THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF
FREEMASONRY FOR MEN AND WOMEN
LE DROIT HUMAIN

THE SOUTH AFRICAN
CO-MASON

Official Journal of the South African Federation

VOLUME 14 - DECEMBER 2013
We are approaching the summer solstice –
a time when the grand design of masonry is
flowering at its height point in the heavens.
How have you applied the 24” gauge during this past Masonic year?
Let us be reminded of the power of reflection and meditation.

Take time to think
It is the source of power.

Take time to play
It is the secret of eternal youth
Take time to read
It is the foundation of wisdom.
Take time to pray
It is the greatest power on earth.
Take time to love and be loved
It is a God given privilege.
Take time to be friendly
It is the road to happiness.
Take time to laugh
It is the music of the soul.
Take time to give
It is too short a day to be selfish.
Take time to work
It is the price of success.
Take time to do charity
It is the key to Heaven.

UNLESS YOU TRY TO DO SOMETHING BEYOND WHAT YOU HAVE
ALREADY MASTERED, YOU WILL NEVER GROW

Anonymous
I remember myself on the 27 December kneeling on the mountain and asking God to help me see and understand things. I had never thought that one day I will become a Freemason. I was in a state of ignorance, fear and many other things. I was then not initiated.

I have always been passionate about experiencing new things, longing since I was very young for my spiritual development. That was my longing at the time but I was blinded by anger. Anger against my parents, anger against life.

When I look back I see that in all the things good and bad I did, I was actually looking for my own identity. Why this? Why that? Those are the questions I keep asking myself.

I recognise today that my mistake was in only seeing what the world was doing to me and not what I was doing to the world. Now I want to know “How to do this? How to do that?”

Freemasonry: so many speculations about it. It took me courage to decide because there are more important things in life than fear. I understand that certain things cannot be taught from inside to the outside - you have to go in and see. From my first meeting I have never before felt so connected to any other philosophy before.

How do I understand the world if I don’t understand myself? What is the purpose of this world?

There isn’t anything more horrible than having eyes and not being able to see, having legs and not being able to walk, ears, hands….and having a heart and not being able to love. More horrible because at the end you cannot love yourself because others don’t have what you have and you are unable to use them or you do it for the wrong reasons.

How do I get to know myself? To love myself?

Because Love is something that you don’t “get” but that you share.

Studies reveal that we only use 1% of our brain capacity - isn’t it terrible? Not to talk about our spirit…..

In my country we have a proverb: “The mouth of the elder doesn’t smell of roses but always tells the truth”. What I understand by this is not to judge a person by the appearance, you never know who will help you in this world. We have more things in common than differences: lets focus on that.

All things are connected through the flower of life; we are all part of the same unit which is life. How do I understand life? How to create harmony within oneself?

Life bounces us around every day. We react every day and every action is equal to a reaction. It is normal, but can you try to think about your reaction. We are all born for a purpose which is not to destroy, but to use anything you can to build - and the first and most important is our Temple. Are you building? How are you contributing to our world?

I want to participate in reality, learn how to take responsibility of myself and my actions. I want to break through the intellect world…

I’m not used to reading the guide when I’m building something. It never takes me long to figure out what I have to do and right now its that I’m building and I have had all the tools for 25 years and only now I am figuring out how to use them.

Gregory Kaniki EA

QUIET THE MIND, AND THE SOUL WILL SPEAK

Ma Jaya Sati Bhagavati
Many of us long for an underlying sense of meaning, something we can still believe in no matter what happens to us, a navigational force to pull all the disparate pieces of our lives together into some kind of whole. Perhaps we find ourselves feeling helpless when even a little too much of the unexpected occurs, defenceless when we find we don’t have control over a situation and can’t fathom what might happen next, unsure of where to turn when we aren’t having the positive effect we want with a troubled family member or friend. In any of these circumstances, and in so many more, we shut down. Then we go through the motions of our day, day after day, without much dynamism or spirit.

Many of us experience ourselves as fragmented, perhaps as confident and expressive when we are with our families, but a completely different person when we are at work, frequently hesitant and unsure. Perhaps we take risks when we are with others but are timid when alone, or are cozily comfortable when alone yet are painfully shy and withdrawn with others. Or maybe we drift along with the tides of circumstance, going up and down, not knowing what we might really care about more than anything else, but thinking there must be something.

To explore kindness as that thread of meaning requires finding out if we can be strong and still be kind, be smart and still be kind, whether we can be profoundly kind to ourselves and at the same time strongly dedicated to kindness for those around us. We have to find the power in kindness, the confidence in kindness, the release in kindness; the type of kindness that transcends belief systems, allegiances, ideologies, cliques and tribes. This is the trait that can transform or lives.

Kindness is the fuel that helps us truly “walk the talk” of love, a quality so easy to speak about or extol but often so hard to make real. It helps us to genuinely care for one another and for ourselves as well. Kindness is the foundation of unselfconscious generosity, natural inclusivity, and an unfeigned integrity. When we are devoted to the development of kindness, it becomes our ready response, so that reacting from compassion, from caring, is not a question of giving ourselves a lecture: “I don’t really feel like it, but I’d rather be helpful, or what would people think.” When we are devoted to the development of kindness, we are no longer forcing ourselves into a mould we think we have to occupy; rather, it becomes a movement of the heart so deep and subtle that it is like a movement of the sea close to the ocean floor, all but hidden yet affecting absolutely everything that happens above. That is the force of kindness.

TENDERNESS AND KINDNESS ARE NOT SIGNS OF WEAKNESS AND DESPAIR, BUT MANIFESTATIONS OF STRENGTH AND RESOLUTION

Kahlil Gibran
It gives me great pleasure to have been given this opportunity to stand in front of you brethren and be given the opportunity to articulate my topic for this evening. It is oft said that a tree that doesn’t have roots lacks means of sustenance leading to eventual wilting followed by death. Those who lack knowledge of their history are doomed to repeat it. My topic today will give a brief synopsis of the history of speculative Masonry. Though I believe that a single piece of architecture may not reward it all the justice it deserves but I believe that there are several schools of thought regarding Speculative Masonry.

An introspective Brother will use his discernment to search for the truth. Efforts have been made going back to two hundred years by scholars concerning the origins of the order of Speculative Masonry however, theories are wildly divergent with respect to the Pre-Grand Lodge period. There are various sources from where these hypotheses were taken from. However, it is up to each member to make their own conclusion. The few amongst these were taken from, “The Ancient Mysteries; The Roman College of Architects; Operative Masons of The Middle Ages.”

Historians believe that during the campaigns that led to the glory of the Roman empire, in their concerted belief to strengthen their culture, they had attached a series of Colleges of Architecture whose primary purpose was to plan and build edifices imposed with the safety of fortification and comforts. When the Roman Empire finally reached its end, principal colleges continued to keep their member’s affiliations. These colleges journeyed north with the eventual establishment on the island of Lake Como. In the year 568 A.D., the Lombards invaded the vestiges of what was left of the Roman countryside however, their king Rothares gave the colleges exclusive rights to build the surrounding country. In the year 1568 A.D., the Lombards invaded the vestiges of what was left of the Roman countryside however, their king Rothares gave the colleges exclusive rights to build the surrounding country. This led on to the Romanesque-type of architecture. The type of architect, which laid the foundation for the Medieval architecture whose cathedrals and castles still exists to-date. Many scholars still believe that these colleges were forerunners in the early years of the 18th century; started admitting non-operative/speculative Masons. This was the then foundation of modern Freemasonry.

Historically, Freemasonry began with the minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh, which was recorded in 1599. The first date in England was said to have commenced in 1646 which recorded the initiation of the famous antiquary and scholar Elias Ashmole in Warrington. The York Right of Masonry also had an old Lodge which was older than any in London; and as a result, didn’t recognise the Grand Lodge of London, which was in all essence founded in 1717. In the year 1725 A.D., it constituted itself as a Grand Lodge of all England. This obstinacy and belligerence led to its final demise in 1791 A.D.

The Irish Rights of Masonry was recorded from 1688 A.D. in Dublin. The Scottish Rights of Freemasonry was subsequently formed in 1736. At its preliminary, 35 out of a 100 Lodges were represented. Other records of individual Lodges in Scotland go back further to 1642. One such Lodge was the Lodge Mother Kilwinning which has its minutes recorded back in 1642. Most of the Lodges at the time were derived from Mother Kilwinning Lodge.

Another Lodge in Aberdeen dates before 1483. As seen in its town records, there is a seal of incorporation which dates back to 1541. Records show the minutes of the Lodge commencing in 1670. Registration of the Lodge show that Speculative members were in the majority. A well-know member John Boswell was a Speculative member in 1600 of the Lodge of Edinburgh.

In the year 1716 A.D., a few of the Lodges felt that they were neglected by Sir Christopher Wren who was the Grandmaster of the time. They met at various pubs at the time to air their grievances; these were the Goose and Gridiron Alehouse, Crown Alehouse, The Apple Tree Tavern & Rumme and The Grapes Tavern in Westminster. They eventually constituted themselves Grand Lodge pro-tempore in due form and henceforth revived their quarterly communication of the Officers of the Lodge which is the Grand Lodge. They then resolved to hold the annual assembly and feast to choose a Grandmaster. On St.
the assembly of Free and Accepted Masons was held at the Goose and Gridiron Alehouse.

In 1721, an interesting state of events occurred. The Duke of Montague gave instructions to be made of the Ancient Charges being in use in operative Lodges of the aims, objectives and privileges of the entrusted members. Dr. James Anderson was singularly entrusted with these. With the help of the Grandmaster Payne, the constitution was framed with an allusion concerning God, the Holy Church and Invocations to the Holy Trinity omitted. It received approval in 1723. It literally said, “Through Ancient times, Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country, yet it it was more expedient to obligate them in the religion to which all men agree, leaving opinions to themselves ie. To be good and true men of honour/honesty whatever denomination or religious persuasion”.

To date, this has led to the present lack of cooperation/unity between many Masonic obligations around the world. In 1723, the clause of the constitution makes no stipulation for belief in the Supreme Being as a necessary qualification for membership. It was not until 1815 that under the United Grand Lodge of England that the charges were modified in the 1° chapter. It said, “Let a man’s religion or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the Order provided he believes in the Great architect of the Heaven and Earth and practice the sacred duties of Morality.”

This was a distinct departure from the original form. This threw the door open to all persuasions ie. Hindus, Jews, Buddhists, Parsee and Muslims. This did not come into force until 1815.

The first Lodge on foreign soil was set up in France which was founded by the Duke of Warton in 1728. Further Lodges were found the following year in India and Gibraltar, and a Provincial Grandmaster was appointed in new Jersey in 1730 and Boston in 1733.

In 1738 the Vatican launched an unprecedented attack on Freemasonry. This resulted in the order going underground in Europe where the authority of the Catholic Church was still dominant; all except England, where the King of England, Henry VIII had divorced his first wife Catherine of Aragon, a French aristocrat, and opted to marry Anne Boleyn against the wishes of the Pope, thereby making himself the Head of the Church of England and severing ties with the Catholic Church. She was subsequently banished to a Monastery. This led to the publication of the “Exposures” that led to unauthorised individuals and cowans gaining admission to the Lodges. Violent opposition subsequently followed. The eventual discontent in 1753 led to a separate Grand Lodge calling themselves the Grand Lodge of Freemasons according to Ancient Institutions. This was nicknamed the Grand Lodge of “Moderns”, subsequently electing the Duke of Atholl as the Grandmaster. An interesting point is that the “Ancients” supported Higher Degrees whilst the “moderns” didn’t. The year 1788 was at a time when three Lodges dominated English society. These were the Ancients, the Moderns and the Yorks. Its master William Preston had quarrelled with the Grand Lodge, had withdrawn and formed an alliance with the York grand Lodge, calling themselves The Grand Lodge of England, south of Trent. The following year, the Lodge of Antiquity led by William Preston apologised and returned to the ranks. Because of continuous malcontent, a treaty was drawn up on St John’s Day 22 December 1812 where the Grand Lodge of Reconciliation was constituted. This led to the heir-apparants of King George III being made the Grand-masters. These were the Duke of York and the Duke of Sussex. This grand gesture led to the joining of the Ancients and Moderns.

I will end with this…. As a result of trade and economics, continental Lodges from the original Grand Lodge prior to the changing of the rituals were formed in South Africa and Dutch East Indies were formed. Initiates could not be admitted into the Grand Lodge of Scotland until they had received their 2nd. Degree. This would be the same for Lodges working under the authority of the Grand Orient of France. Reason being that the Lodges in the continents were consecrated prior to the change in rituals. The status quo may still be in existence.

A greater part of my research was done in respect to Bro. Charles Helier whose detailed knowledge of the history of Speculative Masonry made this all possible.

S Mbambela FC
The reason why I chose to talk about Women in Masonry is the feeling I have that in our Order we take it for granted to go through the ritual with male and female Brethren. For us in this Lodge the words Brother or Brethren are not gender biased. I believe it should be reminded to the Brethren of this Lodge that it did not just happen! Instead, our mixed gender ritual work is the result of a fight for Equality. It has to be remembered that until today, some Masons would not recognize you, my Sisters in this Lodge as worthy Freemasons. So yes, the question of female Freemason is still debated in some circles, although my opinion is that the debate is no more relevant.

Being Free......
"By the T... of good report, being free ". This is a key principle of recruitment in our order as well as in all masonic obedience’s I know. Still in force today.

Let's go back 200 years, right after the French Revolution. In the early 1800s. The French Revolution (1789) aimed at the Freedom of people of France and even more than that: Equality and Fraternity were part of it. And this motto has further been adopted by number of French masonic Obedience’s (Liberté– Egalité – Fraternité form part of their ritual). However, eventually the French Revolution failed to bring the women at an equal level as men. Women did remain under the responsibility of their father or husband. They were legally not emancipated. 50% of the population in France was not "free" in masonic terms.

Hence the impossibility for women to be initiated in masonry as per the key principle of “Being Free”.

At the same period there started the beginning of a fight by some women for emancipation and gender equality. It is to be noted that these women were supported by many men, but probably not enough, as we all know this struggle is still raging nowadays. Let me here quote Victor Hugo, renowned French novelist, who was at the time President of the French League for Women Rights: "there are citizens, but no female citizens. This is a state of violence which has to stop".

Women in Masonry as part of the fight for Equality: Maria Deraismes

Maria Deraismes was initiated into Masonry the 14th of January 1882 in the Lodge "Les LibresPenseurs" at the Orient of Le Pecq (near Paris). By doing so, this Lodge was going against the rules of their Obedience (Grande Loge Symbolique Ecossaise), from which they distanced themselves a few days before.

This hugely bold move created such a tsunami that Bro Maria never attended any further meeting in her mother Lodge. And the Lodge itself imploded and eventually disappeared only few years after this memorable event. They were too early for their time! Maria (Marie-Adelaide) Deraismes, born 17 August 1828 in Paris, was educated. Definitely much more than the average women of the time. Never married. She was definitely “free” by our current standards, but was she considered as such in her times? From 1866, with other women, she leads the fight for gender equality in France. She... writes in newspapers, speaks at conferences, sometimes as guest speaker, also invited
by masonic institutions. Every time she would promote women’s rights as well as Democracy.
Not being able to work as a freemason in properly constituted Lodges for more than 10 years after her initiation, Maria Deraismes, with George Martin, create the Lodge Le Droit Humain for men and women, the 4th of April 1893. This single Lodge will become our Masonic Order in 1901. Reading the History of Freemasonry, Maria Deraismes was not the first woman to be initiated, but her contribution to bringing women into masonry was immense.

**Old Charges and Landmarks**
Not being emancipated was clearly an obstacle for women to join masonry. But let’s be honest here, the fundamental and basic rules of Free-masonry in the XVIII and XIX centuries made it clear that it is an only men affair.
This is the reason why women as bright, educated and free as Maria Deraismes and others (Louise Michel, …) would not be allowed in Freemasonry.
I found no other explanation to this segregation than the historical and social context of the time. Which immediately raise the concern of its validity and relevance in the XXIst century, i.e. today.
In the XIXth century, in an attempt to bring women close to freemasonry, Adoption lodges were created. Women in these Adoption lodge were selected by men of the male Lodge the Adoption lodge will depend. The rituals in these Adoption Lodges were totally different from the one in the male Lodge. The activities were more like of a social club than of a masonic lodge. This just created a sub class of freemasons, an expression of guilt of our then Brethren.

**The women-only Orders**
However these Adoption Lodges, in France, in 1945, eventually gave birth to the Union-Macconnique Feminine, the 1st female Craft, which also adopted in 1959 the Ancient and Accepted Scottish ritual, same as in the male Craft.

**The Debate**
So yes, there has been and there still is debate on the subject of women in Freemasonry. Today, we have across the world Male Obedience’s, Female Obedience’s and Obedience’s for Men and Women. I could personally see some evolution in the mindset of some of my Brethren in Male Craft. I can also see some changes in that respect in some well-established Masonic Orders which are slowly evolving to a Men & Women organization. In my view the debate today, is more around the Men and Women working together in the same lodge than anything else.
Let me share with you my answers to some “theoretical” questions with an imaginary Brother from a male Craft.

[ Now that there are Female Masonic Orders, why should we accept women in our Lodges?

Freemasonry is about Fraternity and Tolerance. So if you accept the principle of a woman freemason, what is preventing you to consider her as a Brother who will be a valuable addition into your lodge? Not accepting or initiating her will be violating your own principles. ]
Our Landmarks are clear: No Women. How do you pass this hurdle?

Different Masonic Orders do have different Landmarks and Constitutions. We are progressive organizations and although we draw our strength from tradition, we are all working for the progress of Humanity. This means we cannot be static and dogmatic. We cannot use our Constitutions, written at a certain period in the past and in a given context, as an excuse not to move forward and get the Humanity to progress. Find the cornerstone. Change your Constitutions.

But Women are not the same! They can bring so much emotion in our debates.

Is that wrong? As a Freemason we need to deal with our emotions and others' emotions. This is true in Lodge and outside Lodge. And what a fantastic place, amongst your Brothers and Sisters to express yourself, genuinely and why not with emotion.

And I would like to mention this quote from St Exupery with a slight change: “My Sister, you are different from me, but far from diminishing me, you make me richer!”

And what about Fraternity in Lodge? How do you deal with sexual attraction between a Brother and a Sister?

If this is your concern, my question to you is how do you deal with it in the profane world? Lodge is a place of learning about ourselves and others, and we have tools and symbols to help us do that. Let’s learn in Lodge how to treat women as equals and use it in the outside world. The Apron invites you to take control of your emotions and to keep your Metals outside of the Temple. The symbolic meaning of Metals may include pre-conceived ideas and profane ideas about women. They are your Sisters. You are in Lodge.

In Conclusion
I would like to close this with 2 quotes.

“The work of our predecessors is still largely to be continued, in this difficult world of the XXIst century”. Daniele JUETTE, former Most Puissant Souverain Grand Commander – Le Droit Humain

And “We just cannot work towards the progress of Humanity with only half of the Humanity”. Maria Deraismes

References:

S Adjovi MM
TO FASHION THE ASHLAR

The premise for this article is taken from an editorial Haboneh Hahofshi, The Israeli Freemason Vol LIX No 1 1994. The following is a partial quotation from that editorial.

“One of the differences between Freemasonry and other organizations, charitable or social in nature, is that we not only have a special organizational framework, particular ceremonies and rituals, but we also have a particular set of principles that must be studied by our members. Masonic study is not only desirable, but an absolute necessity if we wish to maintain our traditions and enable our order to prosper and to attract new and valuable elements of society. Most Brethren seem to believe that by simply attending the Lodge and paying their dues, they have fulfilled all the requirements needed to be a good Mason.

Far from it, by definition, a Mason must work by himself. First, with symbolic hammer and chisel, the rough work of the Apprentice who has just seen Masonic light. Then with increasingly finer and more sophisticated tools, as his knowledge increases, the scope of action widens by advancement through the degrees and offices. All this presupposes an active interest in Masonic thought, an inquiring mind, a readiness to read and study in order to understand and not merely to repeat parrot-like our rituals.”

It is common knowledge among Masons that the words of our ritual are symbolic of the lessons that Freemasonry teaches. Using symbolism, it has been said that the Entered Apprentice represents the rough ashlar. He is symbolic of the stones taken from the quarry that were used in the building of King Solomon’s Temple. As he progresses from Entered Apprentice to fellow Craft, and then to Master Mason, the rough ashlar or candidate is fashioned into the smooth ashlar. He is symbolic of the stones placed in the final structure of the Temple. Ultimately, he is perfected and becomes the Master Mason.

How is this process accomplished? The answer lies in the work of the Intender. It is the Intender who wields his tools to fashion the rough ashlar or Entered Apprentice into the smooth ashlar or Master Mason. The Intender symbolically uses the working tools of Freemasonry....to decide which bits of stone need to be removed, .... to keep him with in the bounds of Freemasonry and maintain him within the bounds of brotherhood.

It is the intender who can foster an interest in the new brother to continue his Masonic study so that he becomes more than just one who parrots back our ritual. After the stones are placed in the Temple that is the Lodge, these stones require regular maintenance so they will not deteriorate. That maintenance is the continued study of our fraternity. If the Intender maintains his contact and mentors the new Master Mason after he is raised, the love of our brotherhood will continue to grow and the future of the Lodge will be insured.

By Ira Gilbert
Illinois Freemasonry Spring 2013

(This article has been edited)
**WHO AM I, A BEING OF LOVE....**

Who am I? This question has been asked numerous times across the ages and with various answers. But as fundamental as it is, very few of us have been able to explain to our own selves; who are we?

Birth, beliefs, customs, rituals and symbols in one's life have been usually the determinants of what makes us believe who we are. But is that all or is there something more?

It will be right to say that I am a being. What type of being will be determined by my actions in the society that I live in. But the key to understanding oneself is far from being determined from one's actions. It has also been argued that who we are gives our role in society; eg. I am a carpenter, I am a brother or I am a member of this club, makes us who we are. Yes I agree, that our interaction with society can be a component of who we are. But is that it?

Beings we are, it is now to understand what type of beings are we. Human beings experience life through emotions and it can be categorised as positive and negative feelings. My belief is that we have only two feelings that drive all our behaviour including and especially our thinking. Those 2 feelings are: Love and Fear.

Does this answer the question of who am I? Yes and No, but it speaks about an extremely important determinant of our being that it would be naive to not consider them.

Love, the sweetest feeling of all, the one that allows each one of us to live in bliss and harmony. Whatever we feel, think, say or do is only but a way to experience this feeling and we all strive to have more of it in our lives. However, we always feel that we do not have enough of it. It is the greatest and hardest drug currently available on earth and we are all addicted.

We are today afraid beings, scared of the next thing. Why can't we experience love unconditionally, without fear that it will end. This is what society has taught us, we need to always be weary of what's going to happen.

The instant that we start thinking about what will happen next, we find ourselves into this cycle and we, alas, forget the present, the now, this moment.

It is Fear, that makes us wonder, it is Fear that makes us doubt, It is Fear that makes us forget this instance. We are afraid that the other is not going to be happy and therein lies the dilemma. The other's opinion, the other's thoughts, what will the other feel. In the midst of society, we have become so engrossed that we have forgotten that it is Me who decides how I feel. We have forgotten that the chemical reaction that I would like my brain to send is determined by Me and only Me. Instead we await for the other to give me the signal about what I should feel and the result is that we are constantly in fear of the now and the future.

Freemasonry demands work and it is this work that requires discipline. Discipline of the self.

Mother Nature has demonstrated to us that the core is what matters and that core is Me. For years, one has absorbed layers and layers of societal norms, leading to a life of what will the other think. Fear. With discipline, one has the possibility of living a life of only Love. A life where, the feeling of disappointment or failure is nothing but a moment to understand the other without experiencing it emotionally. It is the realisation that the time is NOW.

It is the time to remove the layers, some will feel like removing the layers of a coconut to get to the cream others will be as easy as peeling a mango. The closer we get to realise that ; I the being, is the One who decides how I am going to feel, the closer we will be to our own self. It is about living the life of a detached observer.

This is the age of transformation, and the first step is to start living. Living in full harmony, living in full acceptance of the self and others, living in complete dedication to Love because this is who I am.

I cannot be sad,
At me, I cannot be mad.
In fear, I will disappear,
As one of our peer.
In Love, I will be,
And realise this is Me

“Our task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within ourself that one has built against it.” said Rumi.

Kabir Kaleechurn EA
CENSING

To The International order of Freemasonry for Men and Women no meeting is complete without the opening censing ceremony. The DC leading the procession with the swinging thurible with the burning charcoal and incense filling the air with fragrants, marks the preparation for the meeting.

The censing of the air is often associated with the Roman Catholic church and the higher Anglican churches, but in the East it is widely used and also in the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. In fact the early churches took this practice over from earlier religions. The earliest recorded evidence of censing is attributed to the Egyptians. It was used in the Temple services and funeral rites and was only done by a priest or priest –King. Ancient Hindu writings and Babylonian stories of 2000 BC also refer to its use. It was Pythagoras who is said to have taught of its calming effects. So there is plenty evidence of its general use before the start of the Christian faith. In some Christian circles the use of incense is condemned because of its origin in pagan use. It’s use today is only by the general consensus of religious opinion.

Censing in Pre Christian times was used for various reasons:

- Sacrifice to deity
- To drive away evil spirits
- As sacrifice to the deceased human being
- A symbol of honour
- Accompaniment to festivities and procession
- To act as a refreshing perfume at banquets

Incense was used therefore not only for its sacrificial aspects but also for protection against evil (Aaron used incense to stave off the plaque – therefore used not only as atonement but also to drive away the evil spirits). The Thurifer leading the procession is in fact cleansing and purifying the atmosphere of whatever thoughts may be an obstacle to the higher powers. By censing the officers, the Thurifer purifies and cleanses each officer so that the virtue and beauty of that officer may became visible.

The use of incense has continued to have an appeal to the Spiritual side of humanity as well as for its fumigatory effects. Leadbeater informs us that all chemical elements has its own set of influences. Therefore by mixing certain gums when burnt as incense, will stimulate the purer and higher emotions or it could also have the reverse effect. The two well known sources of incense are Benzoin, Olibanuim and Frankincense. The last two were obtained from certain trees in S E Arabia and E Africa. Benzoin is a vigorous purifier. It drives away all coarse or sensuous feelings or thoughts whereas Olibanuim creates a restful atmosphere in order to stimulate the astral body to respond to higher things.

The Astral Body of man is being purified in the censing ceremony. Thethurible is made up of four parts:

| Charcoal | earth | dense body |
| Lighted Incense | fire | mental body |
| Smoke | air | spiritual body |
| Vapour | water | emotional aspect of body |

The thurible is no longer merely a censor but encompasses the four elementals of the first degree and is also appealing to all the astral levels of the Brethren who are all E A’s and in particular to the officers who are leading the meeting.

The clicks given on a short chain are linking swings which are meant to strengthen the officer in her/his work. It is NOT an honour. The swings also link the Thurifer with the officer who is returning forces along the same lines.

The three swings given on a long chain to the guardians of the of the pedestal forms a cone or funnel in front of the pedestal The Thurifer has his/her back in line with the altar. The force which has been drawn down to the center flows through the Thurifer and includes the officer being censed.

The 7 circles in descending size in front of the pedestal, forming a beehive of force represents the 7 planes of matter and all other symbols associated with the number 7.

The Brethren in the E are linked together by the Thurifer with the RWM. The Thurifer then moves around the Lodge linking all the officers and then in turn the Brethren in the columns back to the point in front of the RWM The IG and OG are also linked. The IG represents the ethereal body and the OG the physical. So doing we Lodge is still linked with the outer world.

The censing of the Lodge has therefore linked all the officers and Brethren to form a unit which is also an essential essence of Masonry- Group work. When the group works selflessly, the group in time becomes an entity. This is what the ceremony of censing achieves- unity of the lodge.

THE FIRST DUTY OF LOVE IS TO LISTEN

Paul Tillich
ROUGH AND PERFECT ASHLAR

Ashlars are shaped stones used for construction of structures; cutting these stones to uniform shapes and sizes requires skill and experiences of a true craftsman with many years of experience of the field. Structures built with Ashlars take years to be executed and are more resistant and last for centuries. That is why historically, only large edifices from medieval times were made of Ashlars than any other material due to the necessity and difficulty of assembling the skilled craftsman needed to complete the many subsets of knowledge such as how to build a stone archway, how to lay a foundation stone, and how to lay stone one on top of another to great height; i.e. pyramids, Cathedrals, King Salomon’s Temple…

Naturally, stones are classified according to their mineral content and the process of their formation. Good stones are characterized by durability, hardness, strength, amenability to dressing, appearance and weight, fineness of grain, compactness… In order to be suitable as building stones, a rock should have specific qualities such as capacity to stand the ravages of time and weather, requisite strength to bear strain and super-incumbent weight, attractive color and general appearance. Its structure must also be such as to allow quarrying into good sized blocks. Allegorically, Masonry is taught through the subject of architecture and building trade. The Rough and Perfect Ashlars are stones used as symbols and invested with morale significance alluding to man’s moral and spiritual life; The stones are used in two forms: one Rough, just as it comes from the quarry, representing man in his ignorant, uncultivated state; and the other Perfect or Smooth, finely finished and ready to take place in the construction of the structure, represents man educated and refined. But as we are not operative but free and accepted or Speculative Masons, we use the Rough Ashlar as an allegory for the uninitiated freemason prior to his discovering enlightenment; and the Perfect Ashlar also as allegory for a Freemason who through Masonic education works to achieve an upstanding life and diligently strive to obtain enlightenment.

The contrast between the Rough and Perfect Ashlar is not as between one man and another man, thereby generating a snobbish sense of superiority or inferiority, but as between what a man is at one stage of his own self-development and what he is at another stage that is why it lies open in the lodge for the brethren to moralize on. The Rough Ashlar is located in the South on the W.J.W’s office to illumine and guide the E.A.F’s emotion in the North, the dark side of the Lodge and the Perfect Ashlar in the West on the W.S.W’s office where their lesson applies to all are worthy, who have a heartfelt wish to go from ignorance to knowledge, from darkness to light and from death to life. The Rough Ashlar is the stone in its rude and natural state and is emblematic of man in his natural state of ignorant, uncultivated and vicious. But when education has exerted its wholesome influence in expanding his intellect, restraining his passions and purifying his life, he is then represented by the Perfect Ashlar which, under the skillful hands or supervision of the R.W.M and his Wardens, has been smoothed and squared and fitted for its place in the
building of the temple of humanity. However, we will observe that the Rough Ashlar in a Masonic Lodge is not in its rude or natural state. It has been squared in a certain fashion, partially smoothed and has apparent strength, hardness, fitness, durability... It possesses all the qualities that could make it a perfect stone for use in the construction, but it needs the hands and skill of the perfect Craftsman to bring about that result.

It represents the candidate for membership in a Masonic Lodge. Such an applicant is not in his rude or natural state neither ignorant, uncultivated nor vicious. Masonry does not accept candidate for such qualifications because applicant by education and perseverance has fitted himself as a respectable man in his community, assuming full responsibility as a citizen of a country, a churchman, a businessman, doctor, engineer, a member of his family and so on.... and there are a vast number of persons in every community possessing such qualifications and are not members of any Masonic Lodge, and never have the desire or interest to join themselves in the pursuit of the study of the Ancient Craft’s hidden mystery.

Initiation to the Ancient Craft of Freemasonry lift the initiated a step above ordinary human and establish him as the intermediate between the inner and the outer world, the tunnel linking the Divine Power to humanity, the matter on which God pouring down and manifest his glory. Cowans judge Masonry by the actions and manner of living of their initiated and members of the Order; as a freemason this fact is just and correct but the non mason knows little or nothing of its teachings or objectives in the building of character. In that sense, the subject is in the crude state of the Rough Ashlar, possessing all the qualities or perfect material, but lacking the polish that comes from a continued study and practice of the great teachings of Masonry, that is why it can be said that membership in a lodge does not make a man a Mason. He must apply his abilities to improve all in him that falls short of that high standard set by Masonry in character. If he is satisfied with being E.A.F, F.C or Master Mason in name only, he loses the benefits of further advancement and improvement offered by membership in the Order. In other words, he falls far short of anything that might be termed the Perfect Ashlar. That is why the candidate has to think of himself as he were a building’s stone and that he will be expected to polish himself in manner and characters in order to find a place in the finished work of Masonry which is the making of the Perfect man.

The Perfect or Smooth Ashlar, uniform cuboids stone and squared, symbol of perfection, is the final journey made by the Rough Ashlar to the state of rulers deriving their powers from the consent of the governed; the constitution and laws speaking the will of the people with the powers properly distributed and duly adjusted in equilibrium. We call it the Perfect Ashlar, but we must remember that it is perfected only because it is completely adapted to the purpose for which it was made, namely; to exactly fit into its place in the building, and act as a binder for other stones.

In order that it may do this, it must possess certain attributes and through these attributes we are reminded of that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, our own endeavors and the blessing of God.
It has six faces which in any perspective man can take to observe, only a maximum of three can be seen and other three remain unseen. As it is for the Ashlar, it is also true for all true free and accepted freemason, Justice, charity and wisdom are exposed, and knowledge, common sense and love unseen priceless possession within him, both must be absolutely upright and balanced. Mason does not have one standard for the world and another for home; the same faces viewed are presented both to the world and the Lodge, and it teaches that we should not have one code of morals for one place and another for another, but that right is the same wherever we are and under whatever circumstance we may be placed.

In the building of that state of perfection to which we young Masons all aim to attain, what Perfect Ashlar have we that we might go to and try the tools with which we have been working, to know that they are still of fine quality and in perfect condition for the job that lies before us? In every Masonic Lodge there rests on the Altar in the center of the room the V.S.L. It is the solid foundation upon which Masonry in our lives is built. It never changes, civilizations may come and go, but the Book of Books remains the same, adaptable to all conditions and manner of men, in good times and bad, in peace or war, a guide for mankind.

But as Masons, how often do we consult this Guide to try and adjust jewels which are ours and which may need to be altered to get them back to that state of perfection which we as Masons should endeavor at all times to hold as our standard way of life?

The above question seems to be more fair for the fact that in this busy world of today, we neglect this practice. Therefore, as we think of the Ashlars and try to do a little moralizing in the Lodge, let us forget, even for a brief period, the material things in our lives, and direct our thoughts to the more important duty of contemplating our own defects and shortcomings, and adjusting our way of life and bringing it more in harmony with that standard given us by T.G.A.O.T.U in the V.S.L.

Ashlars are not just two pieces of stone but, they represent what we have been and what we hope to be. It is up to each individual Mason to pass his own judgment on himself and to adjust his jewels accordingly, so that when the time comes and he lays down his tools and makes the final journey on earth or when God call him to rest by ending his earthly life, he may leave behind a reputation as a wise counselor, a pillar of strength and stability, a Perfect Ashlar on which younger Masons may test the correctness and value of their own contribution to the Masonic order.

Like a man, each Rough Ashlar begins as an imperfect stone with education, cultivation and brotherly love, man is shaped into a being which had been tried by the square of virtue and encircled by the compasses of his boundaries given to us by T.G.A.O.T.U. The Rough Ashlar represents a man’s unrefined state and his need for improvement. He learns that the goal of being a better man includes spirituality of thought and striving for perfection of conduct via duties, expectations and obligations in the ritual or V.S.L, he is charged to work toward these goals of self improvement.
All rough ashlars must have within them the potential to be made into a Perfect Ashlar because making a Perfect Ashlar from the Rough Ashlar requires skill, tools and a plan without any of the three, no ashlar can be made perfect. A quote from H.L. HAYWOOD: “it is not a mere shapeless stone found by accident but a stone roughly shaped, suggesting thereby that the craft is selecting its materials and not attempting to make something out of nothing.” Skills to use the tools means education to wield the Common Gavel, the Chisel and the 24 inch Gauge for the E.A.F; education to use the talents God gave us in whatever walk of life we may be called. It must be capable of being worked into a perfect stone. This is why candidates requesting for membership are asked many questions regards as to their character, aim and motivation about why they wish to become Freemasons.

The candidate must also have the potential to both serve and support the Fraternity. They must be carefully inspected, just as each Rough Ashlar is inspected for quality in order to be able to fit him into Freemasonry's tenets and goals, which are compatible to God's laws because an imperfect stone may be made perfect, however major flaws are difficult to overcome and when assembled into a structure, the entire structure can be weakened from its improper use. This is as true of men as it is of stones. Flawed ashlars can bring negative feelings and approach upon the fraternity from non-Freemasons in the outside world.

Let us not forget that Perfect Ashlars are not found lying about the stone quarry without benefit of their having been hammered, chiseled and polished into such a state of being.

Freemasons must give serious consideration to our personal responsibility to educate other Brothers toward their self improvement.

Like the Good Samaritan in the Holy Bible (Luke 10:25-37); it is in the giving (not handling money) and assistance to others in which you will find the true jewels of enlightenment. True Master Masons not only exemplify the tenets of the craft, but they teach what they learn.

I AM NOT PARTICULARLY RELIGIOUS OR SPIRITUAL, I AM JUST AN ORDINARY PERSON TRYING TO MAKE SENSE OF THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE.

Nelson Mandela

THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF FREEMASONRY FOR MEN AND WOMEN

LE DROIT HUMAIN

SOUTH AFRICAN FEDERATION

dhisafed@gmail.com