
**INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF
CO-FREEMASONRY
LE DROIT HUMAIN**



**THE SOUTH AFRICAN
CO-MASON**

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REPORT FROM OUR MPGC

Given at The National Convention

A sincere appreciation is expressed to the Brothers and Sisters for their loyalty and dedication to the Federation and its various Lodges. Brethren have shown service in various ways: those who have worked on the temple building committees and also the brethren who attended meetings, raised funds, assisted other Brethren and who served humanity in many ways. It is heart warming to notice how the Brethren have taken ownership of the Temples and Lodges and how the principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth is enacted in so many ways.

We have made great strides over the past few years, but we must lift our aspirations to a higher level. We are about to elect new officers to serve on the Administrative Council, Finance Committee and Areopagus Council. While this may be viewed as an honour, these Brethren have the responsibility to strengthen the infrastructure of the Federation. They will have to ensure that Lodges adhere to the International Constitution, the Rules and Regulations of the Federation and the Bye Laws of the Lodge. They will also be responsible for keeping the records and archives as well as maintaining the harmony between Lodges. These responsibilities are not to be taken lightly.

On reviewing the last few years, I appeal that we strive together for the following goal:
* To seek a deeper understanding of the inner meaning of the ritual and our ceremonies. To apply these to our lives both within and outside of the Temple. This will involve deeper research.

In conclusion, to inspire, to challenge, to prompt contemplation amongst us all, let me quote from an anonymous contributor:

WHAT A LODGE SHOULD BE

The Lodge should be an open door for the Brethren to the path of purification, happiness and liberation.

A narrow yet glorious road which few tread but the whole world seeks.

Freemasonry can provide us with a path of unity, liberty and charity, but it is meaningless, unless we put these ideals into our lives and work. Only then will it, and our work, become real and effective - the heart of the message of brotherhood should be in the daily duties we perform and with whoever we come into contact.

Let us try to be good, not for our own glorification, but for the service of humanity.

The Very Illus Sis EE Bronner

June 2011

AREOPAGUS COUNCIL REPORT

LODGES: * Sovereign Chapter Veritas No 31 - Valley of Durban * Sovereign Chapter Good Hope No 98 - Valley of Cape Town * Sovereign Chapter Amor No 102 Valley of Johannesburg * Encampment of the Southern Light No 127 Camp of Durban * Encampment Triangle Labor Magnus - Cape Town (working under the charter of Southern Light) * Encampment of The Mystic Quest No 138 - Camp of Johannesburg * Consistory of SA

Except for the Durban Lodges, lodges have met regularly. The Encampment and Sovereign Chapters have worked regularly and according to the Lodge Bye Laws. Recently, the Consistory of SA has not been working due to the resignations and deaths of several senior brethren.

Prior to 2005, The SA Jurisdiction or Federation only worked the degrees up to and including the Encampment, the 30°. This meant the senior brethren were merely consecrated in a higher degree and never worked the degree. This was viewed by the IP MPSGC The V Illus Bro N Njardvik 33° as a serious short coming in the growth of SA. The MPGC applied for and was granted permission to have a Triangle of Grand Inspector generals (33°), a Consistory of SA (32°) and also introduced an abridged form of the tribunal (31°) ceremony. Although the 31°-33°

are often viewed as merely administrative degrees, each degree does have separate ritual, regalia, signs and words and also a specific inner message. It is important that the senior brethren continue to research, meditate and continue with their own development.

The senior brethren in Cape town discussed and applied for a triangle encampment so that the Brethren could practice their degrees. The Triangle Encampment Labor Magnus functions under the Charter of the Southern Light No 127.

For clarification, the SA Federation may only grant degrees up to and including the 30°. The Supreme Council grants the degrees 31 - 33°. They have strict criteria that require to be attained. These degrees are not awarded as a reward for work done, but rather to brethren who will render further service to the Federation and not merely a Lodge.

Brethren who had advanced are The Very Illus Bro M Cooper who was granted the 33°. Brethren J Bonaconsa (since resigned), L Lewies, P Ferreira and C Quickfall were elevated to the 31°. RW Bro J Rycklicki was elevated to the 30° in April 2007, but regrettably passed to the GLE in June 2008.

It is regretful that the senior brethren, due to the low numbers, have had to neglect their own growth on the order to support other lodges. Hopefully with the growth of the craft lodges it will relieve the senior brethren.

The low numbers will only increase as the increased membership move up the degrees.

The incoming Areopagus Council will have the task of organising our archives in preparation for our centenary celebrations at our next National Convention in April 2014.

June 2011

**THE WHOLE OF LIFE IS BUT A MOMENT OF TIME.
IT IS OUR DUTY, THEREFORE TO USE IT,
NOT TO MISUSE IT**

Plutarch

ALLIED DEGREES REPORT

The degrees of the York Rite also known as the Allied Degrees are quite distinct from the AAASR degrees. The naming convention derives from the time in Britain when the male craft comprised of two rival orders, each claiming to have the true masonic teachings. However there are areas of overlap between the York and the AAASR degrees. In order to protect and promote these degrees, the Council of Allied Masonic Degrees was formed in England in 1880. A similar council was formed in the USA in 1892. The York Degrees, like the AAASR

degrees, consists of several degrees - each with its own ritual, regalia, modes of recognition and inner meaning. The content of these degrees can be considered to be unique and does add considerably to the deeper meaning of masonry. Although it is not considered necessary to be active in the York Degrees for promotion in the AAASR, I have found these degrees to have explored another aspect of the symbolism used in the AAASR which adds to the richness of masonry and surely the priority of masonry is not merely about

advancement but rather about the discovery of the inner meaning of life. Corresponding to Blue Masonry of the AAASR (3 degrees) the York also has the Chapter Degrees (4 degrees): namely Mark degree - PM (which we call the IM or the fourth or Secret Masters degree as worked by the Continent) - Most Excellent Master - Royal Arch Degree. The SA Federation only works 3 - namely the Mark degree - Royal Ark Mariners - Holy Royal Arch. The qualification for joining these Lodges is MM status.
June 2011

CHARTER FOR COMPASSION

The principle of compassion lies at the heart of all religious, ethical and spiritual traditions, calling us always to treat all others as we wish to be treated ourselves. Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the suffering of our fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect.

It is also necessary in both public and private life to refrain consistently and empathetically from inflicting pain. To act or speak violently out of spite, chauvinism, or self-interest, to impoverish, exploit or deny basic rights to anybody, and to incite hatred by denigrating others- even our enemies - is a denial of our common humanity. We acknowledge that we have failed to live compassionately and that some have even increased the sum of human misery in the name of religion.

We therefore call upon all men and women - to restore compassion to the centre of morality and religion - to return to the ancient principle that any interpretation of scripture that breeds violence, hatred or disdain is illegitimate - to ensure that youth are given accurate and respectful information about other traditions, religions and cultures - to encourage a positive appreciation of cultural and religious diversity - to cultivate an informed empathy with the suffering of all human beings, even those regarded as enemies.

We urgently need to make compassion a clear, luminous and dynamic force in our polarised world. Rooted in a principled determination to transcend selfishness, compassion can break down political, dogmatic, ideological and religious boundaries. Born out of our deep interdependence, compassion is essential to human relationships and to a fulfilled humanity. It is the path to enlightenment, and indispensable to the creation of a just economy and a peaceful global community.

BY KAREN ARMSTRONG

ADMINISTRATION COUNCIL REPORT

SIX LODGES IN FOUR ORIENTS: * Sphynx Lodge No 225 - Johannesburg * Theano Lodge No 229 - Pretoria * Light of Africa No 233 - Durban * Athena lodge N0 236 - Pretoria * Lodge Dedication No 238 - Cape Town * Lodge Fraternity No 240 - Durban

Despite members of the Administration Council being situated in different Orients, meetings have been held in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Appreciation is extended to the members of this first council for their contributions.

Four Lodges went into abeyance - Lodges Amity No 220, Amethyst No 222, Masonic Light No 237 and Light of Osiris No 232.

The temples of the SA Federation are located at 25 Rose Avenue, Durban; 1 Buccleuch Avenue, Craighall Park; and Cnr Rifle & Wetton Roads, Kenwyn in Cape Town. The Pretoria Orient meet at Victoria Cross Lodge, 26th Street, Menlo Park, Pretoria.

The individual temple maintenance committees must be thanked for their voluntary work to ensure that properties are managed and maintained.

Craft Lodges have met regularly and have been active with both ceremonial and study work. Annual Business meetings and installations have taken place.

The interest expressed in the Port Elizabeth region came to naught, but two members joined Lodge Dedication. The interest expressed in forming a triangle Lodge in Pietermaritzburg was also not successful due to insufficient members.

Membership: There has been a

continual drive for membership by means of the SA website, advertisements, events and lectures given to the public. The word-of-mouth recommendations still remain our main source of applications.

A change in applicants has been noticed since the 1994 democratic elections. The membership has become younger and more reflective of South African society. Of interest has been the interest expressed from individuals in Swaziland.

Membership remains a concern for the Federation.

Several senior brethren of the Order have passed to the Grand Lodge Eternal. We must continue to maintain the high standards they have set.

Open Meetings: During December open meetings were held in the different Orients to which the public were invited. The St John's Day in Summer ceremonies were performed under the guidance of our MPGC. These have been very well attended. Brethren are able to share the meeting with family and friends and dispel any misconceptions about Freemasonry.

Study Groups: A MM study group has been formed in Cape Town. The Johannesburg and Pretoria brethren are encouraged to support Athena lodge to gain further study. It is only by in depth study that the inner mysticism of masonry can be

revealed. Study is strongly recommended within the craft meetings.

Fund raising:

The annual cheese and wine fund raising drive in Johannesburg has become a "not to be missed" event. This offers the brethren an opportunity to mix socially and is a platform from which enquirers can spring.

Lectures: Cape Town offered a series of lectures to the public. These informative lectures led to the Lodge gaining some valuable members.

Individual Lodges have adopted charities which they support. Service to the community continues to be a driving factor and must not be neglected.

Lodge of Mourning and Remembrance: Lodge Dedication held a Lodge of Mourning and Remembrance in August 2009 for The Very Illus Brn Seal 33° and Brewis 33°HC.

International Constitution: Illus Bro C Quickfall is the SA Federation representative on the committee for the revision of the International Constitution.

Consecrations: In late 2007 the Johannesburg brethren considered changing the entrance to the Temple to allow the play-school to have their own entrance. This was done and the Temple was reduced in size also creating an extra room for higher

Continued....

Degrees.

The Temple at 1 Buccleuch Avenue, Johannesburg was re-consecrated by the MPGC after the building alterations.

The Victoria Cross Temple was also re-consecrated after Theano Lodge moved to the new premises. Both ceremonies invigorated the vibrations of the Lodges.

Interaction with other Obediences: Male Craft 18th Degree Chapter Rosa Sine Spina No 1189 and Transvaal Conclave of the Secret Monitor No 30 rent the Rutland Temple for their meetings. The relationship between their Order and Co-Freemasonry has been amicable and mutually beneficial.

Visitors: Most Craft Lodges have few visitors from other Orients due to

distances involved within the Federation and our isolation from other Federations. Cape Town has had some overseas visitors and visitors are always welcome. Brethren are encouraged to visit other Orients should the occasion arise.

Achievements: The Administration Council has achieved the following goals.

* Terms of Reference were set. This will have to be reviewed by the incoming Council.

* The SA website has been set up and is maintained by Sis K Lemmon-Ward in Australia.

* The Craftnews - an inter-lodge communication was set up as well as the annual Co-Mason Bulletin and are managed by Illus Bro C Quickfall.

* The SA Federation Rules and Regulations were reviewed and new

copies were issued to all members in 2009.

* Directives were revamped and issued to all Craft Lodges

* Federation forms were digitised and issued

* Bye-Laws were revisited and updated where required.

* Guidelines for administrative positions in the Lodge were issued

* Stock mistresses were appointed in the various Orients.

The Craft Lodges, although scattered over SA, are not working in isolation, but are working as part of the SA Federation under the auspices of the Supreme Council. Appreciation is expressed to all the Craft Lodges for carrying the light of Le Droit Humain high and with pride.

June 2011

ADMINISTRATION COUNCIL

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

With the experience of the past 5 years it is possible and desirable to step back and reflect on the Administration Council. The context of the comments in this report is that it was the first time such a body had existed within the SA Federation.

Role of the Administration Council: The role of the Administration Council is arguably more extensive than the Terms of Reference first set out. Tasks included:

1. To keep accurate records of all members and of their progress through the Craft. There are currently three versions of this information.
2. When necessary, make suggestions pertaining to the Craft to the Triangle

who will take further action. No matters arose in this regard.

3. To provide channels of communication within the Craft.

This should include sending of all Pieces of Architecture to the Secretary of the Administration Council.

Newsletters and at least one Bulletin per year. The addition of our website has had several obvious benefits.

Management of requests and queries from Lodges to assist effective functioning. No requests or queries were made.

Wider roles for the next Administration Council: The Council should have access to an

overall picture of the assets of the Federation and a consolidated report of what property is owned and how it is managed by each Orient. This should include a record of signatories, bank accounts and investments.

Changes in administration of International Co-Freemasonry was to strengthen internal democracy. This was done by widening the range of those involved in information flow and decision making.

The Council could look at ways to achieve this practically within the Federation given the challenges of being geographically spread in small numbers. *(Edited)*

SIGNS EXIST EVERYWHERE

Signs exist everywhere - in religion, art, science and poetry. All have an abstract meaning discernible only to a person who by nature or education can read and understand them. They are stimuli for the mind to use its intelligence to understand, the vibration to bring the wave to the heart to feel and the light for the soul to see.

Freemasonry is a lifelong journey of the preparation of the individual from the darkest parts of his soul to the top of his mind and consciousness. Like a torch, they shine and lighten up the path full of signs and patterns of the design created by T.G.A.O.T.U. in all his wisdom and beauty.

There are signs in nature which are the most truthful. The most meaningful of all signs are the manifestation of the genius of T.G.A.O.T.U. He gave us two books the V.S.L and the Nature. A prepared mind will understand what it reads, an open heart will know what it feels and the enlightened soul will reflect what it receives.

The best example of a sign found in nature is the diamond. Diamond is the modification of the pure carbon which is the building block of any living organism on earth. Similar to this condition of the matter is the graphite. The atomic structure of the diamond makes it not just look

different from the graphite, but also have opposite qualities. The internal symmetry of the diamond is like the most beautiful objects in art and nature is symmetrical. It is a manifestation of the perfect cube atomic structure, the most perfect of all.

Diamonds are born deep inside the mantle in the perfect but tough conditions of the high pressure and temperature. They are lying underneath for millions of years only able to come out on the surface when the Earth decides to give birth to it through volcanic eruptions. Winds and floods wash them away to different places where they can be found.

Rough diamonds do not have the same look that we usually see them and don't have the same lustre. It is only after a few stages which are very precise and instructed by the master cutter, that a diamond becomes a precious gem.

Diamond cutting process involves few stages and special tools. The first is the cutting or cleaving of the stone. It is with very careful and precise measurements done by the master as the diamond is the hardest substance on earth, but not the toughest. One wrong measurement and the diamond can be split into thousands of pieces.

The next step is a polishing and shaping of the stone. It is the

process of preparation to the next and third stage of faceting. The stone's brilliance, fire and lustre depends entirely on how light is reflected within and dispersed out by facets. Each facet must be cut in the right angle so that it mirrors its opposite exactly. Only the perfect cut will then let all the light entering the stone be reflected internally and coming out will reveal all rainbow colours and its true beauty.

The newly admitted Freemason can be seen as a diamond in the rough.

After teachings and training with instructions from the master and through the polishing by himself and his brethren, he is able to reflect the light he received. Only strong character and open heart enables the Freemason to bring out happiness and joy to serve humanity with shining light of the Most High through him.

We as human beings are as a gemstone of the creation, born not perfect outside but perfect inside, going through the process of perfection to reveal his true identity. Every time you look at the diamond just think that you are looking at yourself. We are the gemstones in the jewel box called Earth.

L Samuels FC

MY IMPRESSIONS

The process of initiation into Freemasonry started before the actual ceremony. A friend of mine from Gabon, who is also a Freemason, recommended the craft to me as a way of life and of self-discovery.

She told me she thought I would benefit from being a Mason and that I would be able to contribute in some way by virtue of who I am. My only other contact with Freemasonry was a correspondence with a MM many years ago. I liked the way he thought about the world and our role in it.

I have divided my impressions into seven (magical number 7!) areas:

1. The interviews.

Many months passed before I was finally invited to join the Lodge. I was interviewed and everyone seemed happy to meet me and genuinely interested in why I wanted to be a Mason. What struck me most was the way in which I was welcomed and the absence of any “weirdness”. All seemed like down-to-earth, good people!

Close friends and family members were all supportive, albeit bemused, by my wish to be a freemason.

2. The Lodge

Finally the day of my initiation arrived. I felt slightly apprehensive and I did not know many people at the Lodge.

I must admit that I was

disappointed when the temple in my imagination did not match up to the temple in reality. But the people certainly made up for it!

Firstly I was relieved that I was not the only candidate. My fellow candidate seemed to know much more about Freemasonry than I did and done many years of research and reading.

It was only later, when I attended the initiation of another EA, that I got the full picture of what really happened that night.

As I learn more and more about the Craft, things start making more sense and I am beginning to realise the interconnectedness and meaning of everything we do in Lodge.

But on the night of my initiation I was still a candidate in deepest darkness...

3. The dress.

When the Lodge was ready I was taken into the antechamber to be dressed for the initiation. I had decided earlier in the day to “live in the moment”, not to resist anything and not to worry about what was happening to me.

4. The ritual

I remember feelings and smells and the way I was guided around the Lodge.

I remember the welcoming faces and smiles. Mostly I remember the feeling of surrendering to the process and of consciously not

trying to analyse or control anything.

5. The obligation

I remember hoping that I wouldn't stumble or stutter when I had to repeat my obligation.

6. The tea

The tea that was served after my initiation introduced me to members of the Lodge, their warmth and their hospitality.

I also became aware of the formal, hierarchical way in which matters were conducted. I learned that I was at the bottom of the bottom of the pecking order. My initiation seemed to be an important event in the life of the Lodge. I was looking forward to finding out more and becoming a fellow Craftsman and a Master Mason.

7. My instruction.

The most rewarding part of being initiated as an EA has been the opportunity to be instructed by The Very Illus Bro Marlene Cooper in the secrets and mysteries of the Craft.

I enjoy our conversations so much. I particularly enjoy making the connections between ancient systems of belief, the symbols and the rituals which have been handed down through generations.

My initiation was the first step of a learning pathway that I hope will continue to be a rewarding, interesting and fun part of my life.

H Buber

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBER THREE

The number three has always been a very important number to me throughout my life, as I was born on the 3rd September, I have two sisters which makes us three siblings, and I always used the number three as a lucky number. When I was initiated into Freemasonry I discovered that this mysterious number holds a lot of meaning to Freemasons worldwide.

THE NUMBER THREE AND LIFE IN GENERAL:

Within our lives, outside of the Freemasonry, the number three makes an appearance quite a lot. Here are a few examples of threes found in everyday life:

- * Three primary colours
- * Three is the third whole number , excluding zero
- * Three is the sum of the first two numbers: $1+2=3$
- * The triangle with three points and three sides is the first closed two-dimensional shape/object
- * The three ages of mankind
- * RNA and DNA both have a triplicate codon system
- * Atoms consist of three constituents: protons, neutrons and electrons
- * There are three mammalian germ layers: endoderm, mesoderm and ectoderm
- * There are three stages of glucose respiration: glycolysis, Krebs cycle and electron transport chain
- * There are three great divisions

compelling time: past, present and future

THE NUMBER THREE AND RELIGION:

This number can be found in most religions and cultures, and it represents great mystical power.

There are three main Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The holy trinity in Christian doctrine, (or Trinity in general), is God both as a single being and as three persons: Father, Son and Spirit. This is known as the Tripartite Division.

After the birth of Christ, He was visited by three wise men who presented him with three gifts.

It is said that Jesus was 33 years old when He died on the cross. The cross can also form part of the ancient symbol called the Triple Tau. Christians interpreted this symbol as “Holiness supporting Trinity”. Jesus rose from the dead on the Third Day.

In Muslim devotional rites, certain formulas are repeated three times and others thirty-three times. A devout Muslim tries to make a pilgrimage to all three Holy cities in Islam: Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem.

FREEMASONS, RELIGION AND THE NUMBER THREE:

The received wisdom is that modern day Freemasons trace its origins back to the traditions and rituals of the original Stonemasons

who built the cathedrals of Europe. (Does it date back even further?)

Medieval Stonemasons were of Christian faith. As such, the number of the Holy Trinity was sacred to them. The incorporation of the number three in Stonemason ceremonies would have been their expression of their Christian faith, and their symbolism was passed on to the Freemasonic Lodge, even though Freemasonry is not restricted to Christianity or any faith at all.

The number three is considered sacred in a number of spiritual and initiatory traditions. From the Pagans, to the Druids, the Egyptians, the Scandinavians, and the Hindus, they all held a sacred regard to the number three.

The Jewish mystical tradition, or Kabbalah, also holds some significance to this number, as the central diagram of the Kabbalah is the Tree of Life, which is usually drawn in such a way that it has three pillars, namely The Pillars of Mercy, Serenity and Beauty.

These Mystical pillars of the Jewish Kabbalah are very similar to that of the three great Masonic Pillars which denote Strength, Wisdom and Beauty.

I have utilized this research in my life and hope that this topic will intrigue and inspire all.

C Mesias

NUMBERS, HUMANITY AND THE LAW OF INFINITY

Numbers represent a certain quantity of something. As such they are enormously important in any society when the individuals have to communicate with each other. Geometry, that very important science for Freemasons, exists by itself independent of any specific numeric system, but depends on a numeric system to be written down, explained and its formulas passed down from master to pupil.

For that reason I decided that it would be interesting to do a little research into the Numeric System that we use today in the Occident (adopted by most cultures nowadays).

Here follows a short anthology and it is important that we have a brief look at the basis that converge to the creation of the system we use today.

Neolithic period, the Hieratic system was used to represent quantities, meaning a line or a dot to represent 1, two of these marks to represent 2 and so on.

3000 BC: The Egyptians and Babylonians were first recorded as using the natural numbers and rational number. While Egyptians use base 10, Babylonians use base 60, probably because of the large number of factor 5 that 60 has.

600 BC The Greek system was decimal and as they already had an alphabet (phonogram system as against pictoric) they used the first letter of the word to represent the number (P for "penta" which is the name of 5) combinations of both to denote bigger numbers as we do today

300 BC: Euclid releases his proof of the existence of the irrationals.

600 AD: The Indo/Arabic number system is started as the Arab nomad tribes come into contact with old Greek knowledge in Asia Minor (Greek empire and culture very much in decline). This is a place value system in base 10, including the number zero. The concept of using 9 numbers with the 0 to be able to make all the necessary representations actually had emerged from Hindu India much earlier, where it had been in use for a very long time, but it was an innovation to western (Mediterranean) civilisation. That is not to say that the Indian system did not owe something to earlier systems. What is certain is that by around 650 AD the use of zero as a number came into Indian mathematics. The Indians also used a place-value system and zero was used to denote an empty place. In fact there is evidence of an empty place holder in positional numbers from as early as 200 AD in India.

The original Brahmin symbol system was superseded by the Gupta and then the Nagari and despite the changes over time we can easily recognise the shapes even today.

Importantly these symbols had a deep religious significance - for instance number 3 represented the higher trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Notice that by "decimal system" I mean a number that uses 10 as its base. Most, but not all, ancient peoples used decimal systems. The Romans, for example, used a system that resembled a base-5 system; the Babylonians used a system that is almost a base 60; some cultures have even been known to use

the binary system (like modern computers).

15th Century: This compendium called the Indo/Arabic number system became prevalent in Europe at a time when Europe was coming out of the Middle Ages. Negative numbers are defined.

16th Century: Imaginary numbers are first used to give notational solutions.

17th Century Complex arithmetic is defined as a part of mathematics.

18th Century: The Euler Equation is used to define the natural logarithm of negative numbers.

19th Century: Cantor and his diagonal argument define the real numbers absolutely. The argument also establishes countable and uncountable infinities.

20th Century: Godel's Incompleteness Theorem rules out total completeness of mathematics. The revolutionary system of binary numbers is applied to thought and industry.

So, while numbers have always had an important place in the history of humanity, the signs used to name numbers were not arbitrarily selected - they represent a sometimes subconscious and other times very obvious quality of social, spiritual or social significance.

Sometimes the sign itself (8 and infinity), other times the quantity it represents (1 and unity). The letter G in the Lodge has more ancient connotations from the Greek alphabet where Gamma represented number 3, the Divine Trilogy.

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Numbers have also been used as a secret code and also vilified according to the politics of the time, eg.: number 6 was in Greek antiquity represented by the S and the name of Isis was represented by SSS, when the cult propagated underground they represented her name by 666. Later the church in its battle against other religions declared 666 as the “heathen number” and somehow ended up translated as “the number of the beast”. Numbers represent all kinds of esoteric and religious concepts and there is a full science dedicated to that with different meanings in different cultures. Besides the sign / drawing /

marks that we use for each number we have to take into consideration the name we give to them. These names have their origin in the Indo/European language, with Latin being a strong influence.

The numeric system we use today has the capacity to embrace positive and negative numbers, fractions, rational and irrational, etc to help us express the endless laws of geometry, mathematics and physics.

The most important quality of our numeric system is that it is independent of things themselves - it is abstract. Our number sequence could go on counting forever, embodies the

law of the infinite progression. Every number has a predecessor and a successor.

In today’s world, in our trip of discovery and our quest for knowledge of this endless and forever growing universe, our numeric system is the tool that helps us express it and record it.

These are the numbers we use now, with today’s tools and today’s human perceptions, but the numeric system as well as the language are just the tools used by certain sentient beings at a certain time in their development and therefore subject to change.

L Carter MM

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

I am writing this letter to discover and express the positive feelings that you deserve. Since I have been allied in this Order Co-Freemasonry “le droit humain” on 3rd October where I have been initiated last month.

After my initiation I studied the books that I got from Lodge a little bit to get the concept, but I

realise for ritual book that I have a problem to understand about the signs and concept. So we should wait until the instruction where we really start to understand what is going on, because I know: the beginning of knowledge is the discovery of something we do not understand.

And from me I feel like I have

started a new chapter in my life, where I hope I can improve my character and my life.

I see this letter as an opportunity for me to express my deep sense of gratitude to everything done to help us and I hope and I expect that it will be continual for us to grow up in this society.

G Kitoko EA

**“...with an eye made quiet
by the power of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
we see into the life of things”**

WORDSWORTH

THE IMPORTANCE OF RITUAL

The monthly Master Masons meetings have proven to be needed, interesting and a tool to strengthen our social bond. They provide time to discuss Masonic and philosophical thoughts. This is a compilation of the submissions and discussion by MMs of Lodge Dedication....

Ritual includes simple everyday events and an order and deliberate repeated action. It was questioned how one could discern between habit and ritual.

Rituals are a way of defining what is meaningful and important.

The value of ritual comes from its ability to connect you to a larger context that clarifies your relationship to yourself, others and your place in the universe.

Rituals are an honouring of life's experiences. Some ritual is done with friends or community. Often these are at a time of birth, coming of age, death, passing of a season or period in one's life. They represent a change in our lives and celebrate that rite of passage.

They mark important passages of time and assist with the beginning of new experiences.

The community rituals give a sense of belonging and lead to new freedoms.

These predetermined forms of ritual provide a safe environment to move through the changes that life offers.

Ritual offers a structure to a social group or an individual with relation to religious, social or cultural practice, custom or devotion. It gives a framework to work with a sense of continuity that goes beyond the times.

Rituals invoke blessing and create a spiritual presence in each of us ... opens doors of consciousness and gives guidance and direction.

Repeated ritual and raising of energies create a hallowed place. Churches are

often built on sites of ancient temples and the land used for repeated ritual will adopt those energies.

Ritual may aid in emphasising moral values that serve as group norms and regulate societies. Thus rituals may assist in fostering group stability. Family rituals can protect us against feelings of uncertainty or loneliness and transmit shared beliefs of the family (or group) across generations.

Ritual takes thought and preparation.

For ritual the preparation of a sacred space, often the recitation of texts, repeated actions, movements, chanting and or music are important for the harmony and energies. It can be as elaborate or as simple as required. However it is the intent of the ritual that is most important.

So the very act of preparing to partake in the ritual can raise one's energies. Taking a customary and repeatedly used position to meditate allows one to mediate with greater ease.

Preparing to go to Lodge and standing quietly in procession outside the door are important and part of being mindful and sincere, the raising of energies or

vibrations and contribute to the harmony and flow of ceremonial work.

Censing and incense is an ancient and well used part of ritual. Found in so many religions and ceremonies it is used at times of prayer and blessing. The movements of the thurible and the clicks provide added meaning and symbolic impetus.

Expressing your respect and honour of fellow brethren and their work helps to create a sense of harmony and a bond between the members of the ritual. This importance cannot be emphasised enough as a break-down in the bond for ritual and ceremonial work could cause the disintegration of the vibrations and even the whole Lodge.

The energy and vibration that arises from the appropriate and well-modulated use of voice is an important part of ritual. Tone of voice and inflection should be well prepared before performance to create the right impression in the participants.

Songs, chants and music and the use of gongs and bells also heighten the energy and create harmony. The bells used before we process into Lodge serve to awaken us both spiritually and practically and aid our transformation as one corporate body.

MY IMPRESSIONS AND INITIATION

It is not easy to write about my impressions during the initiation ceremony; the only thing I can say is that I followed what was told and did what was wanted from me. I obeyed and was guided by a helping hand and answered to a voice when asked certain questions. Yet I did all that from my own will.

So I write about why I decided to become a Freemason. In particular what does it mean for me to be a member of the craft and in order for you to understand me, let me relate briefly my story.

I was born and raised for the first 3 years of my life in Gabon. My father never married my mother.

When I was 3 years my dad was appointed to France and a few times later I joined him there as my mum had no money to take care of me. She was 19 at the time and I cannot possibly imagine what it means for a woman that age to give up her only child because of lack of wealth or money.

I grew up in a divided family and when things became emotionally unbearable a helping hand came along. I met an old man, somebody referred to as my "grandfather": Jacques Yves Sicard.

Mister Sicard was my mentor if I may say: he knew history, sciences and was knowledgeable in many other aspects of life, or I thought so when I was young. The time we spent together gave me a sense of history, a desire to go beyond my own existence and to do good no matter what I was enduring. He passed away the year I went back to Gabon; I was devastated but kept my feelings inside and did not cry. Mister Sicard was kind, lovable; he had no

kids as far as I know.

In 2000 I saw my mum again for the first time in years. I just remembered her from the only picture I had and now I was a teenager, taller than her. With her I find a clan, another family, another way of life. My mum gave me a sense of dignity, she opened me up, she helped me become more open to people.

With mum I met poverty. By standard my father is from an upper middle class and my mum, because she has no fixed income is from the poor class. Among her family I also met hope. And I learned that money is not everything, that above all there is something more tangible, more precious for us as human being.

To cut short; from my own experiences we do not suffer because some higher divinity wants us to suffer, we do suffer because another human being is mistreating us; not because of fate or destiny. We suffer because the basic principles of life are not respected: HUMAN RIGHTS or in French DROIT HUMAINS.

When I first heard about Freemasonry I was in high school. It came about because I used to love a song by Louis Armstrong "What a Wonderful World" and someday I found out that he was a member of Freemasonry. Just like that. No sign from up above, just in my readings. He was a Prince Hall Freemason and with some research I found more about masonry, philosophy, the ways of teachings. And I loved that. I was never religious; so masonry suited me as it was more about human being coming together for the greater good of mankind than a

group of people coming together with dogmas. I thought that I in there would be free to express myself, to develop myself and be among people like me looking for answers other than the traditional ones. I became a mason without apron. And in all masonry a name stood out of many. That name was so special to my heart because I was deprived of that when I was young, and because I felt that where I was living that name was lacking; it was DROIT HUMAINS.

Mr Sicard gave me that, although at that time I did not know that. My mum gave me that too.

As an entered Apprentice I was blindfolded, a friend took my hand to the temple, spoke for me when it was necessary, helped me along the journeys I lived and never for a second let me down. That was my Mr Sicard during my initiation. As I went through the ceremony till the end that friend was there for me, and I am very grateful to have such a person by my side.

We come to the temple neophyte and we leave it Freemason and what do we have? We have words, we have obligations, we have memories. A saying goes that Freemasons think about death more than anybody else in this world... it might be true. Going through the ritual we die to an ancient life and we are born to a new one. The life in the Lodge.

We meet friends whom we call brothers, we learn to know them and they get to know us. We work together the ritual, when one is happy we share that happiness, when one is in sorrow, we are all in sorrow. ...continued

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We form a chain, not only the one at the end of the working, but the one from times immemorial when the first masons met and decided to build a temple out of themselves to glorify life over death, or light over darkness. That chain shall never be broken. When a brother dies we know that because the brother next to us during the chain is not the same.

My life taught me that we are nothing but memories to one another. At some

point in time we fade in the shadow, we leave the scene but what we leave behind is what really matters. Mr Sicard is no longer by my side but I sense him near me, because he was a helping hand when I was in need.

I said I wanted to give friendship to my fellow brethren and to mankind I wanted to leave a living impact. I am working on it from now, not by being a member of masonry, but by going out there and applying the teachings I gain in the Lodge. Those teachings

will come from you, from our interactions with one another, with the ceremonies, the ritual. I will do my best to give in my mother tongue what we call BIBULU or hope. I will do my best to reach for greatness. And when I die I would like you to remember that I was a human being and that I inspired people. This is what I hope will be left behind when I am gone and the brother next to you is no longer me.

L Athomo EA

MY INITIATION

My childhood was not that bright. I grew up with no advantage because my parents were struggling to raise a big family of 8 children. I don't see them celebrate my birthday even once.

My uncle tried to support my studies sometimes. But everything was difficult for me because at that time studying in the DRC required not only intelligence, but good and stable finances. That explains why I never completed my studies in any field of my choice. At secondary school I failed to complete in electrical, but I finished grade 12, the fields I did not like. I completed in agricultural sciences that wasn't my choice and I've been changing subjects from secondary school to university because I wasn't stable financially.

The struggle of choice has characterised my life.

I have tasted any kind of bad life: from starving to drinking alcohol and smoking - all as a young man. But in every bad thing that I went through I knew to put a limit and stop!

I knew that there is a certain call inside me that is spirituality.

I wanted to know myself.

My initiation as an Entered Apprentice Freemason took place on 3rd October 2011.

That night is considered as a turning point in my life. After long years of questioning myself about existence, life, death.... I have come to realise that I was missing a spiritual approach to life.

By embracing this spiritual journey, my aim is to understand life and master it. I have been working very

hard in changing my picture in society from the bad picture to the good.

That is a big challenge because as a human being I meet different kinds of people in any corner of life. Some people don't share my belief and I do not share the same view with others.

I don't prejudge or judge anybody, but I try to understand everybody by adjusting myself. The more I try to upright my life the more challenge to fall into my previous behaviour I face.

With the choice I have made - that of following the light by becoming a Freemason for the rest of my life, nothing can stop me from overcoming obstacles spiritually and physically

J K Katapala EA

**The issue is not what we expect from life,
but what life expects from us**

Victor Frankl

WHAT IS THE WORK OF A MASON?

In 1966, in her P of A, Sophie Bischoff, past MPGC, asked “what was the work of a mason”. An answer was found in the words of our V Illus Bro Annie Besant “our great work is nothing less than a concerted effort to carry out the duty that is laid upon us as those who possess the light to spread that light abroad through the world”.

As masons we learn that our work is “to know ourselves”; we are taught that our highest ideal is “to serve”; and that we work to the glory of TGAOTU and for the “perfection of humanity”.

Our Order works the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. On a related website is found the Scottish Rite creed:

“ The cause of human progress is our cause, the enfranchisement of human thought our supreme wish, the freedom of human conscience our mission, and the guarantee of equal rights to all peoples everywhere the end of our contention ”.

Masonic history indicates that many of our more eminent predecessors have been at the front of the movements for social change and the attempted resolution of social inequity. Here we are reminded of our co-founder Maria Deraismes an activist for women’s rights.

Here too the Liberty. Equality and Fraternity echoed at the opening and closing of the French working reminds us how these cries have

been at the forefront of social movements for change throughout the world.

In section IX of the *le droit humain* website, we read: within Federations members take part in the study of annual questions both social and symbolic. Studies with social outcomes can be brought to the notice of the outer world“.

It has been said that in the context of today’s political thinking Freemasonry can only be recognised as a force for good if its principles and tenets can be translated into practical values and those values inculcated into the decision making classes of our society.

In the section of our website dealing with our openness to the world, we find the following statement: The progress of Humanity is not possible unless it is shared by all. Thus every freemason of the International Order of Co-Freemasonry *le droit humain* must regard himself a citizen of the world in order to take part in carrying out the Work. An active citizen?

Lack of space prevents me from copying in full the interesting article on the Concept of Active citizenship that I found on www.faceitproject.org. Read it brn, and tell me does it not resonate for you as it did for me with our own masonic ideals. It’s key concept is that of coming to grips with what happens in public life, developing knowledge, understanding, critical thinking and independent judgement

of local, national and global levels. It implies action and empowerment, ie. Acquiring knowledge skills attitudes and being able and willing to use them - individually and collectively.

So I ask - is this the work of a Mason today, in South Africa - is it active citizenship that is required of us?

Certainly the National Question adopted for South African Federation at the recent convention - **Freemasonry in relation to Social Justice and Social Change** implies just that.

The challenge is, “how to achieve both social justice and social change on a small scale? How do we as freemasons individually and in our capacity as a group assist with necessary change in society today?”

In the Cape Town Orient these past two weeks we had at our Craft Lodge meeting two papers giving an introduction to the National Question as well as three interesting P’s of A from our newly initiated brothers; we had a Mark Lodge meeting at which we were asked to discuss what the Mark Degree meant for each of us and we had a Thirtieth degree meeting where we discuss the symbolism of two of the preceding degrees.

What stood out for me very strongly was that in each of these workings the symbolism and content had meaning in terms of the National Question.

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So already, I find within myself that through *my* awareness of the National Question I have been conscientised anew to the lack of social justice and need for social change in my society.

I read the newspapers, search the internet, receive blogs and e-newsletters and see how in so many ways our Human Rights are being eroded or denied.

I'm writing this on the third of sixteen days of Activism. Sixteen days taken from November 25th (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to 10th December (International Human Rights Day) a period including World AIDS Day. In South Africa, government, civil society organisations and others work together to broaden the impact of the campaign. I wonder, as I attend a lecture by a representative of Engender, an NGO working in the field of gender based violence "will it be enough for me to wear a white ribbon, a red ribbon to show my

support for these campaigns or does Freemasonry expect more of me?

So I ask again - What is the work of a Mason in today's world? Is it any different?

And my answer? It's a Yes - and a No.

My No answer comes again from Annie Besant, who reminds us that "within Masonry is a great opportunity of putting aside the personal self which has so often become so important that it hinders the development of the real self within". And it is only by our continually honing our rough ashlers and reminding ourselves of the lessons we learned when we became a mason, that our real self within can shine out as a beacon of light with which we can light the way and become the sort of citizen that continues outside the Lodge, the work that we do inside our Lodge.

So NO - it hasn't changed. This has always and still continues to be our work as Masons, and so long as I am

continually mindful of my obligation to work for the perfection of humanity and the base of my action is right and just, it's meaningful for me to just wear that white ribbon, that red ribbon as my only action.

But my answer is also a cautious YES - it is different. We know that though there are still some societies today where we cannot be as Free as we'd like to be, we also know that in *our* society we have opened our doors to the world - we have open days, we have lectures, we use the internet to spread abroad our aims and our objectives. So today freemasonry expects of me that I *go* outside the doors of the Lodge and expand my circle of compassion to "do what needs to be done" as a freemason and an active citizen.

What dear brn will your answer be? How will you, how should we, go and do what needs to be done?

That answer lies within the heart of each of us, within the body of our Lodge, within the community of the Federation.

M Raymond 33°

**WISDOM LIES IN ENGAGING THE LIFE YOU HAVE
BEEN GIVEN AS FULLY AND COURAGEOUSLY AS POSSIBLE
AND NOT LETTING GO
UNTIL YOU FIND THE UNKNOWN BLESSING
THAT IS IN EVERYTHING**

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