

Some peculiar Aspects of Freemasonry

Paper delivered by Harvey Lovewell at the May 2010 meeting.

Brethren:

In this paper I use the word *Peculiar* from the definition: belonging exclusively to some person, group, or thing; and not in the form: strange; queer; odd:

The following quotes are from Plato

"At the simplest level, only people who know they do not know everything will be curious enough to find things out." And:

"We can easily forgive a child who is afraid of the dark; the real tragedy of life is when men are afraid of the light"

So my brothers let us seek the light of knowledge.

In this brief talk I will endeavour to trace and analyze some of the peculiar aspects of Masonry that rarely appear elsewhere. The meaning of these words, often taken out of context and even changing with time.

I might add, that many words and ideas in common use today, are different from when they were first uttered and put forward.

I hope the exposure to these aspects and their masonic meaning will bring the light of e. knowledge and expand the mind of my brother masons and perhaps create interest in further study along these lines.

What I say and explain here tonight is not, I repeat not, the final word in defining these ideas; no doubt many of you can add further light by your own knowledge and interpretations. However, it is my hope to stimulate your curiosity and encourage your further study and research, which after all is what Masonry is all about.

There seems to be confusion in the minds of some members of the Craft, concerning the meaning of the terms, "Most, Right and Very Worshipful", and just "Worshipful" as applied to a brother holding a certain office.

Anti masons accuse us of using these as a form of worship, a kind of religious implication. Such, however, is not the case and in fact, by reading the minutes of Grand Lodge, it was not until 1730, that the terms "Right Worshipful" or "Worshipful" appear. Up until then it was "Brother" and the first Grand Master was described as Brother Sayer. The use of Grand Honours which accompanies these salutations is also sometimes not understood.

Grand Honours owe their origin to the first Book of Constitutions of 1723, Regulation XXIII, in which the new Grand Master was to be saluted 'in due form' after he had been proclaimed.

The 1738 Book of Constitutions, which by then contained details of the Annual Installations of Grand Masters from 1717 onwards, refers to:

Anthony Sayer, G.M., 1717. When the Assembly '... pay'd him the homage'.

George Payne, G.M., 1718. When the G. Wardens were 'congratulated and homaged'.

George Payne, G.M. again in 1720. When '... it was agreed . . . that the Brother proposed [for election as G.M.] if present, shall be kindly saluted.

What then is the term form? When opened by any other Officer than the Grand Master, the Grand Lodge is opened only in "Form." If a Past Grand Master, or the Deputy Grand Master, presides, it is opened in "Due Form." When the Grand Master himself is in the Chair, the Grand Lodge is opened in "Ample Form."

Back to the words "worship" and "worshipful" as used in Freemasonry they have no connection with the modern meaning of glorification, idolization, and deification. In church the congregation worships God; in a lodge a brother is "Worshipful" when he is Master; in Grand Lodge a brother is "Most", "Right", or "Very Worshipful", the words being used in the old English sense. Let us not forget that the term is used as a sign of respect to Judges, Lord Mayors etc, when no deification is intended.

The use of "Most", "Right" and "Very" in Masonic titles however, seems a direct descent from the Church of England. The heads of the Church are the Primate of Canterbury and of York. Their official title is The Most Reverend. Under them in the Hierarchy come the Right Reverend the Bishops. The next title of honor in the Church is that of Very Reverend applied to Deans or heads of Cathedral Chapters.

In the English Parish there is The Reverend Parish Priest who is assisted by two Wardens. There is a strong resemblance between the ceremony of the induction of the priest into the Parish and that of the installation of a Master of a lodge. In the more formal appointment of a Canon the resemblance is more marked by the ecclesiastical use of the word "installation". The Bishop installs the new Canon with a ritual that would seem familiar to one who has previously been installed as the Master of a Lodge.

The word Right, was used in other than ecclesiastical circles at a very early date; Samuel Pepys' in his "Diary" written in 1661, notes a clergyman having addressed his congregation as "Right Worshipful and dearly beloved". In the seventeenth century, guilds in London called themselves Worshipful, as "The Worshipful Company of Grocers".

The word "ship" as a suffix (hardship, horsemanship, lordship) is from scip and/or skap-Old Teutonic words indicating a rank or qualities that go with it. Anglo-Saxons used weorth to describe value. Hence "Your Worship", and also the Masonic "Worshipful".

It apparently was first used Masonically at the formation of the Mother Grand Lodge; Anderson's Constitutions has a "Postscript" titled "Here follows the Manner of constituting a New Lodge, as practis'd by his Grace the Duke of Wharton, the present Right Worshipful Grand Master, according to the ancient Usages of Masons." In these old writings the letter formation of an S looks like a modern low case f.

"Honor thy father and thy mother" in the King James Bible, was originally written in the Wycliffe Bible of the Fourteenth Century. "Worship thi fadir and thi modir,"

There can be no doubt that 'paying the homage' and 'saluting' were the early beginnings of our present-day Grand Honours, and the records show Salutations only for the M.W.G.M. and the Grand Wardens, who were the only Grand Officers in those early days. By the time of the Union of the two Grand Lodges the list of Grand Officers had increased enormously, but there was still no rule in the 1815 issue of the Book of Constitutions as to the number of Salutes, or who received them.

It was not until 4 June 1930 that salutes for the various Grand Officers (with varying numbers of Salutes according to Rank) were agreed by the Grand Lodge as an amendment to the 1926 Book of Constitutions. It was now proper to salute visiting Grand Officers on private lodge occasions; that might have just been customary before then, but the correct numbers of Salutes were not prescribed until 1930. There is no explanation for the movement of 'hands and arms' apart from what is given in the ritual. The E.A. or F.C. 'Salutes' are the signs of those degrees, simply used as a Salutation. The G. or R. Sign in the Third Degree and in Grand Lodge is simply the appropriate sign used as a Salute.

In English Freemasonry, Honours are given to four ranks: Worshipful Master rank, once in the Board of Installed Masters. District Grand officers, that is, Very Worshipful rank five times; District Grand Master that is Right Worshipful rank, seven times; and Grand Master rank, nine times. These honours are given at installation and at the times of visitation in an official capacity of officers of that rank.

In Queensland at the installation of a District Grand Master Honours are given in present to the Grand Master 9 times, District Grand Master 7 times, DDist GM 5 times. Dist GW 3 times and Dist G Officers once.

The number of Salutes allocated to the various ranks of Grand and Past Grand Officers seems to be purely arbitrary and without any particular symbolism. It would be easy enough to write pages on the significance of the numbers 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, but from what I have been able to find out the numbers were designed to distinguish different ranks, without any symbolical intention.

Why salute? Where did it come from? Is this the genesis of our Honours? The exact origin of the salute has been lost in time. One theory is that it came from Roman soldiers' shading their eyes from the intense light that was pretended to shine from the eyes of their superiors. Another theory is that it came from when soldiers wore armor—a friendly approach would include holding the reins of the horse with the left hand while raising the visor of the helmet with the right, so that one would know they meant not to battle them. A third theory is that the salute, and the handshake, came from a way of showing that the right hand (the fighting hand) was not concealing a weapon. A combination of showing an empty right hand, palm outwards,

which was then raised formally to a helmet to raise a visor would demonstrate non-aggressive intentions, and therefore respect.

In Tudor times the helmet of a suit of armor was known as a 'sallet', a word very similar to the word 'salute'.

There is also a significant connection to the gun salutes given to dignitaries by the various navies. The number of times a gun is fired depends on who the salute is for.

What is a Lewis? –

A son of a Freemason. What does that denote? - "Strength".

The word Lewis is used to designate the son of a Mason. The English word "Lewis" is a term belonging to operative Masonry, and signifies an instrument that is made of a pair of dovetail wedges, provided with a hook or ring. Inserted in a hole in a large stone, pulling on the hook or ring spreads and locks the wedges securely in the stone, so that it may be raised by derrick or other lifting device, without putting a rope or chain about it. As a "Lewis" is used to lift the heavy stone the symbol of strength can be seen.

From Browne's *Master Key* comes the following definition on the duty of a Lewis, the son of a Mason to his aged parents? "To bear burden in heat of the day and help them in time of need, which by reason of their age they ought to be exempted from; so as to render the close of their days happy and comfortable".

His privilege for doing this is to be made a Mason before any other person, however dignified by birth, rank, or riches, unless he waives this privilege.

By long established custom, Lewis takes precedence over another candidate, only if there is more than one candidate to be initiated on the same evening. He is not entitled, as is sometimes claimed, to any preference in the appointment of Officers in the Lodge and should not be shown any privilege other than the one that has been mentioned.

Tubal Cain was the son of Lamech and Zillah, brother of Jabel and Jubel, and the first worker in metals. He is mentioned in the bible, in the Book of Genesis, Chapter 4, Verse 22. (An instructor of every artificer in brass and iron.)

It was said by Josephus that Tubal Cain excelled all other men in strength and was renowned for his warlike achievements. Mackey says the true derivation of the word is an instrument of iron that has been forged. Tubal Cain was accorded the invention of the Smith Craft: of gold and silver, iron, copper, and steel in the legend of the Craft found in the old manuscript Constitutions.

We, as Masons, know Tubal-cain is depicted as a blacksmith. We do not know when he lived, but probably in the days when primitive man used tools of stone or flint to work naturally-occurring pieces of gold, silver, copper and meteoric iron into weapons, tools and ornaments for use in war or peace. At some stage, man utilized fire to liberate metals from their ores, and there came that magic moment, some thousands of years ago in Mesopotamia, when copper ores bearing tin were smelted; this first alloying of metals launched the Bronze Age, a great step forward in this ascent of man. This early metallurgy promoted the first explosion in international trade, as bronze coinage formed a novel means of exchange, and the cradle of civilization in the Eastern Mediterranean area thus spread to Europe.

There is a definite metallic streak running through our Masonry. We were divested of money and metallic substances even before we entered the Lodge.

Hiram Abiff: - a widow's son — the name meant Master Workman, Architect and Chief Builder. (He was a Smith and not a stone mason)

Hiram is thought to have lived or at least temporarily worked in clay banks (1 Kings 7:46-47) in the plain of the Jordan between Succoth and Zarethan. Hiram (assumed to be Hiramabi in the VSL), a craftsman of great skill sent from Tyre. 2 Chronicles 2:13-14 relates a formal request from King Solomon of Jerusalem to King Hiram of Tyre, for workers and for materials to build a new temple; King Hiram responds "And now I have sent a skillful man, endowed with understanding, Hiram-abi my master craftsman (the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre), skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and to make any engraving and to accomplish any plan which may be given to him, with your skillful men and with the skillful men of my lord David your father." In the original Hebrew version of 2 Chronicles 2:13, the phrase translated above as "Hiram my master craftsman" is Hiram *Abi*. (For more information see "The Bronze Castings of Solomon" Lovewell)

Josephus Flavius in his *Antiquities of the Jews* (Chapter 3:76) refers to Hiram as an Artificer. "Now Solomon sent for an artificer out of Tyre, whose name was Hiram: he was by birth of the tribe of Naphtali, on his mother's side (for she was of that tribe); but his father was Ur, of the stock of the Israelites."

The following quotation is from the book by- Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas, *The Hiram Key: Pharaohs, Freemasons and the Discovery of the Secret Scrolls of Jesus*

"Some of the Masonic seventeenth-century manuscripts [preserving the 'Old Charges'] do not refer to Hiram Abif, which has led some to believe that the character was an invention of this relatively recent period. However, the name Hiram Abif was only one designation for this central figure; he is also referred to as Aymon, Aymen, Amnon, A Man or Amen and sometimes Bennaim. It is said that Amen is said to be the Hebrew word for 'the trusted ope' or 'the faithful one', which fits the role of Hiram Abif perfectly. But we also know that Amon or Amen is the name of the ancient creator god of Thebes, the city of Sequenere Tao II. Could there be an ancient linkage here?"

Hiram Abiff is, in essence, identical with many of the Mystery School heroes. The drama of the Egyptian god Osiris began with his tragic death, the search for his body by Isis, its discovery and restoration. The Greek god Dionysus was attacked by the Titans. In the course of the fight he went through many transformations but was finally overcome. The Titans dismembered him, but in due time the goddess Rhea came to his aid and he rose glorious and entire. This formula is ancient. It is the concept of the sacred king, who in many instances is lame (which signifies his dedication), and is destined for sacrifice, that the earth might become regenerated and uplifted by divine power.

Every Mason knows that it is Solomon's Temple where Hiram Abiff, known as 'the Widow's Son', was a Master Craftsman. He crafted the bronze pillars, the bronze sea, and many other gold and bronze items (kings 7:13 - 46). His name is Hiram in this verse. According to the Ritual tradition, he is killed before the completion of his work. The Bible and the ritual place him in Jerusalem.

Regarding Hiram as the "Son of the Widow," there are a few things to mention. The Egyptian god Horus, as the child of Isis and Osiris, was also the son of a widow. Hermes Trismegistus called the stone "orphan." There seems to be a Manichaeian origin to the terms "son of the widow" and "children of the widow". The Manichaeans were called "children of the widow".