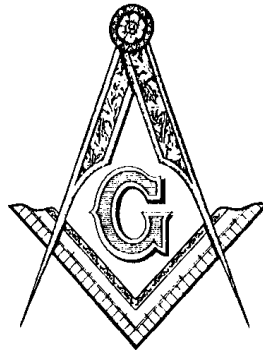


THE
NEWSLETTER
OF THE COMMITTEE
ON
MASONIC
EDUCATION



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IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

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TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS

The factual accuracy of an article is the contributor's responsibility. The opinions expressed by the authors do not necessarily reflect those of the Grand Lodge A.F. & A. M. of Canada, in the Province of Ontario, nor of the Committee on Masonic Education.

Size of Article: Material submitted for the Newsletter should reflect consideration both of the physical size of the publication, and the readability of the piece. Our pages run 300-325 words per page, so a maximum of about 1200-1300 words is the limit. Articles can also be one-paragraph notes of interest, or any length in between. Longer articles of special merit might be printed in sections over several issues.

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An Invitation: The Newsletter is published by the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education. We welcome responses from all readers. If any of our contributors or subscribers have access to historical information about their District, or Lodge, or special individuals, please forward it to the Editor. Much of our Masonic history is also linked to the history of our country through members who have been community, business, professional, religious or political leaders. Careful research of material made available should provide some interesting information for The Newsletter readers. It would also help to educate us all about the contributions of individual members, lodges and Districts to the history of our country, provinces, and our villages, towns and cities. We need to know more about each other and about the part that Canadian Masons have played in our history. Can you help?

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THE COLLEGE OF FREEMASONRY

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THE PERFECT ASHLAR

Submitted By: W. Bro. Dave MacLeod Centennial Lodge #684

The topic I would like to consider is one of great importance to many Masons, and that is the relevancy of our craft to our modern society. Our fraternity has its roots in antiquity, in the first millenium, and in light of declining membership and the challenges posed by our modern society some worry about whether it will survive, and if the message of Freemasonry will continue to be heard in the future.

When you were made an Entered Apprentice you were introduced to the world of Freemasonry. One part of your initiation which may have especially impressed you was the Junior Warden's lecture, during which you were conducted around the lodge, and some of the symbols of masonry were explained to you. The shape of the lodge, its ornaments, and its furnishings all have special significance to Masons. During this lecture you were shown the immovable jewels, the Tracing Board, the Rough Ashlar, and the Perfect Ashlar:

- The Tracing Board, for the worshipful master to lay lines and draw designs on.
- The Rough Ashlar, for the Entered Apprentice to work, mark, and indent on,
- and the Perfect Ashlar, for the more expert workman to try and adjust his jewels upon.

To our ancient operative brethren the Perfect Ashlar had a simple but important purpose. When a new project (for example a church) was started, it would attract masons from a wide area. Each Fellowcraft or Master carried his own tools, and instruments or "jewels" for measurement such as squares, levels, and plumb rules. The perfect ashlar was used to try or test those jewels to make sure that they were accurate and correct; and to ensure uniformity amongst all the craftsmen working on a job. It was a point of reference from which they could all work. Out of necessity the perfect ashlar was made of igneous rock to be hard and durable, and dressed and finished with great skill and hard work to a high degree of perfection. As you know modern operative stone masons are relatively rare. However many other trades have been developed, and many of the people who practice those trades do so with the same sense of pride and craftsmanship as those ancient brethren. I have a friend and brother who is a tool and die maker by trade, who is an excellent example of this. My brother served an apprenticeship in which he was taught how to use the tools of his trade. More importantly he was

taught to be proud of his work, and the importance of craftsmanship in every job. Now he has his own shop, of which he is very proud. And what a shop it is!

He specializes in robots for the automotive trade. His shop is very modern, filled with all sorts of fancy machines to help him do his work. He has a machine called an EDM which uses a special copper electrode, deionized water, and a lot of electricity to machine the steel. It is able to make the most fantastic moulds in considerably less time than conventional machining. He has huge metal lathes and milling machines with high tech computer controls; punch in the program, put some steel on the table, and let the machine work. He has super accurate gauges with digital readouts which allow him to work to tolerances of a ten thousandth of an inch. He is part machinist, and part computer programmer, skills required by the demands of modern society on his trade.

In the midst of his shop is a tool which he says is vital to his trade, one of the first tools he bought when he opened his shop. It is a table made of igneous rock to be hard and durable, dressed and finished with great skill and hard work to a high degree of perfection; a modern day perfect ashlar. My brother uses it to measure parts, test their squareness, and gauge the accuracy of his work. For all of his high tech equipment, computers, and gauges, when he needs a point of reference he comes back to and relies on a piece of equipment which has its roots in antiquity.

How does this relate to us as Freemasons? Like so many different trades our society has undergone sweeping changes during the last millennium, the last century, indeed during the last decade. Our social and political systems have evolved, giving us ever greater freedom and autonomy. Technology has literally transformed our landscape. The automobile, airplanes, and improved transportation have opened up a whole new world. Television, computers and telecommunications have allowed us access to much more information than we ever dreamed possible. With the Internet we can communicate with our neighbours, or with a friend on the opposite side of the world. We have high tech machines which improve our standard of living and make our lives easier. We live in a world full of freedom, in a world with many choices.

However, not all of those choices are beneficial to society. Many people express concern about violence on the street and in our homes. They are concerned about the environment, about drugs, racism, religious intolerance, and a myriad of other social ills. They are worried about their kids, and the world they will inherit. Moreover in many cases they feel helpless, almost drifting in the ever

changing moral tide, without a point of reference.

Freemasonry can be that point of reference - the Perfect Ashlar. Our craft has its roots in antiquity, yet the lessons it teaches are just as relevant and important today: lessons of The Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God, of the practice of moral virtue (doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do), of perseverance, and of charity. Like the hard igneous rock of the perfect ashlar these lessons have endured the test of time because they strike a common chord amongst men of good will, they are not easily eroded by the changing moral tide, nor chipped away by the latest fad.

How do we let the world know about the lessons of Freemasonry? By living them - by applying the lessons as best we can to our everyday life; and by letting the world know we are Masons! Projects like the Help to Hear campaign, sponsoring teams, and our Masonic signs help to raise our collective profile in the community, but it is our actions individually which will have the greatest impact. In a world where so many are wavering and unsure, a man who is honest in all his dealings, a loving husband, a good father, a hard working employee, and a good Brother sets an excellent example. Your example to others speaks volumes about our fraternity to non-Masons. There are many good men out there who would make excellent Masons if they knew a bit more about our craft, and you are the key. Be proud of who you are, be proud of what you do, and you will serve as the beacon which will attract others to Masonry.

My brother has seen many changes in the years since he opened his shop. He is constantly buying new machines and learning new techniques of manufacturing, and yet in all this rapid change he still needs that table of rock, his perfect ashlar, as his point of reference. It helps him to gauge his work and measure the progress he has made. And so it is with our society; we are experiencing rapid change, and now more than ever we need a firm foundation, a point of reference, to help guide our progress. Masonry can be that point of reference, the perfect ashlar to society. Our fraternity has its roots in antiquity, yet the lessons it teaches are just as relevant and important today. As Masons we should strive to lead by example. In doing so we will help to improve society, and as an additional benefit we will undoubtedly attract other men of good will to our fraternity. Like the hard and durable igneous rock of the perfect ashlar, Masonry will endure, and its message will continue to be heard in the future.

THE SUBLUNARY ABODE

W.Bro. Iain Mackenzie, Georgina Lodge #343 GRC

Brethren, I have always been interested in those words in our ritual which appear old fashioned or whose meanings are not well understood today. One word in particular comes to mind, the word “SUBLUNARY”. It occurs in a piece of ritual which tells us we are, and I quote, “to bear in mind and act according to the laws of the divine creator, so that when we are summoned from this SUBLUNARY abode, we may ascend to the GLA where the world’s great architect lives and reigns for ever and ever”.

First of all, what does the word mean? It comes from the Latin “SUBLUNARIS”, which means “beneath the moon”, or “of this world”, as opposed to “of the next”. This is an appropriate use of the word since all Masons hope to go from this life on earth to the GL above when they die. Remember the Masonic funeral service? After we throw the sprig of acacia into the casket, we point upwards in the hope that the spirit of the deceased may go there. Our ritual is full of examples of this theme, and I will quote two of them to illustrate the point -

“Thus by square conduct, level steps and upright intentions we hope to ascend to those immortal mansions, whence all goodness emanates”,

and this from the J.W. lecture in the 1st Degree ---

“The mason who is in possession of this virtue, (i.e. Charity) in its most ample sense may justly be deemed to have arrived at the summit of Masonry, figuratively speaking an ethereal mansion, veiled from mortal eyes by the starry firmament”.

I have a bit of difficulty with the latter since it seems to be saying that a mason who practices charity might go to the ethereal mansion while still alive! It doesn’t say he must die first! – however I prefer to think it means by practicing charity in such a way, he qualifies himself to go there when he does die.

Although all these heavenly places have different names, I think it safe to assume that the GLA, the ETHEREAL MANSION and THOSE IMMORTAL MANSIONS all represent the same place. The three quotations simply give us three different paths by which to get there.

But let's think for a minute about the ethereal mansion veiled from mortal eyes mentioned by the JW, and it's interesting that this is the only one of the three references which mentions a physical barrier. We know it's there but we just can't see it. The other two don't mention one - however it is particularly important that there be such a barrier as we shall see. In this case the mansion is veiled from our eyes by what? - the starry firmament. The firmament is the sky, regarded as a vault or arch, so the starry firmament in our ritual is literally a black covering, like a sheet or dome covering the earth and embedded with stars - not the vast infinity of space we are familiar with today. But why did the writers of the ritual use this expression rather than "a celestial covering of diverse colours", for example? Why did it have to be a dark covering? Again, why did they use the term "sublunary" to describe our situation here on earth instead of "this earthly abode" or some such expression? Clearly they intended both to signify night rather than day-time. The use of an expression which means "under the moon" in conjunction with the starry firmament implies darkness, the darkness of death. But as in death we lose all knowledge, in ascending to the GLA we enter a new world of brilliant light and become possessed of ALL knowledge. All things, we are told, will be revealed when we reach that ethereal mansion.

This is one of the great examples in our ritual of a fundamental principle, which is that we strive always towards the light, from the darkness of ignorance to the light of understanding and knowledge, the knowledge of ourselves.

This theme, expressed on such a grand scale, is repeated on a smaller, more human scale at the conclusion of this portion of the JW lecture. Again I quote; "The starry firmament is emblematically depicted in our lodges by seven stars which have an allusion to as many regularly made masons, without which number no lodge is perfect, neither may any candidate be legally initiated therein".

The seven or more masons who comprise the lodge (and remember that a lodge is composed of the masons who occupy it not the building in which the meetings are held), are in fact the physical barrier or veil who in their persons shield the light of Masonry from the non-mason, and as such are an allegory for the starry firmament which shields the light of the GLA from our human eyes.

Think of the candidate entering the lodge for the first time. He is physically and mentally in a state of darkness. Following the invocation, he perambulates round the lodge with the JD, and in so doing, passes by all of the masons present, thus symbolically passing through the veil to reach the great lights of Masonry: and it is no coincidence that these are the first things he sees when restored to light at the

altar. This veil is the thing which protects our secrets from the public at large, so that when anyone sees a mason he sees only the man, not the Masonic knowledge he possesses. Only by entering the lodge as a candidate can those secrets be obtained.

This is a beautiful allegory, and it is depicted physically in the sign over the SW chair in most lodge rooms.

A TALE OF TWO PILLARS

by Bro. David Cameron, Senior Warden of Grand River Lodge No. 151, G.R.C.

Presented at the Waterloo District Senior Wardens' Night, January 23, 2001

When I was Inner Guard I heard a wise Past Master give advice to the then Senior Warden. He told him that when saying that part of the Senior Warden's lecture which states that the pillar "on the left was called Boaz", if you point to the pillar on the left hand side of the picture, after lodge several past masters will come up to you and say "Tsk, tsk, tsk. You pointed to the wrong pillar." However, if when saying these words, you point to the other pillar, a different group of past masters will come up to you and say "Tsk, tsk, tsk. Wrong pillar." So the best thing to do, while describing the pillars, is to wave your pointer vaguely in front of the picture, making sure not to point at anything!

Although it was sage advice, I thought that a definitive answer should be able to be found. What higher authority do we have on the Temple of King Solomon than the Volume of the Sacred Law? In 1 Kings 7:21 it says "He set up the pillars at the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the south and called it Jachin; and he set up the pillar on the north and called it Boaz." (1) Now this is from the New Revised Standard Version, which is a fairly recent translation. If you look at an old translation, like the King James Version you will find that the words left and right are used in place of north and south. Why the discrepancy? Well, it is because in ancient Hebrew the same word was used for both north and left. The Hebrews of that time described directions by facing the rising sun and then describing things as in front, behind, to the left, or to the right. (2) Thus most modern translations use the words north and south in this description.

So, can we now determine which pillar is which? No, we still need more information. The picture shows an archway opening onto a field with a stream

running through, but nothing which tells us which direction we are looking. But the answer lies in our work. In the ritual we hear that there were only three entrances to the Temple, and they were named - East, North and South! Now, the north entrance cannot have a north and a south pillar flanking it, and neither can the south. So this entrance shown on our picture must be the East, that is to say the entrance on the east side of the building - the entrance that faces out toward the East. Thus if you put yourself into the picture, looking out to the East, the pillar on your left is the North pillar, called Boaz; and that on your right, is the South pillar, called Jachin.

Brother Senior Wardens, when you do our lecture, go ahead and point with confidence.

- (1) Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1989.
- (2) Horne, Alex. King Solomon's Temple in the Masonic Tradition, Wellingborough, U. K.: The Aquarian Press, 1972. p.203

Editor's Note:

In the booklet "Guide Lines for Lodge Officers in The Mechanics of The Work", published by Grand Lodge, the directions for the S.W. in the second degree state ... "3. In the lecture identify the two pillars; that on the left facing out is Boaz".

DID YOU KNOW?

Reprinted from the Masonic Service Association of North America "Embassy Notes", March 2001

THE OLDSMOBILE

General Motors has made a decision to do away with the name brand Oldsmobile after 103 years. In a Jan. 28, 2001 story about the Olds the New York Times said:

A Man might leer at a Lincoln or covet a Cadillac, people used to say, but he married an Oldsmobile.

Powered by a solid V-8 engine and dressed up in just enough chrome to look prosperous, the Oldsmobile was a softly rumbling chunk of American steel, a roomy car with less flash than a Cadillac but more prestige than a Chevrolet or a Ford. It was a deacon's car, a shift boss's car, and for as long as even the oldest Americans can remember, it rolled with respectability to the Little League ballpark or the Masonic Lodge.

Ransom Olds was a pioneer in the automobile field and the Oldsmobile was named for him. Bro. Olds was a member of Capital of S.O. Lodge #66, Lansing, MI.

THE MYSTERY IN MASONRY

Reprinted with permission from The King's Chronicle of King Edward VII Masonic Lodge in Chippawa (Dec. 2000). Editor Bill Hodwitz.

We are given many puzzles to ponder: *Which came first; the chicken or the egg? If a tree falls in the forest and there is no one there to hear it, does it still make a sound? Why does the sun rise every morning?*

[Such questions have entered into our consciousness to the point where we can make humorous variations, such as 'If a man speaks in the forest and his wife is not there to hear him, is he still wrong?']

Now, certainly, each of those questions has an answer. For example, take the tree. Any impact causes vibrations in the air.

The vibrations are present whether there is anyone to hear, or not. 'Sound' is our word for the effect that those vibrations have on our ear drums. So, no, if no one is there to hear the vibrations, there is no sound.

But knowing the answer means you lose the flavour, the joy, the appeal of the puzzle. If the next sunrise you see only causes you to realize that the earth is still rotating, then you have lost some of the charm of the mystery.

Masonry is like that. Sure, we can tell about our organization, and explain its rules and procedures, but we do the Order a disservice if we allow anyone think that 'that is what it is all about. ,

We must also express the flavour - our personal pleasure in belonging. It is the warmth of the brotherhood; the satisfaction of being part of something wholesome and moral; and the pride of being included in a somewhat special (secretive and mysterious) organization.

*If a mason entered the room, would anyone know?
I would, if he shook my hand.*

A NEW BROTHER

Editor's Note: The following article has been reprinted from the monthly publication of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba, titled "Masonry in Manitoba", Volume 58, No. 6, February 2001 and was contributed by R.W.Bro. D.H. Mumby. We note that the words seem as appropriate today as they did in 1898.

-from an oration by Rev. John A. Logan, Grand Chaplain, Ionic Lodge No.19, Chilliwack, 1898.

During the initiation of a brother into the mysteries of our ancient and noble order, the question often forces itself upon the mind: "What kind of a brother will he be?" "Will he or won't he be a credit to our society?" "Will he weigh well our hidden principles of the institution?" "Will its truths be woven into the warp and woof of his daily life?" And above all - "Will he imbibe the tenets and principles of Freemasonry, which have so greatly assisted in the moulding and developing of high character?"

That depends. The ladder is before him; it starts upward from his very feet. Will he climb? The doctrines of Freemasonry are spread out, only dimly veiled in symbol and allegory; will he open his eyes to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them? He may. He ought to. In a way, he is bound to do so. But does every brother fully realise his high ceiling? Does he get hold strong enough of the idea that the teachings of Freemasonry are designed to assist him in the building of a grander and a truer manhood, and to assist him in life's struggles? That it is for this that Freemasonry exists? That it not only teaches him how he is to wear his apron as a Master Mason, but instructs him in the Great Lights, which are given to enlighten every man who comes into the Masonic world?

At the outset of this journey, the candidate is asked: "In Whom do you put your trust?" The answer comes direct: "In God". Trust, confidence, faith in him is the

germ, the foundation of all true life. From this point, we are to advance -we are to go on to perfection.

The entrance into this order, the receiving of the degrees, is but the infancy of our Masonic life. Thus were sown into his heart the seeds of truth -full of life and power, which, if carefully nurtured, would grow and produce fruit in abundance, and in quality, excellent. But it is not expected, nor is it natural, that the infant should remain long an infant; nor the seed a seed. We look to the seed to put forth the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The infant makes no effort to grow, the tree puts forth no effort, but under certain conditions neither can help it. Each contains within the assimilating, the growth power, and they must grow.

The light of day comes gradually. Physical development is a continuous process. Not less is this true in the moral and spiritual realm. Freemasonry furnishes us with many ingredients which are extremely helpful in the formation and growth of a true life. The atmosphere of Freemasonry should ever be clear, bracing and inspiring. The obligations imposed should lead our footsteps into the paths of rectitude. The Book on our Altar is to be_"a light to our feet and a lamp to our path."

Every sign and symbol of the order is the embodiment of some well-known truth, which silently, but forcefully delivers its message. The tenets taught, and the charges given, are but reflections of the great lights of Freemasonry, whose rays fall upon all. At every step, new lessons and duties are inculcated. Each doctrine and influence points to the upward way. By careful study, a right use, an appropriation of living truth, we ought to make wonderful strides onward and upward. Trust in God is our starting point. Perfection is our goal.

Though perfection may be a long way off, we must press forward to that mark and gain the prize. There are heights yet to be reached that we dream of. In the meantime, we are to take advantage of everything helpful, of everything that will contribute to our advancement and spiritual growth-redeeming the time-applying our hearts unto wisdom-doing the work that has been given us to do--practising brotherly love, relief and truth, living soberly, righteously and godly, ever reaching out to higher and better things, and to inspire others through everything helpful, to journey from the ladder's foot, and nurture their spiritual seed to grow.

THE UNEXPLAINED

ANOTHER OF THE HIDDEN MYSTERIES

The Second Degree

AN EAR OF CORN NEAR A STREAM OF WATER

W. Bro. Raymond Daniels, B.A., F.C.F., M.P.S.
Chairman, Masonic Education, Waterloo District

Centennial Daylight Lodge A.F. & A.M. No. 679, Hamilton
W. Bro. Thomas B. Clark, W.M.

It is of the genius of symbolism to hide as well as reveal. Our own minds must act for no symbol wears its meaning on its sleeve.

Harry LeRoy Haywood
1886-1956

INTRODUCTION

Circumspice ... look around you

"Properly appreciated, a Lodge room and its several appointments serve as a book in which the silent and contemplative Brother can continually read a great and useful series of lessons, and see clearer and clearer a deep and yet deeper meaning into many things usually passed over without much thought." 1

In what follows, we direct your attention to one of those "appointments" in the second Degree, and suggest a few thoughts about its history and symbolism. The real importance of Masonic symbols is what these symbols teach: the philosophy of Freemasonry. We must always remember that, "The purpose of Freemasonry is not to teach the meaning of symbols; the sole purpose of symbolism is to teach Freemasonry." 2

AN EAR OF CORN NEAR A STREAM OF WATER

The Lodge is opened in the Second Degree

In his **Introduction to Freemasonry**, Bro. Carl H. Claudy wrote: "The Fellowcraft Degree is a call to learning, an urge to study, a glorification of education. ... While the degree contains moral teaching and a spiritual content only surpassed by that of the Sublime Degree, as a whole it is a call to books and study." ³ Yet, how many times have we heard some of our Brethren confess that they find the Second Degree dull and boring, and confide their lack of interest in it. Like the ancient writer of **Ecclesiastes**, perhaps those Brethren sympathize with the sentiment expressed by schoolboys throughout all ages who find "the use of books is endless, and much study is wearisome." ⁴ True, it may lack the excitement of the First Degree and the drama of the Third, but for the thoughtful or Speculative Mason, there is much here to "*read, mark, learn and inwardly digest.*"

In the Lecture on the Fellowcraft Degree given in his monumental opus, **Morals and Dogma**, Bro. Albert Pike, the famous Scottish Rite Mason, declared: "He who would become an accomplished Mason must not be content merely to hear, or even to understand, the lectures; he must, aided by them, and they having, as it were, marked out the way for him, **study, interpret, and develop these symbols for himself**", and he concluded: "The best gift we can bestow on man is manhood. It is that which Masonry is ordained of God to bestow on its votaries: manhood and science and philosophy." ⁵

IN THE WEST - HISTORY AND HEROES

In the course of the floor work in the Second Degree, four heroes of the Hebrew people are recalled from historical events recorded in the Old Testament: **Joshua**, fights the battles of the Lord against the five kings of Canaan (6); **Moses**, delivers the Ten Commandments (7); **Solomon**, lays the foundation stone of the Temple, the house of the Lord God (8); and **Jephthah**, defeats the Ephraimites (9).

In a brilliant study entitled **Surpassing Wonder: the Invention of the Bible and the Talmuds** recently published, Professor Donald Akenson argues convincingly that the historical chronicle recorded in the Old Testament was written as history to demonstrate "the Chosen People's entire relationship with Yahweh" to provide "the blueprint for a restoration of what he believed to be the central aspects of the religion of the Chosen People. In other words, a detailed record of the past was to serve as a detailed blueprint for the future." ¹⁰ I suggest that Masonry uses these

four heroic tales for precisely the same purpose: to inspire us to act with similar resolution and integrity, by imitating their confidence and trust in God the Lord - the world's Great Architect and Creator of heaven and earth, the Most High. These four great men, called to lead the people of Israel, *in cases of difficulty and danger*, looked to God for aid and God granted them success. The moral is clear: "The Fellow Craft, through these references and stories, is given a lesson on the recognition of God and on dependence upon Him for success in all those endeavours which a Mason should properly undertake." 11

WHO COMES HERE?

The epic tale of Jephthah, the Gileadite general - "a mighty man of valour" - is recounted in graphic detail. The story of his decisive defeat and complete rout of the Ephraimites is narrated as the theatrical background to explain the origin of the word **Shibboleth**.

In Hebrew, the word **Shibboleth** means "ear of grain" or "a flowing stream, floods of water". The Ephraimites, although speaking the same language as the Gileadites, spoke with a "foreign accent". Apparently they were unable to pronounce the letter "shin". Any word containing the sound "sh" could have been used as a test, but **Shibboleth** was aptly chosen at the passages of the River Jordan, because the fugitives were in fact required to say: "Let me pass over the water." The **Reverend Bro. Dr. George Oliver** (1782-1867), with his customary penchant for enriching historical fact by adding fanciful details, suggests that the battle between the Gileadites and the Ephraimites took place "*in a field of standing corn*." 12 Perhaps the fields in the valley of the River Jordan were fertile meadows "covered over with corn". If indeed the bloody battle had been joined in a wheat-field on the banks of the Jordan, the choice of the word "Shibboleth" would be even more obvious.

In retreat, wading into the river, confronted and threatened by the dreaded demand, "Who comes here?", perhaps the words of the Psalmist rang in the ears of the terrified fugitive:

I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. 13

... "In deep water" - indeed! They put him to the test to find the truth. He was slain, not for what he said, but for who he was. The moral is best expressed in the memorable words of the American philosopher-essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882): "*What you are stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary.*"

The candidate, however, is taught that the word "*denotes plenty, and is usually designated in a F.C. [] by an E. of C. near a stream of water.*" This is clearly another case of Masonic linguistic license. Perhaps, as some scholars suggest, the transposition of literal meaning in our Ritual was introduced as a deliberate means to protect our secrets - a "shibboleth" in itself. 14

ABUNDANCE - PLENTY - WEALTH

"An ear of grain has been an emblem of plenty since the mists of antiquity shrouded the beginnings of mythology." 15 Ceres is the Roman name of mother-earth, the protectress of agriculture, and the goddess of abundance. In Greek mythology, she is called Demeter, and the goddess is depicted wearing a garland of grain and carrying ears of grain in her hand. In our own time, Ceres lends her name to our breakfast "*cereals*".

The expression, "There's corn in Egypt" is used to mean that there is abundance, a plentiful supply. 16 The arid land of Egypt, where rain rarely fell, owed its fertility directly to flooding of the Nile River. Similarly, where there was water in Palestine, there a plentiful harvest followed. From Solomon's time, under a settled and stable government, agriculture developed and commercial trade prospered. Grain for bread, olives for oil, and grapes for wine were the common commodities of trade, and produced wealth. Indeed, when our ancient brethren were given "a weekly allowance of corn, wine and oil," they were being paid for their labours in the current coin of the realm.

Grain - (the most common kinds were wheat, barley, spelt, rye, fitches, millet 17) - was exported, mainly to neighbouring Tyre. Solomon and Hiram were trading partners which partly accounted for their political alliance. 18 Oil pressed from olives was used in food as we use butter, for fuel in lamps to light the home, with perfume added as a cosmetic, and as medicinal lotion. It was also used in religious ceremonial and sacrificial rites. Wine was the common beverage for refreshment.

"For all Freemasons corn, wine, and oil are symbols of sacrifice, of the fruits of labour, of wages earned." 19 This moral lesson is derived from Hebrew mythology. In the Genesis story, Adam is condemned for disobedience and sentenced to servitude by the Lord God: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." 20 Thus, man must work and labour to earn his daily bread. Bread and Water are the barest necessities without which human life cannot be sustained - food and drink - and we commonly use the phrases, "the staff of life" and "the

water of life" to emphasize our dependence on them.

The Candidate is told that P. is "*usually designated in a F.C. [] by an E. of C. near a stream of water*". How many Candidates are still wondering where it is; how many F.C.s are still looking for it? Let's go back and stand just inside the P.W. or E. of the T., where the J.W. stands waiting to receive our P.W., and look out between the two G.Ps. There it is in plain view: "an E. of C. near a stream of water". Indeed, there appears to be a whole field of golden grain beside the river. Perhaps the artist was influenced by the good Dr. Oliver's account of the scene of Jephthah's victorious battle cited earlier.

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High."

Psalm 46: 4

Throughout the Old Testament, wells and springs are described as joyous and holy places where miracles may occur. In the East, an oasis in the desert provided refreshment and regeneration. Water was seen as a source of life, and lush vegetation as a symbol of life. ... "*her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord*" ... Such is Balaam's vision of God's chosen people, Israel, encamped in the desert:

*how goodly are your tents, O Jacob,
your dwelling-places, Israel,
like long rows of palms,
like gardens by a river,
like lign-aloes planted by the Lord,
like cedars beside the water! 21*

In this symbol the thoughtful and contemplative, or as we prefer to say, the Speculative Mason, reads much more into the word, "plenty". The F.C., having given the P.W., is now allowed to ascend the W.S. leading to the middle chamber of the T., there to receive his "wages of illumination, paid in specie, the gold of Truth", 22 where his attention is drawn to the symbol of the Supreme Being, GOD, the G.G.O.T.U.

*"Illumination by the inner light,
Shows all to him who meditates aright."*

Arthur Ward : The Illuminative Way

On the Tracing Board the "stream of water" seems to flow on beneath the Temple, its disappearance suggesting that "truth" lies hidden within the depths of the allegorical temple, "implying that part of the Mystery teaching vanished from

sight and was discoverable only by those who were prepared to go down into the Vault beneath the Temple," a rich allegory which becomes the basis of the ritual in the degrees conferred in the Royal Arch Chapter. 23 Quite apart from Masonic symbolism, but lending support to it, symbologists point out that, "The wanderings of the Children of Israel and the earthly pilgrimage of the human soul are intimately involved with external or internal contact with water, the latter becoming an oasis of light and peace." 24 This analogy is drawn in the Book of Proverbs, attributed by tradition to Solomon:

*"Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water;
but a man of understanding will draw it out."* 25

Listen to an excerpt from an early version of the Lecture. It is cast in the question and answer dialogue used in the eighteenth-century form of ritual.

Q. What does the pass word denote?

A. Plenty, which is the just reward of persevering industry.

Q. How is this pass word represented?

A. By an ear of corn, adjacent to a fall of water, which is intended to intimate that plenty is usually depicted among our masonic symbols.

Q. What is the moral we derive from this?

A. Here we imply, that while we are bountifully supplied with bread and water, we can never be destitute of the pure elements of life.

William Preston (1742-1818) : The Lecture in the Second Degree 26

The Fellowcraft Degree by common consent represents the period of maturity in life, or "manhood" and the lessons inculcated in it teach how to work on the Temple of Life. Our Grand Lodge instructs that "It is by men in the Fellowcraft period of life that the solid work of this world is done." 27 This ideal was portrayed by **John Ruskin** (1819-1900): "He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into Living peace. And the men who have this life in them are the true lords or kings of the earth - they, and only they." 28

We began these observations by suggesting that the purpose of the Second Degree is educational, in which we are urged to study a curriculum encompassing the seven liberal arts and sciences. Pike, however, characteristically goes yet further: "The purpose of Education and Science is to make a man wise. ... The true object of your studies in Masonry is to add to your estate of wisdom, and not

merely to your knowledge." 29 Remember, it was Pythagoras himself who first coined the word "philosopher" to describe not one who is wise, but "a lover of wisdom." A modern writer has defined **Philosophy** as "the discovery of the divine plan through the intellectual contemplation of nature and man." 30

What are the rewards of our quest? How are we paid our wages? What may we expect to get out of our Masonic endeavours? In the Second Degree, we have seen that Freemasonry teaches that **Bread and Water** - the bare necessities of life - are more than "**plenty**" for the spiritually-minded man who does not live by bread only. Rather ...

*Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
and the man that getteth understanding.
For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver,
and the gain thereof than fine gold.*

*She is more precious than rubies:
and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.*

*Length of days is in her right hand;
and in her left hand riches and honour.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
and all her paths are peace.
She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her:
and happy is every one that retaineth her.*

Proverbs 3: 13 - 18

Indeed ...

*"Masonry is a university,
teaching the liberal arts and sciences of the soul
to all who will attend to its words." 31*

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6. "... Joshua, when fighting the battles of the Lord, prayed fervently that the Almighty would continue the light of day, that he might complete the overthrow of his enemies." Joshua 10: 12 - 14
7. "And Moses also, when he came down from the Mount, ... a signal for them to attend for what he was about to deliver ..." Exodus 19 - 20 The derivation of the H.S. or S. of S. may be found in Exodus 17: 8-13 which describes a great battle with the Amalekites.
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