benevolent institutions and programs, I must also point out that something of great value to Masonry has been lost in the institutionalization of so much Masonic charity. The simple, direct involvement of the individual Mason flying to the relief of a distressed brother, his widow, or orphans, has largely disappeared, because the average Mason now makes his contribution for Masonic benevolence in the form of either an annual per capita, or a contribution solicited by the distant governing body of his Lodge, his chapter, his commandery, or his consistory. Usually, he merely writes a check; rarely does he know who or what is benefitted by his contribution.

Too often a brother never makes a contribution at all; he doesn't see a specific need or the result of the charity he is asked to give to, in line with his commitment as an Entered Apprentice. His imagination hasn't been stimulated; Masonry hasn't communicated effectively enough with such a member.

In conclusion, I have really given you just three words or phrases; television, lifestyle, and private institutions. On these, I have hung some ideas which I believe concern our Fraternity, and which can be of use in communicating Freemasonry both to our members and to those outside.

Once more, I suspect, I have revealed one of my basic prejudices, that Freemasonry is fundamentally an educational institution. As such, it should be seeking the truth of life in every

sphere of human activity, and because of the disparity of men's experiences and the clash of their opinions, it should be trying to harmonize their points of view. As such, it has to appeal to the intellect, not to the blood, where passions that a civilized man must learn to subdue.

If you would communicate Freemasonry, in the broadest sense of that word, you must be like Chaucer's scholar: "For gladly would he learn, and gladly teach."

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, OCTOBER 2018**

LOOKING FOR RAINBOWS

By Ill. Ronald A. Seale, 33°

Ill. Ronald A. Seale, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, has a wonderful outlook on how Freemasonry can brighten one's life, if we all just allow it to. This article appeared in the Scottish Rite Journal, September/October 2018 issue and is used with permission.

--STB Editor

It was a bumpy flight that early summer afternoon, crowded and jam-packed like most commercial flights these days. Crying babies, not enough overhead space, and certainly not enough “knee space” added to the misery on that June day as we made our approach into the New Orleans International Airport for landing.

Yet, we were looking forward to a wonderful weekend with good friends and Scottish Rite Masons in Mississippi as we descended to the runway. In spite of the pleasant plans for the weekend, at the moment I was looking forward to getting off the airplane, nothing more and nothing less.

As we landed, the skies opened, and rain pelted the tarmac as we taxied to the gate. While expected in Louisiana for this time of year, the thought in my mind was not joy in being back in my old stomping grounds but the more immediate threat that everything in the luggage was going to get wet. As indeed it did.

Wrestling the wet and soggy baggage from the conveyor after an interminable wait led to more griping and complaining on my part, I'm embarrassed to say. As we started our trek to the rental car counter, even my glasses wouldn't cooperate as the blast of Louisiana's humidity left them fogged over and virtually worthless.

Leaving the airport and heading to the Mississippi Gulf Coast on Interstate 10 out of New Orleans, I discovered that the rain had not let up, intensifying if anything, and we inched forward in the evening rush hour traffic out of New Orleans. With embarrassment, I now recall that from the time we presented ourselves for boarding at Reagan National Airport in Washington, I could, and did, find something wrong and something about which to complain at every step along the way. Ever had a day like that?

I breathed a sigh of exasperation and inched forward in the traffic jam, determined that no one gained an advantage in traffic. My wife, who was riding in the passenger seat, looked out through the window and exclaimed almost with the joy of a child, “Look, there's a rainbow!!!” And in that split second, it brought me—jerked me, rather—to a central grounding point. Where I saw clouds and thunderheads, she saw rainbows. Where I saw wet suitcases and traffic jams, she saw a weekend of adventure with friends. Where I saw difficulties, she saw opportunities and promise. And, indeed, as we drove eastward for a few miles, the clouds broke and sun brought forth the promise of a beautiful afternoon. It has become yet another teaching moment for me—this dense student. What you see depends on what you're looking for.

I've thought about that weekend drive over the past several days and the axiom that seeing depends on looking, and looking depends on focus. What we expect to find often determines what we see. How often do we see the storm clouds and miss the rainbows?

Freemasonry helps us sharpen our focus and look for those things of importance, of meaning and worth, and which add to rather than detract from a meaningful life's experience. God's handiwork is all around us and evident to the discerning eye, not only in nature but in the lives and times of our fellows and, indeed, of our very selves. The prolific author and great Freemason, the Reverend Joseph Fort Newton, reminds us that a man is truly a Mason "when he can look into a wayside puddle and see something beyond mud and into the face of the most forlorn fellow mortal and see something beyond sin."

With his first steps as an Entered Apprentice, our candidate is instructed to look for the Divine in the ordinary, the majesty in the commonplace and the hand of God in all our undertakings and endeavors. Thus is the benefit of entering upon the Masonic journey and receiving instruction and counsel.

I would hope that you find your Masonry not only in the degrees and the lodges and meetings but, also, in your everyday encounters and with all whom you come in contact. Just as importantly, I would hope that others will find their Masonry in you—your attitude, your humility, and your grace and kindness.

Of course, everyone is entitled to have a bad day and miss the mark once in a while. That's when you need a nudge from a loved one: "Hey, chump, don't miss the rainbow out there."

JAMES T. TRESNER II, 33°, G.: C.:, NOVEMBER 11, 1941 – JULY 12, 2018



Ill. James T. "Jim" Tresner II, 33°, Grand Cross, former Book Review Editor of *The Scottish Rite Journal*, laid down his working tools on July 12, 2018. He attended several colleges and earned two masters degrees and a Ph.D. in business communications and had been a Professor of Drama and Speech at Connors State College. Most recently he was editor of the *Oklahoma Mason* and Grand Orator of the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma. His Masonic journey began at age twelve when he joined the Order of DeMolay.

He was raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason in 1963 in Garfield Lodge No. 501 of Enid, OK, and became a Master of the Royal Secret in 1964. He belonged to the York Rite and nearly any Masonic body you can think of and as for participation, he was "Past Everything but Redemption."

Bro. Jim's particular passion was the Scottish Rite, and he served for many years as Director of the Work for the Valley of Guthrie, OK. Perhaps his greatest renown came as an author. He was Book Review Editor of *The Scottish Rite Journal* for twenty-one years, 1996–2017, and the

author of several books including *Albert Pike: The Man Behind the Monument*; *Vested in Glory: The Aprons, Collars, Caps, and Jewels of the Degrees of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*; *From Sacrifice to Symbol: The Story of Cornerstones and Stability Rites*; and *But I Digress*.

I knew Bro. Jim for some forty years and worked closely with him in the Scottish Rite Research Society and MSA's Masonic Information Center. When I think of him, I think of the photo shown here with his dramatic pipe—like a publicity shot of a matinee idol from the '40s. I once told him I thought his image would be better served without a pipe, given all of the anti-smoking fervor. His simple reply was, “But that’s who I am.”

--S. Brent Morris, 33°, Grand Cross, Managing Editor, *The Scottish Rite Journal*

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, NOVEMBER 2018**

COMMITMENT AND DEDICATION

By Dwight M. "Mach" Sigmon

RW Dwight M. "Mach" Sigmon gave this acceptance speech after being elected the 2019 Grand Master of North Carolina. "I am a simple man from a small town in western NC that still tries to understand why I find myself in this position." From his thoughts in this speech one can well understand why he deserves this honor.

--STB Editor

My brethren, I thank you for your kind and warm reception. It means more to me than words can adequately express. I see many here this morning who have been severely impacted by the recent storms and flooding. Each of you remain in my daily thoughts and prayers as you continue in your recovery efforts. I hope and pray that each day gets easier on you and your family.

I stand before you today extremely grateful for this special opportunity of being elected as the 166th Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina. This is a humbling experience and one that I take very, very seriously. I would like to thank MW Bob Gresham for the confidence he had in me as his selection as the Junior Grand Steward for 2012. MW Gresham, you can be assured that I will do my best to serve the craft well.

As I began this journey, I told you of my commitment to continue serving in each place and station with the same dedication and devotion as I had always tried to do. I am hopeful, that by the grace and guidance of our Almighty Creator, that I can continue to meet and even exceed your expectations as Grand Master.

It has always been my goal to serve any position in which I have been elected to or appointed to the very best of my ability and in such a manner that it would leave that position better than when I started. Those that I now follow have set the bar extremely high. My commitment to meeting and exceeding this goal remains for my final and most important station. I am honored to now officially and proudly accept your decision to elect me as your Grand Master for 2019.

I look forward to serving and sharing my message of kindness, brotherly love and how I continue to strive each day to treat others as has been taught to me through my Book of Faith and the various lessons taught to me through the many Masonic Rituals that I have either observed, participated in, or conferred.

Maybe I have been put in this position because it is time we have a friendly reminder of how our ritual lessons can help bring a positive change to the world we live in. Our world is extremely divided and has been for some time. I truly believe, as Freemasons, we have the tools to make a real difference in guiding this world on a more positive journey. Each of us must be committed if we are to bring a positive change both in our own lives as well as the lives of others. We do this by example, the example of the type of life we choose to lead. Actions always speak louder than words and men always speak what is in their hearts. Each of us have a choice, we can choose to be a "Mason" or just a member.

To me a Mason is one who lives his life in accordance with the lessons taught to him from both his Book of Faith and the various Masonic ritual lessons he has received. Our dues cards say

that we are a member of this fraternity. It does not state anywhere that we are Masons. Every day we must continually strive and work hard to earn that important title of “Mason.” One of our Masonic rituals reminds us that Life is a School, Masonry is Work. It is not easy to be a Mason. I know. I have to work at it each and every day.

One of my guiding principles in how to treat others comes from one of my favorite Masonic lectures. Some of you may recognize which degree this lesson is from.

“Ever remember that, being human, you must of necessity often err; that those who hold different opinions entertain them as honestly as you do your own; and that you have no right to deny or doubt their sincerity. Especially, never harshly denounce an opinion that more experience and a more thorough investigation may someday compel you to adopt. Therefore, always treat your opponents as if their opinions were at some time to become your own.”

We are taught in the annual installation of our officers many important lessons but two I would like to focus on are;

- To set a guard at the entrance of our thoughts, to place a watch at the door of our lips, to post a sentinel at the avenue of our actions thereby excluding every unqualified and unworthy thought, word, and deed, and preserving consciences void of offense toward God and man. (Found in the charge when installing a Tyler) and

- May kindness and brotherly affection distinguish your conduct as men and Masons. (Found in the Closing Charge at the installation of officers and one that we should always observe)

So, I encourage you, that before you speak or act whether in person, social media or any environment remember that you represent the fraternity of Freemasonry, especially when you wear any of our Masonic emblems.

I have spent years studying Masonic ritual lessons and trying to perfect my ritual abilities. These lessons truly guide my life and actions. Several of our Masonic ritual lessons teach that Masonic emblems are worn or displayed not to, and I stress not to, inform others of our rank or title or as an advertisement for potential new members but as a constant reminder to ourselves of the obligations and lessons we have agreed and obligated ourselves to abide by. We cannot pick and choose which of these lessons apply. To truly be a “Mason” they all must apply and guide your life in everything you do and say.

More importantly always remember, your own actions, appearance and words provide an opportunity for us to attract the best of the best this world has to offer in becoming a part of our historical fraternity, or they can just as easily discourage someone from exploring further an opportunity to be a part of the world’s greatest and oldest fraternity, the greatest self-improvement program available in the world today. The choice of how you choose to represent our fraternity is one that you must make every day. Remember, in today’s world, someone is always watching, including and more importantly the Supreme Architect of the Universe that “All Seeing Eye” represented so vividly throughout our fraternal bodies. Our forefathers left us a fraternity to grow and prosper and we can only attract the best men if they clearly see the true character of what we represent as “Masons.” The way we carry ourselves is our best method of advertisement.

My brethren, Masonry is Work, hard work, important work, and work needed more than ever in our society today. It is time that we as Freemasons lead the way in Making a Difference in this world. Every day ask yourself this question; Today, am I going to be a Mason or just a member? I hope that you will do as I try to do and choose every day to be the best Mason you can possibly be.

In closing, I look forward to serving the Masons of North Carolina as we begin this journey together and I stress the word “together.”

My brethren, I am proud to be a Mason. I am even more proud to be a Mason from the grand jurisdiction of the great state of North Carolina! May the Supreme Architect of the Universe continue to bless you and this great fraternity that we love so much!

Thank you.

**THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN
OF THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION
OF NORTH AMERICA, DECEMBER 2018**

MASONIC CIVILITY

By John Marinucci

Most Worshipful John Marinucci recently completed his term as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Delaware. His message should inspire all of us to begin the New Year with a new resolution of Masonic Civility.

--STB Editor

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” I ask that you contemplate that scripture. We’ve all heard it while we were in Masonic darkness, being led by our faithful guide around our respective lodges so that the brethren of the lodge may inspect us and our preparation in order that they might find us worthy to receive Masonic Light.

While this scripture is recited as a part of every one of our respective first degrees, I contend that the recited Psalm and the Entered Apprentice degree ritual is a metaphor for much more than preparing us to receive Masonic light. I believe this Psalm and the Entered Apprentice ritual has a very poignant message for us in today’s society.

It is clear that the vast majority of Masons all seek to dwell together in unity. But I ask that you stop and truly contemplate what that Psalm and the Entered Apprentice ritual is telling us. Do we truly dwell together in unity? Perhaps within the protected bastions of our respective Masonic Lodges, we do, but, in our American society as a whole, I’m embarrassed to argue, not so much. Unfortunately, we live in a time marked by hate and intolerance, the likes of which I have never experienced before. Never before in my 58 years have I seen or felt such divisiveness permeating every aspect of life within American society.

It seems everybody hates everybody right now. People today have become polarized in not only their thinking but also in their actions. Americans have become so divided in their views. Our society today seems to be marked by the unfortunate notion that if you support one thing, you must oppose the other, with no room for compromise and no room for tolerance and acceptance.

For some reason, it has become okay for people to express their opposition to the “other side” with rhetoric that is increasingly more and more offensive, rude and yes, people have even resorted to violence when they feel words have failed them. Prominent people can’t dine with their families without being confronted and heckled about their political views. Certain leaders have taken to not only defending but actually inciting such conflict and lack of civility. Law-makers and politicians have been shot on baseball fields, while makeshift bombs have been mailed to selected individuals. To what end or to what purpose? What point do such conflict, incivility, and violence make?

I fully realize that the actions of a few do not and should not define the whole, but I ask you brethren—is this the society in which we want to live? Is this society the legacy we want our children or our grandchildren to inherit?

So what do we do? How do we, as Masons, rise above this hate and span the societal divide?

“And the men who hold high places, must be the ones who start, to mold a new reality, closer to the heart” (Rush, 1977). This is the opening line to a 1970’s rock and roll song performed by the group named Rush.

My brethren, we, as Masons, are the ones who can heal this country and heal our society by practicing outside of our lodges, that same Masonic Civility that we enjoy within our lodges. Every Mason has a deep respect and admiration for every other Mason, whether they have met or not. Why? Because regardless of our religion, our political views, our professions, our nationality or the color of skin, we all took the same obligations and we all seek to improve our personal Masonic Edifices, through Faith, Hope, and Charity.

My brethren we, as Masons, can be that beacon in society by allowing our Masonic light to shine through in our daily lives and in our personal interactions with non-masons. We are the answer—Masonry is the answer to how we heal society—and it all starts with extending our Masonic Civility beyond our Masonic circles and into society in general. I’m not suggesting we violate our vows by divulging that which we should not, but if we treat our fellow man who is a non-Mason with similar civility that we treat our fellow Masons—we will improve our respective corners of the world, just a little bit.

I recall a particular lodge meeting in my mother lodge. The discussion about the budget and expenses was tense. There was a divide in the lodge about how to best spend our scarce and declining resources. Past Masters and seasoned, well tenured distinguished brethren who had opinions on the issue, spoke several times to their point and as the discussion was settling down and the Master was ready to call the question, the tension in the lodge was palatable.

A young man who had only very recently received his Master Mason Degree stood to speak. There was an audible collective groan by the brethren almost to imply, “What could this young man who has been a Mason for like ten minutes expect to add to this very difficult discussion?” The young man began to speak after being recognized by the Master with a stern admonition that this was the final comment before he called for a vote.

“I don’t wish to speak about the lodge budget or finances,” the young man said quietly, “I’ve not been a Mason long enough to have a good understanding of the budget, but I wanted to say that, while this is only my second lodge meeting as a Master Mason,” the young man paused for a breath—you could see the brethren dropping their defenses and the tension lifting as the young Mason spoke—“I am so impressed with the way the brethren have discussed this very difficult issue.”

The room fell silent as everybody strained to hear him through his soft, almost timid voice. “The respect that everyone has shown each other as they discussed this difficult issue—this is true Masonry, and I’m so proud to be a member of this lodge and this fraternity.” The lodge was silent as the young man sat down. He probably did not realize how truly profound his words were. The words of a young man and new Mason changed the dynamics in the lodge that evening as the Master called for the vote.

The Masonic Civility that has become second nature to us all had so impressed this young man, that same Masonic Civility can impress and change the world.

Life is about relationships. It’s not about money, or about power. It’s not about authority, or positions and titles. Life is about relationships. We are defined by how we treat people and how we manage our relationships. We can disagree with each other without becoming disagreeable. We can hold differing views and perspectives in a civil and respectful manner.

As Masons, we hold ourselves to a higher standard by acting upon the square and circumscribing our desires. I challenge each and every Mason who hears or reads this to practice

the same Masonic Civility without their respective lodges that we so naturally practice and enjoy within. Let's lead the charge to tone down the rhetoric and do our individual part and heal our society through Masonic Civility. History is replete with instances and examples of Masons and Masonry guiding societal change. We owe it to society, our fellow man and most importantly our future generations to reverse the current trend of polarization, divisiveness, and hate and create a legacy of civility, respect, and tolerance.

ELECTED FELLOWS OF THE TENNESSEE LODGE OF RESEARCH

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE AWARDED</u>
Howard Ketron "Jack" Akard	Dec. 13, 1997	Philip Edward Phillips, Ph.D.	Dec. 12, 2009
*MW John Burton Arp, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994	*Paul Frederick Richards	Dec. 11, 1999
*Donald Barrow	Dec. 10, 1994	Robert Harold Richards	Dec. 10, 1994
Thomas Ernest Brooks	Dec. 10, 1994	*John Nicholas Sharp	Mar. 9, 1996
Derial Wayne Bivens	Dec. 14, 2019	*Donald Martin Smith	Dec. 10, 1994
*MW Billie Reginald Brown	Dec. 10, 1994	David Edward Stafford, Ed.D.	Dec. 11, 2010
MW Ronald Jasper Coates	Dec. 8, 2001	*Louis Steinberg	Dec. 10, 1994
*Harold Cristil	Dec. 10, 1994	Charles McBerry Thames	Dec. 10, 2005
*Bobby Joe DeMott	Dec. 10, 1994	Vincent Lamar Troglen	Dec. 10, 2011
*Jacob Roach Denny	Dec. 10, 1994	*Clarence Raymond Wilson, Jr.	Dec. 12, 2015
Thomas James Driber, Ph.D.	Dec. 13, 2008		
*Charles Jahew Eads, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994		
*Robert Elmer Gooch	Dec. 10, 1994		
*Gary William Hall	Dec. 13, 1997		
*Virgil Marion Hileman	Mar. 9, 1996		
MW Dickie Wayland Johnson	Dec. 9, 2000		
Matthew Glenn Johnson	Dec. 13, 2014		
*Thomas Charles Kenner	Dec. 13, 2003		
Joseph Clayton Pryor Kindoll	Dec. 11, 2010		
*Billy Wilton King	Dec. 12, 1998		
James Michael Kinslow	Dec. 10, 2016		
George Caleb Ladd, III	Dec. 11, 2004		
Sanford Dale Lancaster	Dec. 13, 2008		
Michael Carroll Lett	Dec. 14, 2002		
*Moses Defriese Manning, Jr.	Dec. 10, 1994		
*James Allen Marshall	Dec. 10, 1994		
*James Clifton McCarley	Dec. 10, 1994		
John Russell Meldorf	Dec. 10, 1994		
*Richard Travis Milton Prine	Dec. 10, 1994		
Warren Lee Moore	Dec. 10, 1994		
MW John Lawrence Palmer	Dec. 12, 2015		

*Deceased