

Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia

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2.1- THE SUBLIME DEGREE

Provincial Education Programme Master Mason Degree

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Learned students of art have discovered that the word “Sublime” as applied to the degree of Master Mason is not one of those matters which are of an antiquity of “Time Immemorial.” It seems to have made its appearance in print first about 1801. Today, its use is practically universal.

That the degree “Is” sublime, in all the highest meanings of that much abused word, is not a matter for discussion or proof; it is sublime if we feel it as sublime; it is just an ordinary ceremony if that is all it is to us. Sublimity is not in the thing, but in us.

The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid in its absolute perfection is sublime to a mathematician, to a six year old child or a savage who cannot count beyond ten, it is less than nothing. The most beautiful sunset which ever thrilled the senses of color could not be sublime to a blind man, nor can harmonies of Beethoven or Wagner be sublime to a man born deaf. If the Master Mason degree is sublime, it is because of what it is and what it does to a man’s heart.

The Master Mason’s degree is immensely different from the two preceding ones. It has the same externals as far as entry and closing are concerned; it uses also a circumambulation, a passage from Scripture, has an obligation and a bringing to more light - “All The Light Which Can Be Communicated To You In A Blue Lodge.” But its second section departs utterly from the architectural symbolism of the first two degrees, and concerns itself with a living, a dying and a living again. It is at once more human and more spiritual than the preceding degrees. It strikes in upon the heart with the force and effect of a great bell, heard in a silent place; no thoughtful man receives, or ever sees this degree, with any understanding of its symbolism, who does not feel a sense of awe and wonder that a mind of man could conceive it, put it together, place so much of wisdom in so simple a vehicle, give so much light in so few words and in so short a time.

The Master’s degree as whole is a symbol of old age; of wisdom and experience. It is a symbol of preparation for that other life which it so grandly promises. It brings to the initiate the symbolism of the Sprig of Acacia and tells him in one breath that a man must stand alone, even while he must lean upon the Everlasting Arms. It lays before him the whole drama of man’s longing for a Something Beyond; it tells the tale of what ignorance and brute strength may do to destroy knowledge and virtue, even while it shows that, never can darkness overcome light, never can evil win over what is good, never can error prevail over truth.

There are those who find in the symbolism of the Third Degree a promise of the resurrection of the body. None can blame them; the symbolism is there. Nor can one blame the miner who digs in the earth after the outcroppings of an ore, for believing that the ore is all he can expect to find; even when a later delver in the earth goes through the ore and finds a diamond. If, to a devout and orthodox Christian the Master Mason degree is symbolic of the resurrection of the body, that doctrine of bodily resurrection is in itself a symbol of a spiritual raising. Each of us, then, may interpret this part of the degree in according to the light which is given him, and no man has either the wisdom or the right to say, “That Interpretation is True, This One False.”

There have been some twenty or more interpretations of the whole degree; they range all the way from the story of the Garden of Eden to a sort of cipher drama of the violent death of King Charles the First. Modern students, however, are reasonably well agreed that the Hiram Legend is a retelling of the immortality of the soul; it belongs with the story of Isis and Orsiris, and the most beautiful of the early religious myths, the Brahmanic story of Ademi and Heva. Thus interpreted, the

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soul, mind or spirit; after it acquires knowledge, is subjected to temptation. It must bargain with conditions, make a pact with evil, compromise with reality, or suffer. Every life demonstrates the truth of this; we are all tempted to compromise with the best that is in us for the sake of expediency. Not infrequently, we, as did a Certain Three, think to win knowledge, power, place, and reward for themselves; not by patient effort, but by force alone.

In the sublime degree there is no compromise. Those who seek unlawfully are bidden to wait until they are found worthy. . . but there is no suggestion of yielding to their importunity if they will not. Nor do they wait. For a time, it appears that force is superior to righteousness, that evil can overcome good. But only for a time. And while, indeed, That Which Was Lost has never been recovered, yet the manner of its losing has been an inspiration to all men in their search for it ever since; a just retribution overtook the evil and the consequences of wrong doing are set forth unequivocally.

It is difficult to write about that which is sublime, translate it into words of everyday, and at the same time comply with the statutory requirements. All Master Masons will forgive the seeming vagueness of these references; indeed, they should not find them vague. But in any attempt to translate the symbolism into words, it loses in two ways; first, as any symbol must lose (can you describe a rose so that it appears beautiful or put the majesty of a mountain or the magnitude of the ocean in a phrase?); second, because the appeal of the symbol is to the heart, the soul or the spirit; when one attempts to make of it also an appeal to the mind, the spirit symbolism becomes clouded over with materiality; the bloom is gone from the petal; the butterfly is crushed.

The moral lessons in the degree are many; the virtue of loyalty is most obvious and, perhaps, least important, symbolically. That truth wins in the end; that evil does not flourish; that strength of heart is greater than strength of arm; that it is by the spirit of brotherhood, not by one man alone, that which has fallen can be raised; that in his greatest extremity man has but One to Whom to turn; that beyond brotherhood the soul stands always, and must always stand, alone before God, when no prayers save its own may avail; That he who would win true brotherhood must give proof of his fitness to be a brother; these, and many more can be read from the degree by the most casual minded.

But there is a deeper lesson, for him who is minded to dig far enough. There are certain matters which can be proved by logic, and by experiment. Thus, we know not only by vision, by experience and by counting on the fingers that two added to two make four, but also by demonstrating this fact by mathematics.

It is entirely obvious to all scientists that the laws of nature are constant; they do not vary between here and there. But it is not demonstrable! We are confident that the laws of motion and gravitation as we see them demonstrated on earth and in the solar system, are the same in some far off planet of an unknown sun, in some other solar system of the existence of which we do not even know. But we cannot prove it.

In this sense we cannot prove either God or Immortality. A God who could be proved to a finite mind by a finite means would be a finite God, and The Great Architect we believe to be infinite. The crux of the whole controversy between those who profess a science and those who profess a religion, has been over this demand on the part of those scientists that religion reduce God to

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figures and prove Him by a Rule; while the follower of a religion founded entirely on faith demands that the scientist forego his reason and believe without proof!

In other words, one all Mind demands that one all Soul work and talk wholly in terms of Mind. One all Soul insists that Mind forget its reason and its logic and deal wholly in belief and faith. But a man is not only Mind, nor is he only Immortal Soul.

The ego is made up of both. When they become at war with each other we have either a religious fanatic or an atheist. Luckily for most of us, there is no conflict; we believe the things of the heart because of proofs the mind cannot understand, just as we know the demonstrable truths of science with expositions which mean nothing to a heart.

The esoteric meaning the Sublime Degree of Master Mason is not at all for the mind. To the mind it is not a proof of anything. But it truly is the Forty Seventh Problem of Euclid of the heart!

As that strange and wonderful mathematic wonder contains the germ of all scientific measurement, so does the symbolism of the Third Degree contain the germ of all doctrines of immortality, all beliefs in a hereafter, all heart certainty of a beneficent Creator Who has us in His Holy Keeping.

There have been those who, fearing that Freemasonry was about to set up a doctrine and a church to teach it, have frowned upon Freemasonry because of this symbolism. But note carefully, there is not in all the Master Mason Degree any suggestion of creed or dogma or even of a "Way to Heaven." The Mohammedan who believes that the way to Allah is to kill a Christian or two, will find no contradiction of his queer faith in the Master Masons degree. The Christian who sincerely believes that only by Baptism can he be "Saved" will find nothing in the Master Mason degree to hurt that faith. The Spiritualist who feels that unseen friends are waiting to receive him and carry him forward, can be a good Master Mason. The Third Degree teaches not how to win immortality, not how to get to heaven, not any particular way to worship the Great Architect; it teaches that immortality is; that God is; and leaves to others the fitting of those ineffable truths into what frames they please.

How could the degree be otherwise than sublime? It contains the greatest thought, the most intense hope, the most sincere prayer which all mankind possesses. From the dawn of humanity man has tried to see God. He has believed in God. He has struggled toward the light, often stumbling, often failing; but always stretching forth hands upward, winning his slow way to a little better spiritual comprehension of the Great Mystery.

The Sublime degree of Master Mason is at once a promise and a performance; an exposition and a demonstration; a doing and a believing of the loftiest aspirations in the heart of humanity. Of course, it is sublime; and, equally of course, many who fail to see its inner meaning do not find it so. The beauty of the unseen sunset is there only for eyes which can see. The man who finds the degree otherwise than sublime must blame the man, not the degree. For it is not of the earth, earthy; there is in this ceremony and its simple but awful words, something as much beyond the minds of the generations of men who made it, as there is in its mystery. Something Beyond the comprehension of those who give it, and they, fortunate among men . . . who receive it and take it to their hearts.

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**2.2- SUBLIME MASTER MASON, REMEMBER NOW
THY CREATOR**

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Sublime Master Mason, Remember Now Thy Creator

THE SUBLIME DEGREE OF MASTER MASON

Similarities exist in all the degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry. Each has an entry, a reception, a circumambulation, an obligation, a bringing to light. Each discovers certain symbols to the initiate and, in demonstration and in lecture, gives him the key by which he may unlock the door behind which he will find their meaning.

In its Second Section the Sublime Degree departs from the familiar. Instead of being concerned with moral principles and exhortations, as is the first degree, or with architecture and learning, as is the second, it answers the cry of Job, "If a man die, shall he live again?"

The degree delves into the deepest recesses of a man's nature. While it leads the initiate into the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple, it probes the Holy of Holies of his heart.

As a whole the degree is symbolical of that old age by the wisdom of which "we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent life and die in the hope of a glorious immortality."

But it is much more than that. It is at once the universal and yearning question of man throughout all ages and its answer. To teaches no creed, no dogma, no religion; only that there is a hope of Immortality; there is a Great Architect by whose mercy we may live again, leaving to each brother his choice of interpretations by which he may read the Great Beyond.

It teaches of the power - and the powerlessness - of evil. For those who are happy in a belief in the resurrection of the physical body, the Sublime Degree has comfort. For those whose hope is in the raising only of that spiritual body of which Paul taught, the degree assures of all the longing heart can wish.

When the lesson of the greatest hope and the dearest wish of all mankind is made manifest, the Sublime Degree turns to this life and this brotherhood, and in the symbolism of the Lion, the exposition of the Five Points of Fellowship, the means by which a Mason may claim all that a man may from his brother, and the Word, ties together the Hiram Legend and daily living in a manner which no thoughtful man may see and hear without a thrill, a way at once awe-inspiring and heartening, terrible but beautiful, sternly uncompromising yet strangely comforting.

It is because the degree is all this - and more, much more, which cannot be put into words - that it means so much to those of whom it becomes a part. The ceremony is not of the earth, earthy, but of that land of the inner life, that home of the spirit where each man thinks the secret thoughts he tells never - never.

Pull the flower to pieces; remain the petals, a perfume, but no rose. Play the symphony, isolated note by note; sound is heard, but no music. Every word Milton wrote is in the dictionary, but great poems may not there be found.

So, of any written account of this degree; we may write of its symbols, analyze its legend, tell of its meaning, but we pronounce but words without a rhyme, make a flower of wax, a song muted. The

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best we may do is to point out a path up the high mountain of spiritual experience which is the Sublime Degree, that he who climbs may see it with a new view - and clearer eyes.

"REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR . . ."

Of all the quotations, allusions, facts, and names taken from the Great Light and made a part of the Masonic ritual none has a more secure place in the hearts of the brethren than the first seven verses from Ecclesiastes xii:

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy Youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low: Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, when the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Of the two favorite interpretations of Biblical commentators one makes this dramatic passage a description of old age and senile decay; the other, a reference to the seldom experienced and much feared thunderstorm in Palestine.

The first gives advice to remember the Creator before the eyes begin to go blind, the hands begin to tremble, the legs to weaken, the teeth to drop out; before the old man is frightened at every little sound, even the voice of a bird, before his voice ceases to be musical; before "the almond tree shall flourish" - that is, the hair whiten like the almond tree in bloom - and so tiny a weight as that of a grasshopper be burdensome; before the silver cord (spinal marrow) be loosed or the golden bowl (heart) be broken and so on.

Whether or not the writer of this passage possessed a sufficient knowledge of anatomy to refer to the spinal cord, heart, internal organs, and brain as the "silver cord," the "golden bowl," the "pitcher," and the "wheel," is problematical. The storm interpretation is not open to such an objection; the little mills with which women ground corn would soon cease in the face of the feared thunder; the women in the houses would draw away from the windows and shut them and also the doors, but there is some difficulty in fitting the grasshopper and the almond tree into this analogy.

Read it how you will, the majestic and awe-inspiring poetry rings here the solemn warning with a shake of the heart and a shiver up the back... Remember now thy Creator . . . now, before the fearsome storms of life, or the decay of old age is upon you; wait not until "fears are in the way" to cry for help to the Almighty. Delay not until toothless, sightless, white-haired age asks for help from on high because there is no help left on earth! Remember now thy Creator, while limbs are strong and desire ardent, while life pulses redly and the world is all before . . .

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No man thinks of his Master Mason's degree but hears again in his heart at least the beginning and ending of this sermon in poetry: "Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth; . . . then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it " The solemn strokes on the bell which is Ecclesiastes and the heart-gripping drama of the Legend of Hiram Abif are never to be known apart by him who has met them together.

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2.3- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART ONE

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LOST WORD

The mythical history of Freemasonry informs us that there once existed a Word of surpassing value and claiming a profound veneration; that this Word was known to but few; that it was at length lost; and that a temporary substitute for it was adopted. But as the very philosophy of Freemasonry teaches us that there can be no death without a resurrection-no decay without a subsequent restoration-on the same principle it follows that the loss of the Word must suppose its eventual recovery.

Now, this it is, precisely, that constitutes the myth of the Lost Word and the search for it. No matter what the Word was, no matter how it was lost, nor why a substitute was provided, nor when nor where it was recovered. These are all points of subsidiary importance, necessary, it is true, for knowing the legendary history, but not necessary for understanding the symbolism. The only term of the myth that is to be regarded in the study of its interpretation, is the abstract idea of a word lost and afterward recovered.

The Word, therefore, may be conceived to be the symbol of Divine Truth; and all its modifications-the loss, the substitution, and the recovery-are but component parts of the mythical symbol which represents a search after truth. In a general sense, the Word itself being then the symbol of Divine Truth, the narrative of its loss and the search for its recovery becomes a mythical symbol of the decay and 1088 of the true religion among the ancient nations, at and after the dispersion on the Plains of Shinar, and of the attempts of the wise men, the philosophers, and priests, to find and retain it in their secret mysteries and initiations, which have hence been designated as the Spurious Freemasonry of Antiquity.

But there is a special or individual, as well as a general interpretation, and in this special or individual interpretation the Word, with its accompanying myth of a loss, a substitute, and a recovery, becomes a symbol of the personal progress of a candidate from his first initiation to the completion of his course, when he receives a full development of the mysteries.

HIRAM ABIF

The word "Abif" (sometimes written "Abiff." but far less often than with the single "F") has in one way or another caused considerable controversy among both Biblical and Masonic scholars. Those who are familiar with Hebrew speak learnedly of its derivation from Abi or Abiw or abiv - the consonants W and V being approximations, apparently, of a Hebrew sound not easily rendered in English letters. Our familiar King James Bible translates the word two ways "Hiram my father's" and "Hiram his father" which in itself has led to some confusion as to whether our Hiram Abif was the only Hiram or the father of another. Scholars, however, are fairly well agreed that "my father" as a translation of "Abif" is correct if the words be understood as a title of honor. Hiram the Widow's Son was "father" in the same sense that priests of the church are so known; the same variety of father that was Abraham to the tribes of Israel. Abif, then, is a title of respect and veneration, rather than a genealogical term.

Just when the legend of Hiram Abif came into our symbolism is a study by itself of which only a few bare facts can here be included. Common understanding believes that Hiram Abif has always been

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in our system and descended to us from the days of Solomon. But critical scholarship will have none of “common understanding” and demands proof; names, dates, places, documents before setting a date to any happening.

Our oldest Masonic manuscript (Regius Poem, dated approximately 1390) traces Masonry not to Solomon but to Nimrod and Euclid, in a still earlier time. In this is no mention of Hiram Abif. The Dowland manuscript, dated about 1550, mentions him but only as one of many. Not until The King James version of the Bible appeared (1611) do we find Hiram Abif known as such with any degree of familiarity. Yet here a curious fact is to be found; sometime after the new Bible made its appearance - late in the sixteen hundred, when the King James version had become well known - interest in King Solomon’s Temple was so keen that many models were made and exhibited and handbooks about it printed and distributed. Such specific interest in this particular building from the then new book may easily have come from the familiarity of Operative and some Speculative Masons with the Temple symbolism and, by inference, with Hiram Abif. Anderson’s explanatory footnote of Hiram Abif in his Constitutions (1732) is as follows (spelling and capitalization modernized, and Hebrew letters omitted):

“We read (2 Chron. ii, 13) Hiram, King of Tyre (called there Hiram), in his letter to King Solomon, says, I have met a cunning man, le hiram Abi not to be translated according to the vulgar Greek and Latin, Hiram my Father, as if this architect was King Hiram’s father; for his description, ver. 14, refutes it, and the original plainly imports, Hiram of my Father’s, viz, the Chief Master Mason of my Father, King Abibalus; (who enlarged and beautified the city of Tyre, as ancient histories inform us, whereby the Tyrians at this time were most expert in Masonry) tho some think Hiram the King might call Hiram the architect father, as learned and skillful men were wont to be called of old times, or as Joseph was called the father of Pharaoh; and as the same Hiram is called Solomon’s father, (2 Chron. iv, 16) where ‘tis said:

Shelomoh lammelech Abhif Churam ghmasah. Did Hiram, his father, make to King Solomon. But the difficulty is over at once, by allowing the Abif to be the surname of Hiram the Mason, called also (Chap. ii, 13) Hiram Abi, as here Hiram Abif; for being so amply described (Chap. ii, 14) we may easily suppose his surname would not be concealed: And this reading makes the sense plain and complete, viz., that Hiram, King of Tyre, sent to King Solomon his namesake Hiram Abif, the prince of architects, decried (1 Kings vii, 14) to be a widow’s son of the Tribe of Naphthali; and in (2 Chron. ii, 14) the said King of Tyre calls him the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan; and in both places, that his father was a man of Tyre, which difficulty is removed, by supposing his mother was either of the Tribe of Dan, or of the daughters of the city called Dan in the Tribe of Naphthali, and his deceased father had been a Naphthalite, whence his mother was called a widow of Naphthali; for his father is not called a Tyrian by descent, but his a man of Tyre by habitation; as Obed Edom the Levite is called Gittite, by living among the Gittites, and the Apostle Paul a man of Tarsus. But supposing a mistake in transcribers, and that his father was really a Tyrian by blood and his mother only of the Tribe either of Dan or of Naphthali, that can be no bar against allowing of his vast capacity, for as his father was a worker in brass, so he himself was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass; and as King Solomon sent for him, so King Hiram, in his letter to Solomon, says:

And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, skillful to work in Gold, silver, brass, iron, stone, timber, purple, blue, fine linen and crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him with thy cunning men, and with the cunning

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men of My Lord David thy father. This divinely inspired workman maintained this character in erecting the Temple, and in working the utensils thereof, far beyond the performances of Aholiab and Bezaleel, being so universally capable of all sorts of Masonry.”

In First Kings we read: “And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was a widow’s son of the tribe of Naphtali and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding and cunning to work all kinds of brass. And he came to King Solomon and wrought all his work.”

In Second Chronicles Hiram, King of Tyre, is made to say:

“And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, Hiram my father’s, the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skillful to work in gold and silver, in brass, iron, in stone and in timber, in purple and blue and fine linen, and in crimson, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of David, thy father.”

Alas for those who would believe in the literal truth of the Legend if they could find but a single word to hang to; the end of the story of Hiram Abif is short and calm, not great or tragic. The Chronicler says “And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for King Solomon for the house of God” and the writer of Kings is no less brief:

“So, Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the Lord.”

This is not the place to speculate upon the formation of “The Master’s Part” into our Third Degree - critical scholarship does not believe our ceremony was cast into anything like its present form prior to 1725 at the earliest. But Anderson would not have devoted so much attention to Hiram Abif without some good reason; it seems obvious that “in some form,” the story of Hiram Abif was of importance in 1723, and by inference, in the Lodges which formed the Grand Lodge which led to the writing of the Constitutions. Facts are stubborn and frequently run counter to our desires. We would like to believe in the verity of the legends which cluster around Hiram Abif, but we actually know very little about him. In addition to six Biblical references, Josephus quotes Menander and Duis in reference to him two or three times and refers independently as many more . . . and that is all; not very much on which to build our belief in his character, his greatness, his towering moral and spiritual entity.

On the other hand, it is perfectly possible to envisage any historic character at least in large outline by careful analogy with other contemporary characters, by reference to his time, his civilization, his opportunity, his work. Suppose that all we knew of George Washington was that he was General In Chief of the Revolutionary Army, lived at Mount Vernon, and was the first President of the United States. Much might be read of him merely from these three facts. Thirteen colonies, engaged in a struggle to the death for freedom, would not choose for a leader a man without experience in military affairs. The fact that the Revolution succeeded would tell us that his leadership must have been superb. That he was made First President of the new Republic would indicate with certainty that he had the confidence of the people as a soldier, a man, a leader, and consequently possessed a character to be admired and revered, otherwise he would not be so chose. Merely to look a Mount Vernon is to see a lover of beauty, a man of taste and education, one who loved the earth and its products; the great house speaks with emphasis of hospitality. Much more might be read of

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Washington from only these three facts, but enough has been said to show the process by which we may envisage something of Hiram Abif, even with only meager data. Sacred history teaches much of the time of Solomon; of his queen, the daughter of Egypt; of Hiram, King of Tyre; of Adoniram, the tax collector; of officers Solomon set over various districts. We have a regal picture of Solomon's court, and lengthy and minute description of the Temple.

The chief builder, architect, master workman, give him what title you will, could hardly have mixed in such company, directed the greatest work in Israel's history, been received by Solomon from Hiram King of Tyre as the best he had to offer, and not been a man of parts, ability, skill, learning, culture. To think of him only as one "cunning to work all kinds of brass," in other words, only as an artisan, is completely to misunderstand the too few words in Chronicles and Kings. Rather let us put our belief in the statement that Hiram Abif was "filled with wisdom and understanding" and recall Solomon's many words of admiration for wisdom; he must have been a wise man indeed into whose charge Solomon the Wise was content to give his most ambitious undertaking.

It is commonplace that genius is eccentric; those touched with the divine fire are often "different" from men of more common clay. So, it is not surprising that one legend tells of intense loyalty, of firmness and fortitude under duress, reading into these characteristics an exalted and elevated character, quite in keeping with the architect and builder of the Temple. The distinction between architect and builder is often hazy - it should be acute. Our ritual speaks of Hiram Abif as one "who by his great skill in the arts and sciences was so effectually enabled to beautify and adorn the Temple," which seems to make him a mere adorer! Anything wholly fitted to its use becomes beautiful because of unity and completeness, yet it is also true that what is also useful as a building is not necessarily beautiful to the eye. Any square box of a house gives as secure a shelter as one beautiful in proportion. But complete beauty of building comes when the utility is combined with an appeal to sense and soul. The Temple built by Hiram Abif was no mere shelter; it was the expression of Israel's love of God. To consider Hiram Abif as a mere decorator, beautifier, ornamenter is to deny the very thing for which he lived and - in the legend - gave his life. Architect he was, in all that the best sense of the word implies; builder he was, in that he carried out his own plans.

Of his physical being we have no details. The probability is that he stood about five feet six inches in height, was bearded, swarthy in countenance, had dark eyes, his hair likely long and curly, his shoulders broad - these were the characteristics of his people. Doubtless he was married and a father when he built the Temple. The men of the Twelve Tribes married early; an unmarried man was almost unknown, so be it he was not a cripple, maimed or diseased. Hiram Abif would have a reasonable amount of wealth; the chief workman which Hiram, King of Tyre, sent to King Solomon who "wrought all his work" would be no tyro, amateur or beginner; but a man famed for his art and science and craftsmanship, and thus, one who had already won fame and fortune before he was given this, the greatest task ever laid on the shoulders of a man of the time of Solomon. Undoubtedly, he was regarded with awe and veneration by those workmen over whom he came to rule while building the Temple, and all their families and connections, because of his ability as a great artist. Tribes which but a short time back had been tent-dwelling nomads, whose art was small and whose handiwork was of the crudest, must have looked at one as skilled as Hiram Abif as at a magician, a miracle man, one equal to the very High Priest himself. No wonder they called him Abif, "my father!"

Hiram Abif must have been, at least in private, treated by Solomon as a familiar friend, as much an equal as was possible for an Eastern Potentate of absolute power and authority. Consultations

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would be daily in the building of the Temple. Hiram Abif would be received as an honored guest at Solomon's table. If in public the Architect treated his lord and master with the profound respect which such as Solomon have always exacted from subjects high and low, it is probable that such asteroids were relaxed in private, so that there is nothing incongruous in our legendary picture of Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Trye, and Hiram Abif, acting together in concert as co-rulers - "our first three most excellent Grand Masters" - in governing the workmen and erecting the mighty structure which engaged their attention for seven years.

It is easy to say this verbal picture is but a flight of fancy. It is less easy to draw a less attractive one in its place and make it appear true. While we know Chronicles and Kings and a few other ancient accounts almost nothing of the architect, we do - thanks to patient scholarship, much digging in the earth, and a reading of the literature of all times - know much of the people of Israel, how they worked and ate and lived and loved and labored. After all, it is less important that our mental picture of the illustrious Tyrian be absolutely accurate in small detail than that we keep a true image of a venerated character in our hearts. The color of his eyes and hair matter little; the hue of his conscience, everything. We are told of his knowledge of art and building, of brass and stone, of carving and sculpture - knowing other great artists who have devoted their lives to the creation of the beautiful, it is with some assurance that we liken Hiram Abif's character to the average of great workmen who have labored to produce beauty before the eyes of Him they worshipped. Legendary though our story of Hiram is, and must ever be, our conception of the Architect can continue to be an inspiring fact, and we are the better men and Masons that it is such a man as this we are taught to represent.

THE RUFFIANS

As every Mason knows, at the heart of our mysteries lies a legend, in which we learn how three unworthy craftsmen entered into a plot to extort from a famous Mason a secret to which they had no right. It is all familiar enough, in its setting and sequence; and it is a part of his initiation which no Mason ever forgets.

In spite of its familiarity, the scene in which the Ruffians appear is one of the most impressive that any man ever beheld, if it is not marred, as it often is, alas, by a hint of rowdy. No one can witness it without being made to feel there is a secret which, for all our wit and wisdom, we have not yet won from the Master Builder of the world; the mystery of evil in the life of man.

To one who feels the pathos of life and ponders its mystery, a part of its tragedy is the fact that the Great Man, toiling for the good of the race, is so often stricken down when the goal of his labors is almost within his reach; as Lincoln was shot in an hour when he was most needed. Nor is he an isolated example. The shadow lies dark upon the pages of history in every age.

The question is baffling: Why is it that evil men, acting from low motives and for selfish aims, have such power to throw the race into confusion and bring ruin upon all, defeating the very end at which they aim? Is it true that all the holy things of life - the very things that make it worth living - are held at the risk and exposed to the peril of evil forces; and if so, why should it be so?

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If we cannot answer such questions, we can at least ask another nearer to hand. Since everything in masonry is symbolic, who are the ruffians and what is the legend trying to tell us? Of course, we know the names they wear, but what is the truth back of it all which it will help us to know? As is true of all Masonic symbols, as many meanings have been found as there have been seekers.

It all depends on the key with which each seeker sets out to unlock the meaning of Masonry. To those who trace our symbolism to the ancient solar worship, the three Ruffians are the three winter months who plot to murder the beauty and glory of summer, destroying the life-giving heat of the sun. To those who find the origin of Masonry in the Ancient Mysteries of Egypt, it is a drama of Typhon, the Spirit of Evil, slaying Osiris the Spirit of Good, who is resurrected, in turn rising triumphant over death.

Not a few find the fulfillment of this oldest of all dramas in the life and death of Jesus, who was put to death outside the city gate by three of the most ruthless Ruffians - the Priest, the Politician and the Mob. Which of the three is the worst foe of humanity is hard to tell, but when they work together, as they usually do, there is no crime against man of which they have not been guilty.

A few think that Masonry, as we have it, grew out of the downfall of the Knights Templar, identify the three Assassins, as they are called in the Lodges of Europe, with three renegade Knights who falsely accused the Order, and so aided King Phillip and Pope Clement to abolish Templarism, and slay its Grand Master, A very few see in Cromwell and his adherents the plotters, putting to death Charles the First.

It is plain that we must go further back and deeper down if we are to find the real Ruffians, who are still at large. Albert Pike identified the three Brothers who are the greatest enemies of individual welfare and social progress as Kingcraft, Priest craft, and the ignorant Mob-Mind. Together they conspire to destroy liberty, without which man can make no advance.

The first strikes a blow at the throat, the seat of freedom of speech, and that is a mortal wound. The second stabs at the heart, the home of freedom of conscience, and that is well-nigh fatal, since it puts out the last ray of Divine Light by which man is guided. The third of the foul plotters fells his victim dead with a blow on the brain, which is the throne of freedom of thought.

No lesson could be plainer; it is written upon every page of the past. If by apathy, neglect or stupidity we suffer free speech, free conscience, and free thought to be destroyed either by Kingcraft, Priestcraft or the Mob-Mind; or, by all three working together - for they are Brothers and usually go hand in hand - the Temple of God will be dark, there will be no designs upon the Trestlboard, and the result will be idleness, confusion and chaos. It is a parable of history - a picture of many an age in the past of which we read. For, where there is no light of Divine Vision, the Altar fire is extinguished. The people "perish" as the Bible tells us; literally they become a mob, which is only another way of saying the same thing. There are no designs on the Trestleboard; that is, no leadership, - as in Russia today, where the herd-mind runs wild and runs red. Chaos comes again, inevitably so when all the lights are blown out, and the people are like ignorant armies that clash by night.

Of the three Ruffians, the most terrible, the most ruthless, the most brutal is the ignorant Mob-Mind. No tyrant, no priest can reduce a nation to slavery and control it until it is lost in the darkness of ignorance. By ignorance we mean not merely lack of knowledge, but the state of mind in which

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men refuse, or are afraid, to think, to reason, to enquire. When "The Great Freedoms of the Mind" go, everything is lost!

After this manner Pike expounded the meaning of the three Ruffians. who rob themselves, as they rob their fellow craftsmen, of the most precious secret of personal and social life. A secret let it be added, which cannot be extorted, but is only won when we are worthy to receive it and have the wit and courage to keep it. For, oddly enough, we cannot have real liberty until we are ready for it and can only become worthy of it by seeking and striving for it.

But some of us go further and find the same three Ruffians nearer home - hiding in our own hearts. And naturally so, because society is only the individual writ larger; and what men are together is determined by what each is by himself. If we know who the ruffians really are, we have only to ask; what three things waylay each of us, destroy character, and if they have their way either slay us or turn us into ruffians? Why do we do evil and mar the Temple of God in us? Three great Greek thinkers searched until they found the three causes of sin in the heart of man. In other words, they hunted in the mountains of the mind until they found the Ruffians. Socrates said that the chief ruffian is ignorance - that is, no man in his right mind does evil unless he is so blinded by ignorance that he does not see the right. No man, he said, seeing good and evil side by side, will choose evil unless he is too blind to see its results. An enlightened self-interest would stop him. Therefore, his remedy for the ills of life is knowledge - more light, and a clearer insight. Even so, said Plato; it is all true as far as it goes. But the fact is that men do see right and wrong clearly, and yet in a dark mood they do wrong in spite of knowledge. When the mind is calm and clear, the right is plain, but a storm of passion stirs up sediments in the bottom of the mind, and it is so cloudy that clear vision fails. The life of a man is like driving a team of horses, one tame and the other wild. So long as the wild horse is held firmly all goes well. But, alas, often enough, the wild horse gets loose and there is a run-away and a wreck.

But that is not all, said Aristotle. We do not get to the bottom truth of the matter until we admit the fact and possibility - in ourselves and in our fellows - of a moral perversity, a spirit of sheer mischief, which does wrong, deliberately and in the face of right, calmly and with devilish cunning, for the sake of wrong and for the love of it. Here, truly, is the real Ruffian most to be feared - a desperate character he is, who can only be overcome by Divine Help.

Thus, three great thinkers capture the Ruffians, hiding somewhere in our own minds. It means much to have them brought before us for judgment, and happy is the man who is wise enough to take them outside the city of his mind and execute them. Nothing else or less will do. To show them any mercy is to invite misery and disaster. They are ruthless and must be dealt with ruthlessly and at once. If we parley with them, if we soften toward them, we our-selves may be turned into Ruffians. Good but foolish Fellowcrafts came near being intrigued into a hideous crime. "If thy right eye offends, pluck it out," said the greatest of Teachers. Only a celestial surgery will save the whole body from infection and moral rot. We dare not make terms with evil, else it will dictate terms to us before we are aware of it.

One does not have to break the head of a Brother in order to be a Ruffian. One can break a heart. One can break his home. One can slay his good name. The amount of polite and refined ruffianism that goes on about us every day is appalling. Watch-fulness is wisdom. Only a mind well tiled, with a faithful inner guard ever at his post, may hope to keep the ruffian spirit out of your heart and mine.

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No wise man dare be careless or take any chances with the thought, feelings and motives he admits into the Lodge of the mind, whereof he is Master.

So let us live, watch and work, until Death, the last Ruffian, whom none can escape, lays us low, assured that even the dark, dumb hour, which brings a dreamless sleep about our couch, will not be able to keep us from the face of God, whose strong grip will free us and lift us out of shadows into the Light; out of dim phantoms into the Life Eternal that cannot die.

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2.4- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART TWO

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SPRIG OF ACACIA

Any discussion of the Acacia, important to Freemasonry as one of its fundamental and most beautiful symbols, should begin with clearing away a little of the “rubbish of the Temple” which results from the careless writing of unlearned men. So much has been published about the Acacia which simply is not so that it is no wonder that Freemasons are frequently confused as to what the plant really is, how it came to be a symbol of immortality, and what its true place in religious history may be.

We cannot accurately denote a particular plant or tree as “the Acacia plant” or “the Acacia tree” for the same reason that we cannot accurately specify “the Rose bush” or “the pine tree.” There are too many varieties of roses, too many kinds of pine trees to distinguish one from the other merely by the definite article. As botanists know more than four hundred and fifty varieties of Acacia, “the acacia can be only the most general of terms, meaning them all.” So perhaps it is not to be wondered at that we find one Masonic writer speaking of the “spreading leaves of the Acacia tree” and another talking of “the low thorny shrub which is the Acacia.” We have no certainty that the trees and shrubs now growing in Palestine are the same as those which flowered in Solomon’s era. So that it is not impossible that “Acacia totilis (in Arabic, Es-sant)” and “Acacia Seyal (In Arabic Sayal)” grew to greater size three thousand years ago than they do now. But authorities doubt that the Acacia which grows low, as a bush, and which in all probability must have been the plant which one of the three plucked from the ground as the “Sprig of Acacia,” ever grew large enough to supply boards three feet wide. Wynn Westcott says: “The Acacia is the only tree of any size which grows in the deserts of Palestine, but it has been doubted that even it ever grew large enough to provide planks one and one-half cubits in width.”

Scholars are united in saying the “Shittah Tree” of the Old Testament is an Acacia; and that “Shittim”, the plural, refers to Acacia. In Joel (3-18), one of the poetic and beautiful prophecies of the Old Testament, we read:

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of Shittim.” Commentators place the “valley of Shittim” as possibly the Kidron of Exekiel; but certainly, as some dry, thirsty valley where the Acacia, which flourished where other plants perished from lack of water, was known to grow; another reason for thinking the original Acacia which Freemasons revere was the smaller shrub, rather than the large tree. Inasmuch as Akakia” in Greek signifies “Innocence,” it was wholly natural for Hutcheson (Spriti of Masonry, 1795) to connect the Masonic plant with the Greek definition. He said:

“We Masons, describing the deplorable state of religion under the Jewish Law, speak in figures; “Her Tomb was in the rubbish and filth cast forth of the Temple, and Acacia wove its branches over her monument;” “akakia” being the Greek word for innocence, or being free from sin, implying that the sins and corruptions of the old law and devotees of the Jewish altar had hid religion from those who sought her, and she was only to be found where innocence survived under the banner of the Divine Lamb; and as to ourselves, professing that we were to be distinguished by our “Acacy,” or as true “Acacians,” in our religious faith and tenets.”

It is now well understood that Hutcheson, great as is the debt we owe him, was too anxious to read a Christian interpretation into everything Masonic to be considered as infallible. While the

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coincidence of the Greek word our name for the Shittah-Tree is suggestive, it hardly seems sufficient to read “innocence” into the symbol when it already has so sublime a significance. Mackey considers the acacia also as a symbol of initiation, because sacred plants were symbolical of initiation in many of the Ancient Mysteries, from which Freemasonry derived so much. The modern Masonic scholar is rather apt to pass over this meaning, he is also thinking that a symbol already so rich needs no further meanings to make it important and beautiful.

Apparently, the beginning of the association of the acacia with immortality is in the legend of Isis and Osiris, one of the oldest myths of mankind, traced back into Egypt many thousands of years before the Christian era. Its beginnings, like those of all legends which have endured, are shrouded in the mist which draws a veil between us and the days before history.

According to the legend, Osiris, who was at once both King and God of the Egyptians and was tricked by his brother Typhon (who was very jealous of Osiris), during the King’s absence on a beneficent mission to his people. Later, at a feast provided for the King-God’s pleasure, Typhon brought a large chest, beautiful in workmanship, valuable in the extreme, and offered it as a gift to whoever possessed a body which best fitted the chest. When Osiris entered the box, Typhon caused the lid to shut and fastened; after which the whole was thrown into the Nile.

Currents carried it to Byblos, Phoenicia, and cast it ashore at the foot of an acacia tree. The tree grew rapidly and soon encased the chest holding the body of Osiris.

When Isis, faithful queen, learned of the fate of her husband she set out in search of the body. Meanwhile the King of the Land where the acacia concealed the body, admiring the tree’s beauty, cut it down and made of its trunk, a column. Learning this, Isis became nurse to the King’s children and received the column as her pay. In the tree trunk, preserved, was the body of Osiris. During their long captivity at the hands of the Egyptians; what more natural than that the Israelites should take for their own a symbol already old, and make of the “Shittah-Tree” a symbol of immortality, just as had been done in Egypt?

It is perhaps too much to say that Israelites were the first to plant a sprig of acacia at the head of a grave as a symbol of immortality. But that they did so in ancient times is stated by many historians. Dalcho assigns a novel reason for this practice; that as the Codens, or Priests, were forbidden to step upon or over a grave, it was necessary that spots of internment be marked, and, the acacia being common, it was elected for the purpose.

Mackey disagrees with Dalcho as to these reasons for marking a grave with a living plant. Perhaps the origin of the custom is not important; certain it is that all peoples in almost all ages have planted or laid flowers on the graves of those they love, as a symbol of the resurrection and a future life. The lily of the modern church, the rosemary which is for remembrance, the sprig of acacia of the ancient Israelites and the modern Mason, have all the same meaning upon a grave - the visual expression of the dearest hope of all mankind.

It is both curious and interesting to learn that many trees, in many climes, have been symbols of immortality. India gave to Egypt the lotus, long a sacred plant; the Greeks thought the myrtle the tree of immortal life, and the mistletoe, which survives in our lives merely as a pleasant diversion at Christmas, was held by the Scandavavians and the Druids as sacred as we consider the acacia. Association of a plant and immortality is emphasized in the New Testament - see John 12:24:

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“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”

Also, familiar passages from St. Paul (First Corinthians 15:36,37) used so much in funeral services:

“Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain . . .” Finally, we find in our own stately prayer in the Master’s Degree, such a coupling up of a tree and life immortal; “For there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branches thereof will not cease.” - which of course, is taken from Job 14:7.

Thus there is ample historical recognition of the connection between that which grows and dies and grows again, and the idea of immortality; we do not have to consider the undoubted fact that “shittah-trees” cut to form beams of house, often sprouted branches even when they had no roots, nor our own thought of almost any variety of pine as “the evergreen, or ever living” tree, to see that there is much background behind the symbol. It is one of the glories of Freemasonry that so much has been made of the symbol, so dear and deep a meaning vested in it, that it has almost equaled the square as Freemasonry’s nearest and dearest. All that was mortal on Tyrian lay murdered in a grave “dug six feet due east and west.” The genius of the Temple was no more. No more designs upon the trestleboard; no more glorious architecture to come from that mighty brain; no more holding of meetings with Solomon and Hiram in the Sanctum Sanctorum - the Widow’s Son was dead! Of those who search one finds a sprig of acacia. Oh, immortal story; thrice immortal ritual makers, who coupled together a resurrection and a sprig of green! True, he whose mother was of the Tribe of Naphtali was destroyed, but his genius lived, his spirit marched on, his virtues were recorded in stone and in the hearts of those who built on Mt. Moriah’s heights.

For at least two hundred years and probably much longer the sprig of acacia has held Freemasonry’s premier teaching. The grave is not the end. Bodies die and decay, but something “which bears the nearest affinity to that which pervades all nature and which never, never, dies,” rises from the grave to become one of that vast throng which has preceded us. Error can slay, as can evil and selfish greed, but not permanently. That which is true and fair and fine cannot be destroyed. Its body may be murdered, its disappearance may be effected, the rubbish of the Temple and a temporary grave may conceal it for a time, but where is interred that which is mortal, there grows an evergreen or ever living sprig of acacia - acacia none the less that it may be a spiritual sprig, a plant not of the earth, earthly.

When he who was weary, plucked at a sprig of acacia, he had “evidence of things not seen.” When we toss the little sprig of evergreen which is our usual cemetery “sprig of acacia” into the open grave of one of our brethren who has stepped ahead upon the path we all must tread, we give evidence of belief in a “thing not seen.” For never a man has seen the spirit of one who has gone, or visioned the land where no shadows are. If we see it in our dreams, we see by faith, not eyes. But we can see the acacia - we can look back through the dragging years to the legend of Osiris and think that even as the acacia grew about his body to protect it until Isis might find it, so does the acacia of Freemasonry bloom above the casket from which, in the solemn words of Ecclesiastes “the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

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HOLY OF HOLIES

Every student of Jewish antiquities knows and every Freemason who has taken the Third Degree ought to know, what was the peculiar construction, character, and uses of the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies in King Solomon's Temple. Situated in the western end of the Temple, separated from the rest of the building by a heavy curtain, and enclosed on three sides by dead walls without any aperture or window, it contained the sacred Ark of the Covenant, and was secluded and set apart from all intrusion save of the High Priest, who only entered it on certain solemn occasions. As it was the most sacred of the three parts of the Temple, so has it been made symbolic of a master's Lodge, in which are performed the most sacred rites of initiation in Ancient Craft Freemasonry.

But as modern horologists have found in all the Hebrew rites and ceremonies the traces of more ancient mysteries, from which they seem to have been derived, or on which they have been modified, whence we trace also to the same mysteries most of the Masonic forms which, of course, are more immediately founded on the Jewish Scriptures, so we shall find in the ancient Gentile temples the type of this same Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies, under the name of Adytum or Adytum. And what is more singular, we shall find a greater resemblance between this Adytum of the Pagan temples and the Lodge of Master Masons, than we will discover between the latter and the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Solomonic Temple. It will be curious and interesting to trace this resemblance, and to follow up the suggestions that it offers in reference to the antiquity of Masonic rites.

The Adytum was the most retired and secret part of the ancient Gentile temple, into which, as into the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple, the people were not permitted to enter, but which was accessible only to the priesthood. And hence the derivation of the word from the Greek *Adoein*, meaning not to enter, or that which it is not permitted to enter. Seclusion and mystery were always characteristic of the Adytum, and therefore, like the Holy of Holies, it never admitted of windows.

In the Adytum was to be found a taphos or tomb, and some relic or image or statue of the god to whom the temple was dedicated. The tomb reminds us of the characteristic feature of the Third Degree of Freemasonry; the image or statue of the god finds its analogue or similarity in the Ark of the Covenant and the overshadowing Cherubim.

It being supposed that temples owed their first origin to the reverence paid by the ancients to their deceased friends, and as it was an accepted theory that the gods were once men who had been deified on account of their heroic virtues, temples were, perhaps, in the beginning only stately monuments erected in honor of the dead. Hence the interior of the temple was originally nothing more than a cell or cavity, that is to say, a grave regarded as a place of deposit for the reception of a person interred, and, therefore, in it was to be found the *soros* or coffin, and the taphos or tomb, or, among the Scandinavians, the barrow or mound grave. In time the statue or image of a god took the place of the coffin; but the reverence for the spot, as one of peculiar sanctity, remained, and this interior part of the temple became among the Greeks the *sekos* or chapel, among the Romans the *Adyeum* or forbidden place, and among the Jews the *kodesh kodashim*, or Holy of Holies.

"The sanctity thus acquired," says Dudley in his *Naology* (page 393), "by the cell of interment might readily and with propriety be assigned to any fabric capable of containing the body of the departed

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friend, or relic, or even the symbol of the presence or existence, of a divine personage." Thus, it happened that there was in every ancient temple an Adytum or Most Holy Place.

There was in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple, it is true, no tomb nor coffin containing the relics of the dead. But there was an Ark of the Covenant which was the recipient of the Rod of Aaron, and the Pot of Manna, which might well be considered the relics of the past life of the Jewish nation in the wilderness. There was an analogy easily understood according to the principles of the science of symbolism. There was no statue or image of a god, but there were the sacred cherubim, and, above all, the Shekinah or Divine Presence, and the bathkol or Voice of God.

But when Freemasonry established its system partly on the ancient rites and partly on the Jewish ceremonies, it founded its Third Degree as the Adytum or holy of holies of all its mysteries, the exclusive place into which none but the most worthy the priesthood of Freemasonry the Masters in Israel were permitted to enter; and then going back to the mortuary idea of the ancient temple, it recognized the reverend for the dead which constitutes the peculiar characteristic of that Degree. And, therefore, in every Lodge of Master Masons there should be found, either actually or allegorically, a grave, or tomb, and coffin, because the Third Degree is the inmost sanctuary, the kodesh kodashim, the Holy of Holies of the Masonic temple.

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2.5- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART THREE

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TUBAL CAIN

We use this word often in Masonry and it should be familiar to you, but what exactly is a Tubal Cain?

Origin of Word

The word is thought to be derived from the Bible. It is a man's name, derived from the marriage of Lamech and Zillah. Not very interesting at first blush, but if we look at this from a genealogical perspective, we find that Tubal-Cain is the 8th generation from Adam, from the line of Cain.

He is briefly mentioned in Genesis 4:22 as the son of Lamech and Zillah. His brothers were Jubal, a famous musician and Jabal who was a herdsman. His sister is Naamah who is said to have perfected weaving and other skills. Tubal-Cain was an artificer in bronze and iron works.

It is interesting to note that the Bible tells us little about the relationship either Lamech or his wife had with God. Experience tells us that those who don't have a relationship with God also don't teach their children about Him and I believe in this case the Bible is telling us that because Cain was cursed by God after killing Able. Cain became a city builder, he moved away from God relying on himself before he relied on God. To further the point Lamech probably didn't know anything about him and probably didn't pass on a tradition of worship on to Tubal-Cain.

It may also be interesting to look at the analog character from the Greek histories – Vulcan, the god of fire and metal working. This is a bit of a stretch, but we find other creation stories that overlap, and it is worth noting the Greeks viewed Vulcan as the God of fire, something both needed and hated. It was needed to cook, craft and clean fields and brush for harvest. It was also a destroyer in that it would kill anything in its path.

Jewish tradition holds that before the flood, the four siblings created two pillars that could not be destroyed and encoded all of the known science of the time onto them. One pillar of bronze and one of clay; one would not burn the other would not sink. These were to protect all knowledge in case of a massive fire or flood.

It is a bit of a reach, but you might also think of Tubal-cain as our first war-monger or profiteer. A person who crafted metal to be both a working tool as well as a weapon of war. He was godless and carried the curse of Cain.

Flavius Josephus the 1st century historian describes Tubal-Cain as "[exceeding] all men in strength, and was very expert and famous in martial performances, ... and first of all invented the art of working brass."

The tribe of Nephtali is important here because this ties this Hiram back to Jacob through the slave of his daughter Rachel. That slave was Bilhah who gave birth to Dan as well as Nephtali. He was the fifth son of Jacob and was given wise council from the blessings of Jacob and Moses. He was also the 10th point of ancient Masonic Lectures tying him to the lecture on the apron.

So why the big round about circle?

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Hiram of Tyre or King Hiram was the Phoenician King of Tyre, or Southern Lebanon. This is the place that Europa and Elissa were born, the founders of Europe and Carthage. King Hiram and King David were friends this is well documented. And Solomon asked King Hiram to help him build the temple, to complete his father's work when he was crowned. Don't miss the point here. God had Solomon work with foreign workers to create His temple. He gave Solomon the wisdom to work with these people, which also gave him the resources he needed to complete God's work. This should remind us that we should emulate King Solomon's wisdom and work in harmony with others.

How does this tie back to Tubal-Cain? Remember he was just an artificer in metals. I'll get there in a minute.

The Nephthalis while living adjacent to Phoenicia were intermarrying with the foreigners and kept close ties with the Phoenicians. Effectively we can say that cousins of the line of David were keeping company with foreigners. This probably helped to keep King David close to King Hiram of Tyre.

We read in 1 Kings 7:23 about a certain craftsman who was summoned to help work bronze in a new construction site. He was a member of the tribe of Nephthali and was a widow's son; Hiram King of Tyre brought him in to help craft King Solomon's Temple. There he crafted two very beautiful pillars in the portico of the sanctuary. On the left was a brass pillar called Boaz and the one on the right was called Jachin. See it is someone living in King Hiram's land who is also an artificer in metals that is brought into the mix.

Now be aware that the pillars aren't the same ones as the pillars from the Jewish tradition of preserving science. Also be aware that Tubal-Cain isn't Hiram of Tyre. The link here is that they are both from the same craft (metal workers).

In 1 Kings 7:14 we find proof that this different Hiram character in the mix isn't the King of Tyre, but Hiram King of Tyre knew him and so in turn did Solomon. This is the Hiram our tradition holds dear to. He was the bronze craftsman who added beauty and decoration to the Temple.

See in this instance Hiram the Widow's Son from Tyre, or as we call him Hiram Abiff, had the skill, was in the right place and followed the command he was given to build God's Temple.

Spiritual/Esoteric Views

If you can make the jump, Tubal-Cain started what we know as the Bronze Age. This was very important to mankind and brought ne

We were divested of all metals – it is thought that metal interfered with magic and it was therefore important to make sure it was not part of the work. Also, the threat or danger of bringing a weapon into the craft was thought to be offensive to the work and would diminish the capabilities. You'll also remember that there was no sound of metal in the construction of Solomon's Temple. Peace and harmony being important to the construction of the temple to God.

As part of the craft lectures you will remember that we are presented with the formative parts of metal working: Clay, Charcoal and Chalk.

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Clay providing the minerals for the art of metal working.

Charcoal to heat, smelt and refine the mineral and;

Chalk to provide a flux to alloy with the gangue and separate from the ore.

Who is a machinist? What are the most important tools for doing this work? A gauge, square, compass? What is the forerunning process step to machining? Casting. In that process a raw shape is made into a mold, maybe of clay, then the molten metal is poured into the mold for finishing process. I like to think of him as a tool maker more than just an artificer.

Metal working is advancement in the knowledge of science and a practical application of that art. Tools can be used to craft or destroy. A knife's edge can cut to kill or clean a fresh kill. A mallet can be used to crush a skull or chip away at a stone for building.

We should think in these terms then that the tools Tubal-Cain imparts to us as tools that can either help or harm. What tools we create with our hands, those malleable items can provide peace, comfort help or can harm, maim or kill. It is also important to think of him in terms of a person laying building tools for others to use and learn from as they gain more light.

FIVE POINTS

The Five Points of Fellowship, as every Master Masons knows, contain the essence of the doctrine of brotherhood. But many a new brother asks, pertinently, "why are they called "Points?" In the Old Constitutions, as explained in the Hallowell or Regius manuscript, are fifteen regulations, called "points." The old verse runs:

"Fifteen artyculus there they soughton and fifteen poyntys there they wrogton."

Translated into easy English, this reads:

"Fifteen articles there they sought and fifteen points there they wrought."

Phillips "New World of Words," published in 1706, defines "point" as "a head, or chief matter." Moreover, an operative Masons "points" the seams of a wall by filling in the chinks left in laying bricks or stone, thus completing the structure.

In older days of the Speculative Art there were "twelve original points" as we learn from the old English lectures, done away with by the United Grand Lodge of England at the time of the reconciliation of 1813. They were introduced by the following passage:

"There are in Freemasonry twelve original points, which form the basis of the system and comprehend the whole ceremony of initiation. Without the existence of these points, no man ever was, or can be, legally and essentially received into the Order. Every person who is made a Mason must go through these twelve forms and ceremonies, not only in the first degree, but in every subsequent one." The twelve points were: Opening, Preparation, Report, Entrance, Prayer, Circumambulation, Advancing. Obligation, Investure, Northeast Corner and Closing; and each was

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symbolized by one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel for ingenious reasons not necessary to set forth here.

The twelve original points were never introduced into the United States, and are now no longer used in England, although the ceremonies which they typify, of course, are integral parts of all Masonic rituals.

Our Five Points of Fellowship are not allied to these, except as they are reflected in the word "points." We also find this relationship in the Perfect Points of our Entrance, once called Principal Points. Dr. Oliver, famous, learned and not always accurate Masonic student and writer (1782-1867) sums up the Five Points in his "Landmarks," as follows:

"Assisting a brother in his distress, supporting him in his virtuous undertakings, praying for his welfare, keeping inviolate his secrets and vindicating his reputation as well in his absence as in his presence." by which it will be seen that in Oliver's day the Five Points were not exactly as they are with us now.

Strange though it seems, a change was made in the symbolism of the Five Points as recently as 1842, at the Baltimore Masonic Convention. Prior to that time, according to Cole, the Five Points were symbolized by hand, foot, knee, breast and back. After 1842, the hand was omitted, and the mouth and ear tacked on as the fifth.

Mackey believed that:

"The omission of the first and the insertion of the last are innovations and the enumeration given by Cole is the old and genuine one which was originally taught in England by Preston and in his country by Webb."

Some curiosities of ritual changes, though interesting, are more for the antiquarian than the average lodge member. Most of us are more concerned with a practical explanation of the Five Points as they have been taught for nearly a hundred years. For they have a practical explanation, which goes much more deeply into fraternal and brotherly relations than the ritual indicates. A man goes on foot a short distance by preference; for a longer journey he boards a street car, rides in an automobile, engages passage on a railroad or courses through the air in a plane. Service to our brethren on foot does not imply any special virtue in that means of transportation. The word expresses the willingness of him who would serve our own pleasure and refuse to travel merely because the means is not to our liking would hardly be Masonic. We assist our brethren when we can; also, we serve them. The two terms are not interchangeable; we cannot assist a brother without serving, but we may serve him without assisting him. For a wholly negative action may be a service; suppose we have a just claim against him and, because of our Fraternal relations, we postpone pressing it. That is true service, but not active assistance, such as we might give if we gave or loaned him money to satisfy some other's claim.

How far should we go "on foot" to render service? Nothing is said in the ritual, but the cabletow is otherwise used as a measure of length. That same Baltimore Masonic Convention defined a cabletow's length as "the scope of a brother's reasonable ability." Across town may be too far for one, and across a continent not too far for another. In better words, our own conception of brotherhood must say how far we travel to help our brother.

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Mackey expressed thus:

“Indolence should not cause our footsteps to halt, or wrath to turn them aside; but with eager alacrity and swiftness of foot, we should press forward in the exercise of charity and kindness to a distressed fellow creature.”

The petition at the Altar of the Great Architect of the Universe before engaging in any great and important undertaking is sound Masonic doctrine. To name the welfare of our brother in our petitions is good - but not for the reasons which the good Dr. Mackey set forth; the great Masonic student’s pen slipped here, even as Jove has been known to nod! He Said:

“In our devotions to almighty God we should remember a brother’s welfare as our own, for the prayers of a fervent and sincere heart will find no less favor in the sight of heaven because the petition for self intermingles with aspirations of benevolence for a friend.” Apparently, we should pray for our friends because God will look with favor on an unselfish action on our part - which is un-Masonic and selfish! Cole, writing years before Mackey (1817) said of his Third, our Second Point:

“When I offer up my ejaculations to Almighty God, a brother’s welfare I will remember as my own, for as the voices of babes and sucklings ascend to the Throne of Grace, so most assuredly will the breathings of a fervent heart arise to the mansions of bliss, as our prayers are certainly required of each other.”

This seems to be interpretable as meaning that we should pray for our brethren because we love them, and because, knowing our own need of their prayers, we realize their need of ours. Anciently, it was written “Laborare est orare,” - to labor is to pray. If indeed prayer is labor, then to pray for our brethren we may labor for our brethren, which at once clarifies the Second Point and makes it a practical, every day, do-it-now admonition. To work for our brother’s welfare is in the most brotherly manner to petition the Most High for him.

We often associate with the idea of a “secret” something less than proper; “He has a secret in his life,” “He is secretive.” “He says one thing but in his secret heart he thinks another” are all expressions which seem to connote some degree of guilt with what is secret. We keep our brother’s secrets, guilty or innocent, but let us not assume that every secret is of a guilty variety. He may have a secret ambition, a secret joy, a secret hope - if he confides these to us, is our teaching merely to refuse to tell them, or to keep them in the fine old sense of that word - to hold, to guard. to preserve. The Keeper of the Door stands watch and ward, not to keep it from others, but to see that none use it improperly. Thus, we are to keep the secret joys and ambitions of our brethren, close in our hearts, until he wants them known, but also by sympathy and understanding, helping him to maintain them.

Even without this broad interpretation, the keeping of a brother’s confidence has more to it than mere silence. If he confides to us a guilty secret, since to betray him may not only make known that which he wishes hidden but places him in danger. To betray a trust is never the act of a brother. In ordinary life an unsought trust does not carry with it responsibility to preserve it; in Freemasonry it does! No matter how we wish we did not share the secret, if it has been given us by a brother, we cannot suffer our tongues to betray him, no matter what it costs us to remain silent, unless we forget alike our obligation and the Third Point. “Do you stumble and fall, my brother? My hand is

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stretched out to prevent it. Do you need aid? My hand is yours - use it. It is your hand, for the time being. My strength is united to yours. You are not alone in your struggle - I stand with you on the Fourth of the Five Points, and as your need may be, so "Deo volente," will be my strength for you."

So, must we speak when the need comes. It makes no difference in what way our brother stumbles; it may be mentally; it may be spiritually; it may be materially; it may be morally. No exceptions are noted in our teachings. We are not told to stretch forth the hand in aid "if," and "perhaps," and "but!" Not for us to judge, to condemn, to admonish . . . for us only to put forth our strength unto our falling brother at his need, without question and without stint. For such is the Kingdom of Brotherhood.

More sins are committed in the name of the Fifth of the Five Points than in the name of liberty! Too often we offer counsel when it is not advice but help that is needed. Too often we admonish of motes within our brother's eye when our own vision is blinded by beams. What said the Lord? (Amos VII, in the Fellowcraft's Degree.) "Behold, I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them anymore."

"In the midst of my people Israel" - not in the far away land; not across the river; not up on the mountain top, but in the midst of them, an intimate personal individual plumb line! So are we to judge our brethren; not by the plumb, the square or the level that we are each taught to carry in our hearts, but by his plumb, his square, his level.

If he builds true by his own tools, we have no right to judge him by ours. The friendly reminders we must whisper to him are of incorrect building by his own plumb line. He may differ from us in opinion; he may be Republican where we are Democrat, Methodist where we are Baptist; Wet where we are Dry; Protectionist where we are Free trade;

League of Nations proponent where we are "biter enders" - we must not judge him by the plumb line of our own beliefs. Only when we see him building untrue to his own tools have, we the right to remind him of his faults. When we see a brave man shrinking, a virtuous man abandoning himself to vice, a good man acting as a criminal - then is his building faulty judged by his own plumb line and we may heed the Fifth of the Five Points and counsel and advise him to swing back, true to his own working tools. And finally, we do well to remember Mackey's interpretation of the Fifth Point:

". . . we should never revile a brother's character behind his back but rather, when attacked by others, support and defend it." "Speak no ill of the dead, since they cannot defend themselves" might well have been written of the absent. In the Masonic sense no brother is absent if his brother is present, since then he has always a champion and defender, standing upon the Fifth Point as upon a rock.

So, considered - and this little paper is but a slender outline of how much and how far the Five Points extend - these teachings of Masonry, concerned wholly with the relations of brother to brother, become a broad and beautiful band of blue - the blue of the Blue Lodge - the True Blue of Brotherhood.

THE WORKING TOOLS OF A MASTER MASON

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The Skirret

The skirret is a measure—one that is to ensure the foundation of a building is straight by laying down the string as a marker. It is related, symbolically, to the 24-inch gauge and the plumb rule but has a specific connotation to the Third Degree. The main subject of the Third Degree is one's mortality and immortality. The skirret represents the foundation of the way of life we are to follow as laid down to us by our Creator—keeping it on the straight and narrow, so to speak, using our Masonic principles. The other two tools of the degree follow naturally, and all three are interrelated. The pencil bears a relationship to the All-Seeing Eye of the Second Degree closing ceremony. But the pencil reminds us that not only does the Eye of the Almighty observe whether (and how) we follow the conduct symbolized by the skirret, He remembers what He observes. And the compasses symbolize what fate He has in store for us at the final hour, according what he has recorded (symbolized by the pencil) of our behavior (symbolized by the skirret) throughout our existence in this Earthly life, during which we are to work with the tools of the other degrees and follow the principles of Freemasonry. Thus, all three are symbols of our belief in the Creator and of an individual Mason's religious faith.

We should allow the skirret, therefore, to remind us to start building our character on a proper foundation—namely, the many virtues of behavior found in the Masonic ceremonies, and in the Holy Word of the Almighty. And we should allow this tool to remind us why we should do so—the end of our life shall end someday, and we should prepare now for what comes next.

THE PENCIL

With the Pencil the skillful artist delineates the building in a draft or plan for the instruction and guidance of the workmen. Our building has been delineated in a draft or plan for our instruction and guidance by the Great Architect of the Universe. It is for us to understand what is meant by each detail of the design, so that our life, when considered in the time to come, and in the light of that plan, will be judged by its conformity to that plan.

We all know that in the erection of a building, just how easy it is to misread the plan, and how we need a good light. We have only to seek, and we will find the light that we need. The light of a Master Mason is but darkness visible, that is, ignorance realized, for there is no greater darkness than ignorance not realized.

THE COMPASSES

As in Operative Freemasonry, the compasses are used for the measurement of the architect's plans, and to enable him to give those just proportions which will ensure beauty as well as stability to his work; so, in Speculative Freemasonry, is this important implement symbolic of that even tenor of deportment, that true standard of rectitude which alone can bestow happiness here and felicity hereafter.

Hence are the compasses the most prominent emblem of virtue, the true and only, measure of a Freemason's life and conduct. As the Bible gives us light on our duties to God, and the square illustrates our duties to our neighborhood and Brother, so the compasses give that additional light which is to instruct us in the duty we owe to ourselves—the great, imperative duty of circumscribing

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our passions, and keeping our desires within due bounds. "It is ordained," says the philosophic Burke, "in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate passions cannot be free; their passions forge their fetters." Those Brethren who delight to trace our emblems to an astronomical origin, find in the compasses a symbol of the sun, the circular pivot representing the body of the luminary, and the diverging legs his rays.