



Culver City-Foshay # 467 F. & A. M.

TRESTLEBOARD

APRIL 2011



FROM THE EAST

A Society of Symbols

During our recent information night, as well as several other occasions, I have had the opportunity to speak about Freemasonry to a number of people unfamiliar with our Fraternity. It occurs to me that explaining to others what we are all about also gives us the chance to further consider our own identity—how much about Freemasonry do we really know? A specific question I am often asked is “Why do we make so much use of symbolism?” As we progress through our Masonic education, we are taught the meanings of many symbols, but how much consideration do we give to the method itself of learning by symbols? In fact, is there an easy and convenient definition of “symbol?”

As with many words used in Masonry, symbol has various definitions relevant to our work, according to the Oxford English Dictionary:

- 1) An object or figure that represents something greater than itself, especially a material object that stands for something abstract such as an idea or quality.
- 2) An object representing something sacred.
- 3) A written character or sign standing for an object or process.
- 4) A brief statement such as a motto or maxim.
- 5) A formal statement of faith or creed of belief.

How many “symbols” in each category of definition can be found in our lodge room? In each of our degrees? It would be interesting to count

But why use symbols in the first place? Aren’t precision and literalness virtues in communication? Words can convey specific, concrete information, so why do Masons find symbols more suitable vehicles of our ancient secrets? The great linguist Roland Barthes describes the symbol as an inadequate form of communication because the thing being symbolized always outruns the symbol; for example, the concept of United States, in all its complexity, cannot be fully represented by a flag with some stars and stripes. The flag references the country but does not explain it.

In answer, I cannot put it any more eloquently than the two following quotes by the Hermetic philosopher Oswald Wirth from his book Le Symbolisme Hermetique:

“Symbols are precisely intended to awaken ideas sleeping in our consciousness. They arouse a thought by means of suggestion and thus cause the truth which lies hidden in the depths of our spirit to reveal itself.”

“By their very nature the symbols must remain elastic, vague, and ambiguous, like the sayings of an oracle. Their role is to unveil mysteries, leaving the mind all its freedom. Unlike despotic orthodoxies, a symbol favours independence. Only a symbol can deliver a man from the slavery of words and formulae and allow him to attain to the possibility of thinking freely.”

Wirth’s view of symbols suggests something very profound about symbolism in Masonry. Symbolism is not merely a method we use to teach—it is part of the message of Masonry itself. Masonry stresses freedom of thought and individual responsibility. On the surface, this is seemingly contradicted by our rigid manner of ritual wherein every word, nuance, and gesture must be performed exactly the same on every occasion in every lodge. However, our fraternity is not devoted to commanding blind obedience from its members; it is devoted to teaching them how to liberate themselves. By presenting symbols to candidates, we are not forcing a doctrine on them, but awakening something that already lies within. Each Mason internalizes the symbols of the ritual according to his own nature, thus his concept of Masonry flows from individual insight, rather than something inflexibly imposed from without. Perhaps our use of symbolism is one of the reasons Masonry has so well preserved its democratic, egalitarian values when so many other well-intentioned societies have failed to do so.

Thus, Masons do not have to blindly agree to the exact meaning of each of our symbols, but we do have to acknowledge their importance and work to develop our individual conceptions of them. Put yourself to the test! How many Masonic symbols can you name? What does each one mean, as you understand it? We recently began wearing gloves in our lodge—why? What do they represent? What are the three colors used symbolically in Masonry and what do they stand for?

Fraternally,

Curtis Scott Shumaker
Master



FROM THE WEST

Greeting Brethren!

The article from the West begins this month with congratulations to Brothers Curtis James Falzoi, Kenneth Leonell Burgess II, and Sam House. All three of these brothers recently undertook their Third Degree examinations in open lodge and proved themselves proficient Master Masons! This brings me much inspiration, since I greeted these brothers when they first approached the lodge and was a participant on each of their three degrees. I know them to be good men working to become better men. Their proficiencies, representative of their hard work and determination, produced a standing ovation in each case. Our Secretary is now awaiting their certificates of proficiency, which our Grand Lodge will be sending soon.

Regrettably, not all Master Masons take the time to learn the Third Degree Proficiency because it is not required to enjoy the benefits and privileges of the lodge and fraternity. It is required, of course to qualify as Junior Warden and this is because the Wardens are responsible for the curriculum to the candidates. Too often, unless one is contemplating ascension to the Master's chair, the Third Degree proficiency is an untapped resource of knowledge reinforcement. Furthermore, since the traditional form of the first two proficiencies (popularly called "long form"), has optionally been reduced to the obligations, the steps, signs, tokens and words only (popularly called "short form"), the effort to learn the lengthy Third Degree proficiency becomes more daunting to candidate who previously opted to leaned the briefer forms of his earlier proficiencies.

Now, brethren, as the Senior Warden, I am charged with the duty of governing the education and learning of the candidates during their progress in the degree work. I would enjoin the brethren to regard the Third Degree proficiency as a duty. Each proficiency bears purpose, which includes reinforcement of the candidate's understanding of the principles to which he has committed himself and this is why the examinations are required for advancement between degrees. Merely because there is no advancement after the Third Degree, is not a justification for rejecting what a Master Mason can do to reinforce his important lessons.

Next month, I shall discuss the process of memorizing and shall share with you a unique technique I learned from a brother who had recently performed with great success.

Fraternally,

Masato Francis Taguchi
Senior Warden



FROM THE SOUTH

Historical Lineage of Masonry

After some thought as to what to write for this Month's trestleboard, I came across mya thought of which for some time I had wanted to write about the history of masonry in my country of birth and the connections it had and has (in exile) to the lineage of masonry from time immemorial. Although the actual history of is rather long and a laborious endeavor, in terms of the research, but I decided to start out a series of articles, by talking about the universality of masonry, how its lineage is common in all societies.

Although Masonry is centered on Judeo-Christian belief system, i.e raising after death, but it has also borrowed quite a lot from the Eastern philosophy. Not all of these philosophical aspects are imminent in the blue lodge rituals, but they are found in all other bodies of masonry in abundance. This takes us to the core of this article that the lineage of masonry can be found in almost all cultures in the world. From the most ancient to the most modern, we can trace all that is good about masonry. The universality of masonry makes it a good

ambassador to all four corners of this globe. We can take the teachings and value systems into every society and with minimal to no alterations they can be implemented in its totality into the fabric of that society. Is it then any wonder that masonry can so easily be accepted all over the world and be also easily abhorred by all dictatorships and those who are opposed to non-mainstream way of thought? The lineage of masonry can be traced thousands of years in the past, but it can also be traced in every empire, and civilization which was centered on doing good for humanity. Hence the history of mankind and its future cannot be written without first taking a deep look at what and how masonry shaped all the events the world has thus far experienced.

As an Iranian-American I can freely attest to the impact of masonry in the awakening of democracy in Persia. The revolution of 1906, the first of its kind in the entire middle east which ultimately led to the rising of Nationalism in the entire region and its many aftershocks like the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Egyptian Nationalism of Nasser in the 1950's, the Lebanese upheavals of the 1960's and 70's, and last but certainly not least the creation of the most democratic country in the region, Israel, were all impacted by the virtues of Masonry and what it was purporting to be in those countries.

In future articles I will concentrate on historical aspects of masonry in the region.

Fraternally,

Mahmoud Ghaffari, P.M.,
Junior Warden

DeMOLAY

Theodore Roosevelt Chapter, Order of DeMolay, is now officially reopened! The chapter has had three meetings since the membership class last January. One of our new members, Houtan Sharafatian, recited his first-degree proficiency and did an exemplary job.

The project of rebuilding the Theodore Roosevelt has been a three-year process that culminated with a prospect party last October. Thirteen boys initiated into a membership class held on January 22, 2011. In the class, the boys received both the Initiatory degree and the DeMolay Degree.

The order of DeMolay is an organization for young men between the ages twelve and twenty-one years. The order is sponsored by Freemasonry but one does not have to be related to a Mason to join, but one does require a Masonic sponsor. The name "DeMolay" comes from Jacques De Molay, the last grand master of the Knights Templar.

The Knights Templar were an chivalric order during the crusades that defended pilgrims on their journey to Jerusalem. In their work they became very rich and powerful throughout Europe and due to their clout became the target of less affluent monarchs. Wanting their treasure "Philip the Fair," King of France, trumped up charges with his "puppet pope" Clement V and had the majority of the Templars arrested and tortured. Philip never got all of Templars nor their treasure. Jacques De Molay was tortured and eventually

burned at the stake, but he never betrayed the trust of his brethren the Templars.

DeMolays use Jacques De Molay's last act of fidelity and sacrifice as example to be lived up to. DeMolays attempt to be as faithful, steadfast, and tenacious as the fallen Grand Master Jacques DeMolay, especially when their principals are challenged. In practice, DeMolays never truly face such perils. They mainly have fun! The order strives to ensure that the boys have fun in a safe and clean environment, and in that process the boys learn organizational skills, leadership skills, and social skills.

If you know of any boys who would benefit from joining DeMolay or if you desire further information, please contact Merrick Hamer (mrhamer@yahoo.com) or Dylan Nicholas (WarhammerGeneral@aol.com).

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Dylan Nicholas
Chairman of the Advisory Council

BOOK REVIEW

THE TEMPLAR REVELATION by LYNN PICKETT & CLIVE PRINCE

The Templar Revelation explores the fascinating world of 'The Da Vinci Code' by going into the worlds of the Freemasons, Cathars, and Knights Templars.

The book starts with the hidden mysteries of Leonardo Da Vinci's 'The Last Supper'. In the painting, the figure commonly referred to as the young St. John the beloved, is actually a woman. The 'M' shape that is made by the two figures is a hidden mystery made by Leonardo to convey a private belief. Also, there is no wine in front of Jesus, and very little bread is actually broken. The authors then make the astonishing claim that the Shroud of Turin was made by Da Vinci, in his own image! The Shroud is a primitive photograph, one that Leonardo used as the ultimate Christian Relic and an encoded heretical belief. Going back to 'The Last Supper' the authors purport that the upright forefinger that threatens Jesus by being thrust in his face, is a symbol for John the Baptist. In DaVinci's 'The Virgin of the Rocks' it is seen that it is John that is blessing Jesus, Uriel being John's special protector. Mary is seen protecting John, but her right hand above Jesus seems to be a gesture of downright hostility called 'The Eagle's Talons'. It is however, Uriel's finger that slices the throat of John, as he is to eventually die by beheading.

The authors maintain that John the Baptist was a rival of Jesus, and weave a mystery where they believe that Jesus' political handlers had John executed so Jesus could take over his ministry; not unlike political machinations that go on in the world today. The authors claim that the Templars worshipped and held The Baptist to be exalted over Jesus. They explain that the history of Freemasonry is much older than heretofore

believed, with evidence from John J. Robertson of Masonic Lodges existing as early as 1380, and explode the myth that Freemasonry developed from the Stonemason Guilds, which were conspicuously absent in medieval Britain. Another myth destroyed is that the stonemasons inherited their secret knowledge from the builders of the Temple of Solomon, ignoring another group with an obvious link: The Poor Knights of Christ: The Templars. The early Masons promulgated information about sacred Geometry, alchemy and hermeticism as did the Templars. The link being the work of 15th Century Mason Elias Ashmole, founder of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Ashmole was an alchemist and hermeticist.

The authors go into the mysterious world of the Priory of Sion, also known as the Order of our Lady of Sion, founded in 1099 during the first crusade. The Priory claimed to be behind the creation of the Knights Templar, whose guardianship of a great secret, one that if made public, would rock the foundations of church and state. The Priory and the Templars it is claimed by the authors, were virtually the same organization presided by the same Grand Master until they went their separate ways after suffering a schism in 1188. Da Vinci was recruited into its ranks, and the Priory continued under a series of Grand Masters that included Sir Isaac Newton, Botticelli, Robert Fludd, Da Vinci, and more recently Victor Hugo, Claude Debussy, and Jean Cocteau. Other famous members according to the authors were Joan of Arc, Nostradamus, and Pope John XXIII. Royal Families of the Priory included the d'Anjous, the Habsburgs, the Sinclairs and the Mongomeries. The Priory became famous with the publication of 'Holy Blood, Holy Grail' and the story of Pierre Plantard. Born in 1920, he came to public notice in Occupied France in 1942 as editor of a journal, 'Conquest of a Young Knighthood' which was published with the approval of the Nazis occupying France at the time. The journal was the organ of the Order of Alpha-Galates, a quasi-Masonic chivalric society based in Paris of which Plantard became Grand Master at 22. He was Grand Master of the Priory of Sion between 1981-1984. It was Pierre Plantard de Saint Claire, aka 'Captain Way,' via the Organization of Public Safety that brought about the return to Power of General Charles de Gaulle in 1958. The modern Priory's aim is the restoration of the Merovingian Bloodline as illustrated in the controversial Secret Dossiers that center on the famous mystery of Rennes-le-Chateau, a remote Languedocian village that was the starting point for 'Holy Blood, Holy Grail'.

Perhaps the most controversial chapters of the book revolve around the theory that Mary Magdalene was the wife of Jesus. The skull of Mary Magdalene is paraded around the town of St. Maximin in Provence, taking place on the nearest Sunday to her feast day of July 22. The Magdalene has a fanatical devotion from her followers, the legend of her dying in Provence persists, and the Priory of Sion gives her unequalled veneration. The authors go over the modern day fictional depictions of her relation to Jesus in 'Jesus Christ Superstar' Monty Python's, 'Life of Brian' and Martin Scorsese's 'The Last Temptation of Christ', all perhaps repugnant to most Christians, but which brings about the relationship between Magdalene and Jesus in intimate terms. Her image throughout history has reflected the attitude of the Church to women's sexuality, and her status as a repentant prostitute is maintained for her admittance to the congregation of saints. In the last 2 decades, Mary has become a focus for the way the Church has dealt with their female followers, particularly when the Anglican Church ordained women as priests and as vicars in 1994. Her power as the only significant woman in the life of Jesus is a rallying cry for women activists in the modern church. As Jesus appears first to her after his resurrection, she as seen in modern day theology as perhaps being the most important of his disciples. Curiously, the early Church recognized her true place in the hierarchy and gave her the title, 'Apostola Apostolorum' or Apostle of the Apostles' or 'The First Apostle'. Her enemy was Peter the Fisherman, where Mary states in the Gnostic Gospel, Pistis Sophia, 'Peter makes me hesitate, I am afraid of him, for he hates the female race'. In the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, Peter is quoted, 'Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.' The Gnostic accounts depict the relationship of Jesus and Mary to be on intimate terms. Her relics were found buried in the crypt of the Church of St. Maximin on December 9, 1279 by Charles II d'Anjou, Count of Provence.

Other mysteries expounded in the book are of the 'Black Madonnas,' that are intimately connected to the Magdalene tradition, and known as the Black Virgins. They are found over a wide area of Europe, France,

Britain and Poland. Unloved by the Church, they are not officially recognized, but evoke huge passionate followings. One obvious question emerges: Why are the Black Madonnas black? The answer given by the authors is that the statues were brought back by Crusaders from people who were dark skinned, and that they were associated with Pagan rites and Pagan Goddess worship. In particular Diana, Cybele and Isis. This is why the Church treats them with such disdain, but the favour given by their faithful makes it impossible for the Church to ban. Another interesting chapter is the relationship of the Cathars to the Templars. The Cathars suffered horribly because of their alchemical beliefs, but were spared and protected by the Templars. The persecutions started between 1330-1340 when 63 people were charged with Witchcraft. The inquisition took over the slaughter from there.

This book is broad in its scope of history throughout the middle ages and has beautiful illustrations of Templar buildings and artifacts. Its primary message seems to be that John was the superior to Jesus, and his death but a political plot to remove the last obstacle from Jesus taking over leadership of the populace. It is controversial, but well researched, and is another must for the Lodge Library.

Brother Rick Gorton
32 ° AASR
Culver City-Foshay Lodge #467



CHAPLAIN'S PRAYER

Springtime in April and the Lord brings us tidings of hope and renewal.
The earth and Mother Nature bring forth all that is plentiful.
What is unclear and left undone may the Lord bring to fruition.
Where there is poverty let there be prosperity.
Where men are at war let there be peace.
Where there is famine let there be a great feast.
May this time of year bring renewed faith
in a God that is all seeing and all knowing.
To you we pledge our allegiance.
Amen.

Ed Calzaretto
Chaplain

APRIL 2011						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm Candidates School 9am-2pm	4	5	6 Dinner 6:30 pm Stated Meeting 7:30pm	7	8	9
10 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm Candidates School 9am-2pm	11	12	13 ° 7:30 pm Degree/ Practice	14	15	16
17 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm Candidates School 9am-2pm	18	19	20 ° 7:30 pm Degree/ Practice	21	22	23
24 Meet the Masters 10am-12pm Candidates School 9am-2pm	25	26	27 7:30 pm OSI Degree/ Practice 3rd °, 2nd Section	28	29	30



Chef's MENU:
Stated Meeting Dinner

Chicken Milanese
Vegetable Medley
Baked Haddock "Gloucester Style"
Mixed Green Salad
Dessert

George Wollin
Chef



Jacques de Molay (c.1240/1250 – 1314) was the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar, leading the Order until it was dissolved by order of Pope Clement V in 1312. Jacques de Molay's goal as Grand Master was to reform the Order, and adjust it to the situation in the Holy Land during the waning days of the Crusades. As European support for the Crusades had dwindled, other forces were at work which sought to disband the Order and claim the wealth of the Templars as their own. King Philip IV of France, deeply in debt to the Templars, had Molay and many other Templars arrested and tortured into making false confessions. When Molay later retracted his confession, Philip had him burned at the stake in 1314. The dramatic execution of Jacques de Molay made him a legendary figure. Freemasonry has also drawn upon the Templar mystique for its own rituals and lore, and many others draw their inspiration from the memory of Jacques de Molay.