

Knowledge

I want to talk to you today about Knowledge, I mean masonic knowledge or Masonic light. It is not held in book's; it is not available to the uninitiated but it is yours by right of your initiation. What initiation means is that you are party to, and entitled to understand masonic symbols, interpret ritual, and apply such knowledge to your life and masonic career.

Where is this knowledge? I want to point you to this repository and I am sure you will find it the most interesting of all human studies.

The clues to finding this knowledge we will cover today. It is in our Craft Temples. It also appears in the Square and Pair of compasses of some Constitutions. Its meaning is often overlooked or assumed to be of no value, or little consequence. However, there is no masonic symbol, ritual, or movement without important meaning. The Knowledge is no exception.

I will give a point of view here but you are entitled to accept or reject my thoughts. You are entitled to your own point of view. The main purpose for me today is to ask you to think about this subject and agree with me or form your own ideas. You are initiated and have a perfect right to hear me today, learn something and develop what this knowledge means to you. My objective is to leave you with more questions than I give you answers. You will be empowered today and perhaps embark on a masonic career you never envisaged existed.

I want to go back to the beginning of enlightenment on our masonic journey. That initial step into darkness with a cable tow about your neck and a threat of a sword over your heart. You had to place your whole trust in your guide and knew nothing of what was to happen to you, "poor and penniless and divested of your earthly comforts".

On entering a Lodge, we answer the WM's question. "Where were you first prepared to be made a Mason"? "In my heart WM", you answered with a prompt. Here is the beginning of our masonic journey.

*In my Heart WM

Symbolically you were in darkness, the darkness of ignorance and you stepped into a Temple bathed in light. The symbols, brothers, colours, furniture, the steps you take are filled with knowledge. You were introduced to the Wardens and the Worshipful Master. All sources of masonic light. You violently woke up two Master Masons or Wardens demanding their attention. Each pointed you (symbolically) to a source of further light.

Your desire for knowledge started long before you came to this point. You learnt that the knowledge we call "Masonic Light", is here and you wish to "be admitted to the privileges and secrets of this degree". It first began when you felt or acknowledged the need to learn of the Craft. It drew you in. It caused you ask for admission or seek an invitation to join our Fraternity. You were seeking knowledge. We all have a need for the knowledge of "what it is all about", and by experience we hope to find what Freemasonry might offer to us.

[In selecting a man as a suitable candidate, we believe him not only to be a good man, but one worthy of our peculiar educational process.....a process not to be ignored. The action of making a 'good man better' first required his willingness to undertake a systematic attempt through self-analysis to better understand his own personality and behaviour with or without the aid of another.

As a good man looking inward, he will find the truth resonating deep within his being, tipping the scales in favour of change. Consequently addressing his flaws of character for the purpose of self-improvement creates the foundational structure necessary in changing his life in a positive way forever!]

As a one-time lodge Secretary, I wrote to all applicants for membership and expected a reply confirming their attendance at an interview. I asked them to consider why they applied. What were their expectations? Did their partner support their application? And most importantly, what had they already learnt of the Craft? The answers provided more information than any unprepared candidate for interview. They showed up if the heart was ready to be admitted. It was always wise to progress with care as some applicants had no idea of "what they were all about", let alone the Craft.

Now, the initiate finds that the sources of masonic knowledge are the WM, and Wardens, his proposer and seconder. But there is more than the "liberal arts and sciences".

It is not until the Second degree that the lecture of the Tracing board points out the Centre of the Lodge containing a "G". "To what does it allude?" "To God". Note here, it alludes to God! We overlook the appended word, allude. This is what our dictionary says about allude: -

"suggest or call attention to indirectly, or hint at".

*The Centre. To God.

- Second degree board

It hints at your Deity. That supreme being you professed to believe in. But where is that Deity? Here we must remember our founders would have had no difficulty pointing to the theoretical locations of the Most-High! Here you are told the Deity is in the Centre of the Lodge. That supreme being to whom we must all answer for our actions. That Supreme being who is the source of our Masonic Light.

It does not say it is God, or a substitute for 'the Grand Geometrician'. Most members will say it is either or God or Geometrician. But I believe this is only a little part of the truth. It points out so much more to us. It hints at God, or points you to the supreme being you said you believed in when challenged when seeking admission. It is also the single point of the compass exposed to you on completing your obligation in the 2nd degree, it is our point of reference, also it is perhaps our limitation of self. That small dot on the paper is you, in comparison to the great Temple about you. That parallelapipadon which is from east to west and above all down to the Centre. You are learning how you might fill this Temple and be a "superstructure perfect in all its parts and honourable to the builder". The completion of this Temple is built about you, by you, and around the Centre. It is you, "just perfect and regular".

I reminded you that you declared you were first prepared to be made a mason in your heart. This never changes and as you progress you will find the knowledge and the wisdom you sought in the same place. Within you, is the place of peace and harmony, Truth and Wisdom, and more for you to learn. Freemasonry is a system of self-improvement established over 600 years previously. About 1450 in Scotland.

Let us look now at the G as a Symbol. In Hebrew it is the third letter of the alphabet and is associated at the number 3. (interesting that, is it not). Another interpretation of the G is the Greek word

Gnosis or knowledge is the literal translation. In the Centre of the Temple (remember it is a metaphor for you) is the Knowledge you are seeking.

*Gnosis

From the studies of the liberal arts and sciences in the first degree you are recommended to turn in the second degree to the more hidden mysteries of nature and science. You are pointed to the Centre. Did you look at the Centre in any depth? Probably not, but you did stand under it for the test questions, and usually take your oath and obligation at the Centre of the Lodge. The fact that many Lodges don't is the subject of another lecture.

So here you are in the third degree, you are told to study yourself. "That most interesting of all human subjects". Does this allude to the Centre you were directed too? "In my heart WM", these words echo from the time you entered the Lodge. The secret of the Centre is for you to find and is perhaps the 'lost secrets of the Master Mason'. How many of you have found them? Is this the subject of another lecture? I think it is.

*My Heart.

So, what can Gnosis teach us? By the Third Degree you will have heard the lectures of the tracing boards, have you copied the Tracing board pictures onto your phone and contemplated the meaning of the devices therein. You will have noted the shadows, the compass points, the three great lights, the ladder, the ashlar and you will know have understanding of the symbols therein. The winding staircase has no mystery to you nor does the coffin and the porch. You understand all mysteries and can share these with those just out on their masonic path.

You will have heard the charges in the degrees and the recommendations of the North East Corner. Have taken the advice offered and practiced this in your daily life?

You know the Traditional History, the bright and morning star of hope, and the secrets of a Master Mason and the five points of fellowship. Are these now part of you?

We need to understand why Masonic light or knowledge of the light is so important to each of us. We need an analogy to see what we are all about.

Let us take a step back and consider this example.

You will have all seen a candle at night with many moths and insects of the night flitting around the flame of incandescent illumination. Taking that as an example you will observe some insects approach the light and fly away unimpressed. The colour was not quite right or there were no females to keep them interested. Now when you were admitted to the Order you had a cable tow about your neck. Symbolically showing that should you retreat from the light (Centre) you would not find the knowledge. Subsequently death in ignorance would ensue. There was no benefit to come to you so you retreated and never looked back.

Now some moths fly right on to the light and are burnt to death. They were overly keen to advance. The charge to the Centre and came unstuck. Like so when you were admitted to the lodge a pointed implement or sword was presented to your breast. Symbolically this was a warning not to rashly move toward the centre of masonic light as it would be equally dangerous. You would not learn the progressive steps towards knowledge by experience. Certainly, you would approach the light and miss it entirely. You would not benefit in the knowledge of light.

But the moths that fly and search the light, taking their time, see it from all sides and learn therefrom. They spend many hours hovering, looking at it from all angles, seeing what the rash and the disinterested did not. These are the ones who stepped up the ladder of a progressive science. Who studied the Tracing boards, learnt the charges, applied Freemasonry to their relationships, work, and daily lives.

This is our search. The Search for the non-physical side of our lives. We are in a secular spiritual fellowship and not a religious spiritual search. This is complementary to all religions and if we have no religion it is not a replacement but a supplement to our lives. In these times were possession, ambition, competitiveness, and success drive us like the hunter gatherers we lose the time to consider the lessons of geometry, order, empathy, and much more. "Better to live respected and die regretted".

What we do as true Freemasons is to look at masonic light as luminary of ourselves and what is Truth to us. Considering our spiritual journey to self-awareness, we should realise that this is our primary objective, all other appendages of charity, good works and the like are secondary. They flow from our hearts (our Centre) so enlightened with a sense of purpose, oneness, harmony and completeness of self.

*The Centre Heart.

You will have had time to consider all these things and take them as part of yourself. You will have been set on the road of knowledge, wisdom and understanding. The path of a Freemason is relatively short but it is rich, full and inspirational. To quote our Patron St John the Evangelist, "he who has an ear let him hear, what the spirit says to (you)....."

*A Freemason's Heart.

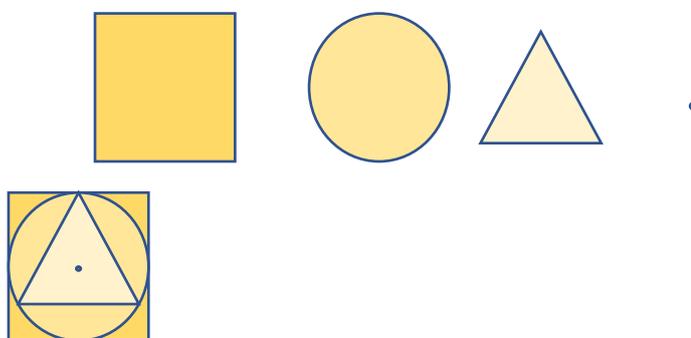
Square and Regular actions.

The Circle to keep you in due bounds with all mankind especially your brother freemasons.

That "Vital and Immortal Principle" you learnt of it the Third degree. That SACRED repository.

Let us not forget our own ego that small insignificant prick of the page from the single point of the compass in the 2nd degree.

This brother, is what I see as a Freemason's heart.



Square and upright actions: keep within due bounds with all mankind; especially your brethren in Freemasonry; and the safe and SACRED depository of every Freemason's heart. Not to forget that

small insignificant prick in the Centre of your ego in relationship to that enormous Temple you have built as a super structure perfect in all its parts and honourable to the builder.

Some questions to think on tonight: -

Which masonic moth are you?

What masonry you have learnt so far?

Have you the knowledge of the Centre, the light of the masonic Gnosis?

The Truth is out there.

Thank you brethren and I hope you find this talk a challenge to you and inspiration to look again.

Peace and Harmony brethren.

Bro Philip Harris

Internet Lodge 9659