

Part 2: FROM TOOLS TO TEMPLES by Brother Gerry Hawley

"Merely to know certain facts about the hidden side of life profits nothing, unless the knowledge is allowed to influence and adapt our method of living to the truths disclosed." Then the knowledge becomes transmuted into wisdom"1

This has been pretty heavy material. To provide a different perspective on the nature of wisdom I refer to Robert Fulghum, who writes:

"All I really needed to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate-school mountain, but there in the sand pile at Sunday-School.

These are the things I learned:

Share everything.

Play fair

Don't hit people

Put things back where you found them.

Clean up your own mess.

Don't take things that are not yours.

Say you are sorry when you hurt somebody.

Wash your hands before you eat.

Flush

Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.

Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some. Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that. Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere, The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane living. Take any of those terms and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or your government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think of what a better world

it would be if we all - the whole world - had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all governments had as a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are - when you go out into the world it is best to hold hands and stick together."2

Are we any the wiser for all of this? WISDOM, it seems, is the use of the essential foundation of knowledge which is developed by investigation, contemplation, and eventual understanding. Let us once again turn to the working tools and apply those of the E.A. in the enhancement of Knowledge based on accuracy, through the application of effort, and the practice of perseverance to the eventual growth and maturity of knowledge, experience, and judgement leading to the ability to make decisions and take action which will raise ignorance, from despair, and establish happiness in the paths of science... in other words.. establish W in US to be applied to take advantage of our knowledge and experience as we mature as men and Masons.

Let us therefore reflect on the W.T. of Masonry as we continue to build our temple, and more particularly on the W.T of an EA, as the means to complete our first Great P.W to contrive, W to conduct us in all our undertakings, W to apply right reason in our dealings with our Masonic brethren, and in our daily lives outside of these ancient walls.

The Lesser Pillars

Let us continue with respect to some of the teachings associated with the working tools of the speculative Freemason, and more especially with the application of those tools in designing, building, and furnishing our individual temples. Earlier, the laying of the cornerstone, and the cementing of the walls of fraternal feelings was explored.

Next we began to look at the raising of the three pillars which support our temple, with a particular emphasis on the nature and significance of the first pillar, the pillar of wisdom.

I should like to emphasize that the building of our individual temples is, in my view, the crux of the intent of Freemasonry, and should be a labour of joy and love. It should be energetically and enthusiastically pursued in accordance with a self disciplined and self initiated plan for life. For as I recently read in a message from a fortune cookie:

"The important thing about your lot in life is whether you use it for building or parking."

I will now reflect on the construction of the two remaining pillars which are essential to that well structured edifice each Freemason should successfully erect as he labours through his Masonic career, and I will describe the application of the working tools of the speculative Freemason to these important tasks.

The second pillar, represented in our lodges by the Senior Warden, is denoted the pillar of strength... strength to support us under all our difficulties. In the lecture of the first degree strength is depicted as represented by Hiram, King of Tyre who is recognized for supporting the building of the temple of Solomon, by supplying the men and materials necessary for its construction.

Brethren, in my view, an essential component in our lives is the development and maintenance of our strength in the Masonic sense, a support structure which includes our families, our friends, our coworkers, our business contacts, even our public agencies, but more especially our brethren in Masonry. Throughout the ages

Our fraternity has been noted for its desire and ability to provide support to its members, and their widows and orphans. From the beginning, a newly initiated Mason is carefully taught the importance of charity, and his duty to relieve the difficulties and soothe the afflictions of his brethren and fellows. It seems to me that one of the best investments a Mason can make is to labour long and hard to establish his pillar of strength, a pillar that, when need exists, will repay dividends of priceless value, even to the point of preventing the destruction of the

edifice which we strive so hard to complete.

Brethren, previously it was demonstrated that the tools essential to the construction of our pillar of wisdom were those of the entered apprentice. What tools are best suited for the construction of our second pillar? From an operative perspective, it is my understanding that, given the necessary quality of its substance, a pillar of support will exhibit its maximum strength when it is properly installed in a perfectly plumb position, at a perfect right angle to its foundation, and such that the supported structure is also at a right angle to the pillar and proved horizontal. Thus the square, level, and plumb rule are important in its construction. >From a speculative sense these tools of the Fellowcraft are essential in the construction of our pillar of support. We build that support of our brethren and fellows by acting with them on the square, by meeting with them on the level, as friends and brothers, and by carrying ourselves uprightly in our lives.

The third pillar, represented by the Junior Warden, and in the lecture, by Hiram Abif, is denoted the pillar of beauty... beauty to adorn the inward man. As with the other pillars this inward beauty is essential to the support of our temple... and most of us, by looking in the mirror, can attest that it is indeed inner beauty that we must be acquiring as we undertake our Masonic labours. But what is that inner beauty, and why is it of special significance to us?

The charge in the first degree provides some insight here as it admonishes the entered apprentice to "be especially careful to maintain in their fullest splendour, those truly Masonic ornaments, benevolence and charity". The man who truly possesses inward beauty, reflects these and other excellencies of character, many of which are summarized in the general charge given at installation. At the risk of detracting from the eloquent language of that work, let me remind you of some of these ornaments of inward beauty. Inner beauty is exemplified in the man who is: dedicated to duty, pious without being hypocritical, benevolent without being ostentatious, friendly, fun loving, courageous, free from superstition, faithful, worshipful, perfectionist, tolerant, virtuous, diligent, industrious; and fulfilled through brotherly love, relief, and truth. Such are the qualities of inner beauty which we, as Masons, are charged to pursue. A challenge indeed!

I have outlined earlier some of the ornaments comprising the inner beauty represented by the third pillar. The speculative interpretation of the working tools of the Master Mason provides some clues as to how to best construct our pillar of beauty.

The skirret, pencil, and compasses, so we are told, are applied to our morals to point out a straight and undeviating line of conduct, to tell us that we must render an account of that conduct to the Most High, and that we, ultimately, face either reward or punishment in respect to that conduct. All this is to teach us to act according to the laws of the Divine Creator which I believe, by so doing, will ensure the raising of a well established pillar of beauty. Each of us then will indeed be an ornament to our grand society, by demonstrating those excellencies of character so appropriately promoted through our Masonic teachings.

Brethren, let each of us strive to complete our individual pillars of wisdom, of strength and of beauty, and in so doing we will, by a natural tendency, support our brethren in the completion of their own, and further the erection of our magnificent temple.

The Canopy

Now that we have considered the building of the walls and pillars of our temple we will move upward to the covering; the celestial canopy.

I have related the building of the walls and the pillars to the common working tools associated with Freemasonry. It should be understood that "all of the tools of Masonry indiscriminately" are required by the Master Mason to assist in the completion of his temple, and as we approach the construction of the canopy we call on other assistance.

In order to reach the summit of our canopy, we use Jacob's ladder, which as the lecture in the first degree tells us, rests on the foundation of the volume of the sacred law. As we ascend this ladder we collect the benefits of development of the three principal rungs namely faith, hope, and charity. The development and practise of these virtues in conjunction with the others illustrated earlier provide us with the skill and resolve to complete a canopy which is able to provide us an umbrella of protection

from evil influences, support to and from our brethren and their widows and orphans, and a clear direction for the development of our individual and collective souls toward their final destiny.

Taken as a whole, the creation of this temple requires a lifetime of effort and by definition, is necessarily incomplete. Once the basic walls, supporting structure, and canopy are in place we cannot be complacent. For the remainder of the time allowed us by the Most High we should spend in ever strengthening and beautifying our glorious edifice. As such labour progresses one can ultimately begin to pay more attention to the interior of the temple; the ornaments, furniture, and jewels which contribute to its overall value and effect.

As speculative Freemasons, each of us are sworn to be builders of ourselves and of other men. We must be active builders; skilled craftsmen labouring on our personal temples of life. In this sense, we must all take great care to labour in a positive rather than a negative context. I am reminded of the following verse published in the "ANTIEN NEWS"(Surrey B.C.):

"I watched them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town,
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and the sidewall fell,
I asked the foreman: 'Are those men skilled?
And the men you'd hire if you had to build?'
He gave a laugh and sad: 'No indeed!
Just common labour is all I need.
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What builders have taken a year to do!'
And I thought to myself as I went my way,
Which of these roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who works with care?

Measuring my life by the rule and square?
Am I shaping my deed to a well made plan,
Patiently doing the best I can?

Or am I a wrecker who walks the town,
Content with the labour of tearing down?"

Brethren, may we all be builders!

I hope that this paper has provided to you a perspective on speculative Freemasonry that illustrates the application of some of the elements of our ritual into our daily lives. Let each of us remember and apply our working tools so as to best progress toward our ultimate Masonic goal ... to be happy ourselves, and to communicate that happiness to others.

1 Walter L. Wilmshurst. *The Meaning of Masonry*. Bell Publishing Company, 1980: 182.

2 Fulghum, Robert. *All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Villard Books, New York, 1989.