

## **ROMANCE TO RITUAL**

**An Address by WBro Tom Walsh**

**Delivered on behalf of the Hawke's Bay Research Lodge No 305**

**To Lodge Turanganui No 1480 EC**

**In Gisborne on Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

Freemasonry is a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated with symbols.

We all love a great story and Masonry tells a great story. Very briefly, the First Degree commands us to control the irrational urges of the flesh. The Second Degree exhorts us to develop our intellect with a study of the Liberal Arts and Sciences. In this degree we are introduced to the spiral, which offers a path towards the centre and in the Third Degree we are taught to balance the emotions and through a confrontation and resolution of our deepest fears, discipline and balance of will, intellect and feelings.

It is not just any tale that makes great stories, those that survived were not only literature but also, drama, they were acted out. Such stories tend to have a set of common elements. A hero, often reluctant, but who is usually rather better than most of us, i.e. Odysseus. A quest or a pilgrimage, a search for the Holy Grail, the journey home, or in our case, the perambulation around the lodge, the search in the Rose Croix and the pilgrimage around the delta in the Temple, a talisman of great power, a ring, a sword, a secret and the assistance of supernatural intervention. They are concerned with the fears that beset mankind and the possible solutions that would resolve these fears.

Through all early cultures we find the concept of a three fold Goddess. Isis, Ishtar, Astarte and Freya were all manifestations of the planet Venus. One of the ancestors of William Sinclair built a temple to the Goddess Freya in the Jarldom of More, which is now Trondheim. During recent repairs to the foundations of the Church of The Virgin Mary, which was built on top of the old temple, the remains of Freya's Temple were found. It was East-facing and had two large pillars at the eastern entrance. Beneath these pillars were found embossed gold plates one of which showed two stylised beings in a close embrace.

Our Grand Master, Hiram, King of Tyre, believed that every year Baal, the son of Baalat and El, dies in the autumn equinox and is reborn at the vernal equinox. From the dates given by Josephus, we know that Hiram of Tyre was conceived at the vernal equinox and born at the Winter Solstice, when Venus rose, close before the Sun. This made him a son of Venus. When his father died, Hiram had to change from being the Son of the Goddess to embracing her in marriage. This raised him from a Prince to a King.

As Baal, he entered the Temple of Venus on the eve of the autumnal equinox and ritually died, acting out his role as Baal. He was laid to rest, his feet pointing East and his head West, in the darkness of the inner sanctum of the Temple. Just before dawn, Venus rose as the bright Morning Star; and as the light of the Goddess shone down, between the two pillars of the porch way, through the dormer and into the temple, the High Priestess, the light of Venus now backlighting the whiteness of her body against the darkness of the sanctum, raised Hiram, the new king, in a embrace. The embrace depicted in the ritual pictures found at the Temple of Freya at More. A five-pointed embrace! The planet Venus, as she moves around the sky, touches the path of the Sun (the Zodiac) in just five places. So the High Priestess of Baalat personifies the Goddess as she comes to her husband at dawn, just as he rises from below the dark earth.

First she reaches down to take his hand, and then she places her right foot against his. Two priests of El, who celebrate the Sun at his zenith and setting, assisted her to pivot the king forward out of the cold embrace of his grave into the warm embrace of the Goddess. As Hiram is lifted by the priests of El, the High Priestess presses her right knee against his, she pulls him tight to her breast

and completely embraces him, throwing her arm across his shoulders to reach down his back as she breathes the secret words of kingship into his ear.

So the new king embraces the Goddess in the five-pointed embrace, which can be seen each generation in the higher reaches of heaven, and his power is established. This is the secret knowledge that King Solomon acquired from Hiram, King of Tyre, and the detail has been preserved in the antient rituals of Freemasonry.

The oldest recorded tale is the story of Gilgamesh, a King renown not only for his prowess but also his tyranny. The story begins with the King standing on the wall viewing the city, orchards and the clay pits. The nature of his birth and parentage made him two thirds God and one third human. To counter his excesses the Goddess of Creation fashioned from the clay a new and powerful son, Enkidu, who is as strong as Gilgamesh but lives with the wild creatures and is innocent of the ways of the city. Gilgamesh hearing of Enkidu sends a trained harlot from Ishtar's temple to seduce him away from the wild things from which he draws his strength. She succeeds. Enkidu is shunned by the wild things and goes to the city to live. He becomes human when fed the ritual meal of the Goddess of bread and strong beer, a meal made from her body and her blood. The candidate in both the Rose Croix and the Temple ritualistically partakes of a similar meal after he has completed a pilgrimage, in the later around a Delta, which is the secret symbol of the Goddess.

Enkidu then fights with Gilgamesh as part of the Goddess's plan to confront Gilgamesh with the destructive nature of his emotional outbursts. The battle is long and hard but as both are of equal strength neither can triumph. Gilgamesh's anger dissipates and the two children of the Goddess become as one in friendship. Gilgamesh thus overcomes his emotional nature and turns to the development of his mind. His Mother Goddess teaches him the nature of the stars and how the star essence can be used to give him strength.

In spite of much opposition Gilgamesh and Enkidu then decide to kill the Demon of the Cedar Forest and set off, after invoking a blessing from the Sun God. For the remainder of the quest the rays of the rising sun light the way. Well stocked with portions of the sacred bread, of which they partake at regular intervals, more in the fashion of ritual than for sustenance, they interrupt their journey at specific locations to dig wells to honour the Goddess.

After many adventures the Demon is finally killed and its head offered to the Gods, Enlil and his wife Ninlil. Enlil is angry at the killing of the Demon but Ninlil, which is another name for the Corn Goddess (the fertility aspect of her trinity), is impressed and comes to Gilgamesh in the form of Ishtar, Goddess of Love and tries to seduce him. Gilgamesh is aware that there is no 'happily-ever-after' with Corn Goddesses, as they are fickle in their love, leave their lovers in the winter and then put in considerable effort during spring and summer to ensure that life continues throughout the cold months.

Rejection of a Goddess, especially one with the three-fold nature of Ishtar, was not a recommended practice. Gilgamesh has not only rejected her advances but also, accused her of lack of commitment. Enraged she sends the Bull of Heaven to teach Gilgamesh a lesson in humility. The plan fails as Gilgamesh and Enkidu kill the Bull and offer up its heart to the Sun God and hurling its thighbone into the heavens to become the constellation known as the Great Bear. A council of the Gods condemns the pair with only the Sun God speaking in their favour. Finally the Sun God convinces Gilgamesh that there is nothing he can do to avert the allotted punishment, which is the death of his friend Enkidu.

Initially Gilgamesh will not accept the death of his friend and refuses to leave the body until after decay sets in. Now faced with the reality of death Gilgamesh is filled with fear and sets out on the quest for immortality. He learns that the secret of eternal life is held by a wise man who was the captain of an ark, which carried his family, their animals and seed stocks safely through a great flood, but does not know where he lives.

He meets three helpers, firstly the Scorpion Man who guards the secrets of the Sun God. He is advised that he must cross the Celestial Sea of Death but does not tell him where the sea is. He wanders aimlessly until exhausted he has a vision of the Sun God as a bright light that overwhelms him as he prays at dawn.

He then meets the second helper, Siduri, a barmaid who lives by the Sea of Death. Gilgamesh is not aware that he is once again in the presence of the Goddess who tells him that he will not attain what he seeks as death is the lot of Man. She advises him to live his life to the full rejoicing in the seasons and love of family. She finally introduces him to the third helper, a ferryman in the service of the wise sage. The ferryman takes him to the wise man who stresses that what the Goddess told him was true. He sets a task for Gilgamesh, which he fails and is sent back across the Sea of Death. Before he left he was informed by the sage that there was a plant at the bottom of the sacred river which if eaten bestowed eternal life.

Gilgamesh seeks out the sacred river and using stones as weights dives to great depths and secures the plant. He decides to return to the city and eat the plant there but when he rests for the night beside a well, the Goddess, in the form of a serpent, rises from the depths and takes back the plant. Gilgamesh awakens and weeps as he now realises that it is his fate to die and he must accept it. He journeys home reconciled to his fate. He has learned that death is an essential part of life and the human quest for immortality is futile. He returns to the same spot on the walls of the city where his adventures began, but he has changed, he sees the city, the orchards and the Temple of the Goddess and acknowledges that these three parts comprise his life.

He reconciles the lusts of the wilderness, represented by the orchard, with the God given knowledge and intellectual life of the city, and fear of death. Gilgamesh, who was two thirds God, the city and the temple, and one third man, the wilderness, has learned to balance the Divine and the Profane, the urges of the flesh, the inquisitiveness of the mind and the hunger for meaning of his spirit. He has finally accepted he is a man, bound to the Earth but forever looking to the Stars, for a Man's reach must exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?

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