

# From Whence Came You and Whither Are You Going

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A reading from the Book of Exodus (32:7—14; NRSV):

*The LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation."*

*But Moses implored the LORD his God, and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, "I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heavens, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on this people.*

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On his Masonic examination the candidate is asked, "Whence came you?" and the Inquisitor hears "From the Holy Lodge of the Saint John at Jerusalem." Then the candidate is asked, "Whither came you to do?" The Inquisitor hears "To learn to subdue my passions and improve myself in Masonry."

"Whence came you and whither are you going?" is a profound question for anyone. I remember the night I was raised. After asking for "Light" three times, hours of coaching, two examinations, I was welcomed to the East to speak to the brethren. But, the cupboard was bare – I had a "Lost Word" and an insatiable thirst for Masonic Light. I really did not know what "Light" was or where to find it; and the lodge brethren were not very helpful as their attention was focused on making more Master Masons.

Daily the question "Whence came you?" is asked by Masons without the slightest thought as to its real meaning. Who can answer that question? Who has ever answered it? Equally baffling the companion question, "Whither are you going?" Simple as these questions appear, the answers require strict search into the depths of Freemasonry's history and Ancient Landmarks; a systematic examination of the various philosophies, religions, theology, and mythologies; and a dedicated analysis of the practice of symbolism. The questions lie at the foundation of all man's thinking and activities – they are purely utilitarian questions.

In his *World Wide Words* Newsletter, Michael Quinion, British author and lecturer who advises on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, provided "a brief look at historical sources shows "from whence" has been in common usage since the thirteenth century. It was used by Shakespeare (Sonnet 48: "From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part"), Daniel Defoe (in the opening of *Robinson Crusoe*: "He got a good estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade, lived afterwards at York; from whence he had married my

mother"), Charles Dickens (in *A Christmas Carol*: "He began to think that the source and secret of this ghostly light might be in the adjoining room, from whence, on further tracing it, it seemed to shine"), Mark Twain (in *Innocents Abroad*: "He traveled all around, till at last he came to the place from whence he started"), and in the King James Bible (Psalm 121: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help")."<sup>1</sup>

"Historical events and the facts that surround them are often obscured by the mists of time. They are also more difficult to interpret when they have become encrusted with myths and legends. That has been, and continues to be, the greatest difficulty in attempting to decipher the arcane, symbolically or emblematically crypt, allegorical, and even sometimes unwritten history of Freemasonry. Folklore, legend, and mythology have their place; they are relevant and important aspects of civilizations and culture. But they are not the same as history. Freemasonry . . . must be viewed in this wider context to be fully understood."<sup>2</sup>

## Old Masonic Manuscripts

There are some 131 Masonic Manuscripts important to the emergence of Freemasonry. Most apply to the *Ancient Landmarks* and *Old Charges or Constitutions* of Freemasonry. Landmarks are a set of principles Freemasons claim to be both ancient and unchangeable precepts of Masonry. Albert Pike said of the Landmarks: "The fundamental principles of the Ancient Operative Masonry were few and simple, and they were not called landmarks. Each lodge was independent of every other, and there was no superior authority over all. Each was composed of Apprentices and Fellowcrafts. Each had its Master and Wardens, and these were elected by vote of all the members. The ancient charges show by what principles the relations of those of the fellowship to each other were regulated; and these

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<sup>1</sup> World Wide Words, <http://www.worldwidewords.org>, Michael Quinion, January 2013

<sup>2</sup> Richard A. Rutyna & Peter C. Stewart, *The History of Freemasonry in Virginia*, University Press of America, Inc, Lanham Maryland, Published for the Grand Lodge A.F. & A.M. of Virginia, 1998, p1

may not improperly be said to have been the 'landmarks' of the Craft."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps no more may be said about them with certainty than they *were those essential principles* on which the old simple Freemasonry was built, and without which it would not have been Freemasonry, the organization of the Craft into Lodges, the requisites for admission into Fellowship, and the methods of government established into the beginning. *There is no common agreement in regard to what are not Landmarks.*"<sup>4</sup>

Since each Grand Lodge is a self-governing body, and there is no single body exercising authority over the whole of Freemasonry, issues of "regularity" are judged within the context of which Masonic Landmarks apply within their own definitions – the interpretations of the Masonic Landmark principles can and do vary. Different Masonic jurisdictions do have different Landmarks. In the 1950s the *Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America* upheld three "Ancient Landmarks":<sup>5</sup>

- Monotheism — an unalterable and continuing belief in God.
- The Volume of the Sacred Law — an essential part of the furniture of the Lodge.
- Prohibition of the discussion of Religion and Politics (within the lodge).

Most of the *Old Charges* outline the history of Masonry tracing its origins to a biblical or classical root; enumerate a set of regulations; and specify the responsibilities of its various degrees. They come down to us from the 14th century in the form of handwritten paper and parchment rolls (Appendix A<sup>6</sup>), as well as their legends, rules and regulations. They originated in 1390 through 1714 and most are in the British Museum in London, England, or in the archives of Masonic Lodges. Masonic historians have carefully and critically studied the arcane Olde English wording of these Old Masonic Manuscripts and they have

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<sup>3</sup> Albert Pike, *Iowa Proceedings*, 1888, Page 156

<sup>4</sup> Otis V. Jones, Jr., *Landmarks of Freemasonry*, Bannockburn Council No. 125, *Miscellanea*, Volume XII, Part Three, Grand Council, Allied Masonic Degrees, 1984

<sup>5</sup> *Commission on Information for Recognition of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America*, 1950

<sup>6</sup> *List of Existing Manuscripts*, The Masonic Trowel, retrieved October 09, 2014

been written about for years - they form the basis of modern Masonic Constitutions and therefore each Grand Lodge's jurisprudence.

Of the Old Masonic Manuscripts of major interest, four directly apply to the evolution of Freemasonry's York Legend:

*Halliwell Manuscript* [circa 1390] – also known as the Regius Poem, is the oldest Masonic manuscript. It consists of 64 pages containing 794 verses of poetry laying down the moral principles and duties governing Masons and stone cutters. The document starts by evoking Euclid of Alexandria and his work in geometry in Egypt and elsewhere. The significance of the document as relating to Freemasonry was not realized until it was featured in a paper entitled *On the Introduction of Freemasonry into England* presented by James Orchard Halliwell, a non-Mason, in the 1838-39 sessions of the *Royal Society of Antiquaries*. The text of the document stated King Athelstan brought Freemasonry to England in 926; some believe the Regius Poem was the basis of the Book of Constitutions adopted by the General Assembly held at York.

*Cooke Manuscript* [circa 1490] – next to the Regius Poem, is the oldest Masonic manuscript. Like the Regius, the Cooke Manuscript is in rhyme but, after an opening prayer, it introduced the Seven Liberal Arts, giving precedence to Geometry, which equates with Freemasonry. Then the manuscript provides an outlined "history" of Masonry, tracing its origins to a biblical or classical root. The second section of the document forms a Book of Charges and, from the style of writing, the author of the manuscript was probably a Mason.

*Dowland Manuscript* [circa 1500] – was first printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1815, by James Dowland. This document's history is similar to that of the Cooke manuscript, then it declares Masonry diffuses from the Temple of Solomon and enters Saint Alban, one of four named martyrs from the Roman Britain era. Masonry suffers in wars after Alban's death but was restored under the reign King

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Athelstan, whose son, a geometrician, obtained a charter for an annual assembly of masons in the City of York.

*Grand Lodge No. 1 Manuscript* [circa 1600] – is a roll of parchment nine feet long and five inches wide. It tells the same tale as the Dowland Manuscript with some minor changes in names of the characters.

The other Old Manuscripts have a standard form based on the York Legend and the requirement that all new candidates for admission be sworn to the Old Charges on the Bible. That requirement meant that every Masonic Lodge should have its own manuscript. Over 100 of the Old Manuscripts survived from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries until the practice and their use died out. Most have been clumsy attempts to deal with the absence of Athelstan's son, Edwin, from any historical record. Differences do occur in specifics of the Masonic Charges and the manner of taking the oath. Some of those Old Lodge Manuscripts of minor interest are:

<i>Landsdowne Manuscript</i> [circa 1560]	<i>Harleian Manuscript, No. 2054</i> [circa 1625]
<i>Grand Lodge Manuscript</i> [circa 1583]	<i>Sloane Manuscript, No. 3848</i> [1646]
<i>Sloane Manuscript, No. 3323</i> [1659]	<i>Harleian Manuscript, No. 1942</i> [circa 1660]
<i>Aitcheson-Haven Manuscript</i> [circa 1666]	<i>Edinburgh-Kilwinning Manuscript</i> [circa 1670]
<i>York Manuscript, No. 5</i> [circa 1670]	<i>York Manuscript, No. 6</i> [circa 1670]
<i>Lodge of Antiquity Manuscript</i> [1686]	<i>York Manuscript, No. 2</i> [1693]
<i>Alnwick Manuscript</i> [1701]	<i>York Manuscript No. 4</i> [1704]
<i>Papworth Manuscript</i> [circa 1714]	

Before leaving a review of Masonic Manuscripts it is prudent to say something about Anderson's Constitutions of 1723 and the Ahiman Rezon of 1756.

James Anderson [circa 1679-1739] was a Scottish minister and author born and educated in Aberdeen, Scotland. In 1710, he was appointed minister of the Presbyterian Church on Swallow Street in London, England. The Moderns Grand Lodge of England was established in 1717 but did not find it necessary to possess a Constitution for some time. In 1721, Anderson, Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of England, was commissioned to write the history of Freemasonry in England. His work was published in 1723 as the *Constitutions of the Free-Masons*. Although there have been several reformed editions, Anderson's *Constitutions of 1723* was the basis of Modern Freemasonry and the foundation of its operation.

*Ahiman Rezon*<sup>7</sup>, or the *Book of Constitutions*, was written by Laurence Dermott, Grand Secretary of the Antient Grand Lodge of England, and published in 1756. By the time of the union of the Antients and Moderns in 1813, there were eight editions of the *Book of Constitutions*. The major difference between *Ahiman Rezon* and Anderson's *Constitutions* must do with God and Religion: during his tenure as a Freemason, a Mason is obliged to firmly worship God, keep His sacred Book, respect the Church's dignitaries and ministers, and forgo the irreligious path of the libertine, nor forbade joining with Atheists and Deisms. Later revisions of the *Ahiman Rezon* were taken largely from Anderson's *Constitutions*. Many American Grand Lodges have derived their existence and authority from Demott's *Book of Constitutions* and the three Hebrew words in the Ahiman Rezon: *ahim* (brothers), *manah* (to prepare), and *ratzon* (the will of law).

## Masonic Legends and Theories

Legend is from the Latin *legendus*, meaning to be read; it is a non-historical or unverifiable story handed by tradition from earlier times and popularly accepted as historical. Legends are told in generations to mostly teach certain lessons of faith, trust,

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<sup>7</sup> Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, Volume I, Macoy Publishing and Masonic Supply Company, Inc., New York, New York, 1966 pages 40-44

loyalty and other virtues.<sup>8</sup> Myth is from the Greek word mythos meaning a story or tale rooted in religion or folk belief. Myths usually involve gods, heroes and humans and are attempts to explain creation, divinity, or religion, account for natural phenomena. or chronicle the adventures of hero.<sup>9</sup>

Freemasonry has been defined to be "a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols," and the legends of Freemasonry constitute a considerable and a very important part of its ritual. Freemasonry gives us two communication modes to convey information on or within the Craft. The first are symbols – material, representing something having inherent value. The other is legends – mental representation of human truth.<sup>10</sup>

Both are important parts of Masonic ritual; teach the Craft's traditions: and educating Master Masons. "The wide use of symbols in Freemasonry is the characteristic that distinguishes it from all other organizations"<sup>11</sup> and is beyond the bounds of this paper, but there are two legends relevant to *Whence Came You*.

**The Legend of York** – "This craft came into England, as I you say, in time of good King Athelstane's day; he made then both hall and even bower, and high temples of great honour, to disport him in both day and night, and to worship his God with all his might. This good lord loved this craft full well, and purposed to strengthen it every del (part), for divers faults that in the craft he found; he sent about into the land after all the masons of the craft, to come to him full even straghtfe (straight), for to amend these defaults all by good counsel, if it might fall. An assembly then he could let make of divers lords in

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, page 573

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, page 573

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, page 573

<sup>11</sup> Alex Horne, 33°, *Sources of Masonic Symbolism*, Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Company, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, for the Missouri Lodge of Research, 1981, p. vii



their state, dukes, earls, and barons also, knights, squires and many mo (more), and the great burgesses of that city, they were there all in their degree; there were there each one algate (always), to ordain for these masons' estate, there they sought by their wit, how they might govern it; fifteen articles they there sought, And fifteen points there they wrought . . ."<sup>12</sup>

The Legend of York has been crucially studied in the *Regius Poem* for years and, notwithstanding its many defects and errors, has been accepted, by the Craft, as the truthful history of Freemasonry. "Every Grand Lodge beholden the *Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America* is lineal descendant of the 926 York Assembly of Masons."<sup>13</sup>

**The Hiramic Legend**<sup>14</sup> – Hiram Abif, an allegorical figure in Masonic ritual, is referred to the King of Tyre as the "Widow's Son", and figuratively the Master of the Construction of King Solomon's Temple. The Hiramic Legend was not used when modern Freemasonry started in 1717, but by 1730 it was the central part of the Master Mason ritual. Today it remains the heart of the ritual and is used to teach Masonic lessons.

The drama of Hiram Abif is ritualistic and is interested in the clash of forces, the crises and fates of the human spirit. But the ritualistic drama was not explained at the end of the degree because it is impossible for one man to explain the tragedy of Hiram Abif to another – each man must learn the explanation of the Masonic lessons presented to him.

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<sup>12</sup> The *Halliwell (Regius Poem) Manuscript*, circa 1390, lines 61-86, reprinted from *The Builder*, September 1923 by the Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, March 06, 2006

<sup>13</sup> York Rite Sovereign College of North America Ritual *Manual of Instruction for the Order Knight of York*, 1957, page 3

<sup>14</sup> George S. Draffen, *The Hiramic Legend*, The Short Talk Bulletin, Volume 6, No. 10, The Masonic Service Association of the United States, October 1989

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Brother George S. Draffen, Scottish Masonic Scholar and Author, said: "In all his study and study of drama, he had never met tragedy so real, so sublime, as magnificent as the legend of Hiram. The origination of the Hiram drama is not known but it was probably a reworking of some medieval mystery play in the early Eighteenth Century by someone with an education and philosophical attainment of a man like Dr. John Theophilus Desagulier or other Rosicrucian adept. It is a mistake to consider the Hiram Legend as history, but when we work in the mysteries of Freemasonry, we must make it truly sublime."<sup>15</sup>

"The first record of the third degree being conferred was in London in 1724 – the Hiram Legend was probably not part of the ritual at that time. Anderson's Constitutions of 1723 make no mention of the tragedy, but fifteen years later, in the second edition of the Constitutions of 1738, the three ruffians had killed the Prince of Architects. So, the Hiram Legend became a part of the Masonic Traditions between 1723 and 1738."<sup>16</sup>

"During the last 300 years numerous theories have been proposed regarding the origin of Masonry. Many have offered no historical evidence to support some preconceived religious or political ideal. Others have been proposed in an effort to invest Freemasonry with qualities and nobility far in excess of the simple truth. According to Allen Roberts (Author and Virginia Freemason), at least twenty-four basic theories concerning the origins of Freemasonry have been proposed at some time. These theories tend to work around several basic themes and be grouped into four basic categories: Ancient Origin, Chivalric Origin, "Ex Nihilo" or Out of Nothing Origin, and Operative Origin. Each of these categories supports a number of theories, some of which are conflicting:<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Conrad Hahn, P.C.M., *The Importance of the Legend of Hiram Abiff*, Masonic World, retrieved September 30, 2014

<sup>16</sup> Chakravarthy S. Madhavan, PM, *The Hiram Legend: Whence & Wherefore*, Pietre-Stones Review of Freemasonry, retrieved September 25, 2014

<sup>17</sup> *Theories on the Origins of Freemasonry*, Grand Lodge of Texas, retrieved October 10, 2014, pages 1-2

**Ancient Origin Theories** – Ancient theories which attempt to create a link between Freemasonry and some ancient period, ancient body, or ancient philosophy. It points out similarities between Freemasonry and the philosophy and symbolism by the ancient order. While it is most interesting, the ancient Egyptian mystery schools, the Essenes, the Pythagoreans, the Roman Collegia, or the builders of King Solomon's Temple, there is absolutely no evidence to support, or substantiate any claims to an origin of antiquity. While Freemasonry has borrowed and absorbed a great deal from the Bible and ancient orders, as well as other social influences, to create today's Masonic ritual, there is no evidence that specifically connects Masonry to any ancient origin.

**Chivalric Origin Theories** – Chivalric theories attempt to develop a link between Freemasonry to some medieval order of knights. This category includes theories revolving around the Knights of Malta or the Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Jerusalem or Knights Templar. These theories did not begin to originate until twenty years after the formation of the Grand Lodge of England. These theories speculate that many of the Knights Templar went into hiding or secrecy in 1307 when the Catholic Church began to persecute them into extinction and these underground cells began to resurface around 1640 as Freemasonry. However, there is no evidence the Knights Templar, or any other group, went into hiding, much less stayed together as a secret society for three hundred years to emerge as Freemasonry.

**"Ex Nihilo" or Out of Nothing Origin Theories** – This category of theories begin to emerge in the literature. They essentially assert Freemasonry is descended from the end of the sixteenth century as learned gentlemen began to spontaneously organization themselves into lodges. John Hamill (Author and English Freemason) maintains Freemasonry developed from the dining clubs that were popular in London during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. While Hamill's theory has some interest, as London Freemasonry appears to have grown out of the public houses and not the guild halls, it also seems to ignore

much of the evidence outside of London proper regarding the development of Freemasonry in Scotland, England and France. It is in the offhand dismissal of this evidence which make these theories suspect.

**Operative Origin Theories** – The last category of theories proposes that Freemasonry originated out of the operative stonemasons of the Middle Ages. These theories are often referred to as Operative Origin or Transitional Theories. That is to say, modern Masonry developed or evolved from actual, operative groups of working masons into lodges or groups of speculative Freemasons. This has been the traditional view on the origins of Freemasonry ever since Anderson's Constitutions of 1723. Anderson, however, implied that Freemasonry somehow developed from the English stonemasons of the Middle Ages, yet they hardly existed prior to 1717. However, many researchers have evidence from Scotland, France, and England that supports the transitional theory of Freemasonry descending from operative lodges of stonemasons.

"The general opinion is that as the great building era began to come to a close in the late seventeenth century, the guilds of working masons began to experience a decline in membership. These members supported the guilds through fees they paid. When new men joined the guild, they were entered as apprentices to a master craftsman, which required that they pay a fee, and, in many cases, furnish a banquet for the guild members. After the apprentice had learned the trade and demonstrated his mastery of the building arts, he was once again required to pay a fee and host a banquet as his name was entered on the roles as a master craftsman. With declining work and membership, the guilds began to wane. In an effort to stave off extinction, they accepted non-working members who would pay fees for the privilege of being a member. Slowly these non-working members, or speculatives, took over the lodges and Freemasonry was born. These theories generally have the best supporting documentation, though there seems to be considerable disagreement on exactly where Freemasonry began or why these non-working members wanted to associate with actual masons or builders. While

the operative origin of Freemasonry will continue to come under attack from many sides and for many reasons, it is still the best theory based on the historical evidence."<sup>18</sup>

## Masonic Esotericism

The origins of Freemasonry are not known with any degree of certainty. And when it comes to the origins of Freemasonry, most Masonic scholars can be divided into two schools of thought:

The dominant Authentic School of Masonic history – those who believe the rites, rituals and moral teachings were derived from speculation into the forms and workings of operative masons; and

The minority Esoteric School — those who claim Freemasonry's origin is in the rites of ancient Egypt, the Knights Templars, the Rosicrucians, and so on.

The simple truth is that we do not know where Freemasonry originated, but the weight of objective, historical evidence tends to support the Authentic School, but Freemasonry has a strong esoteric thread that cannot be accounted for by adherents of the Authentic School.

There are three kinds of Masonry: Operative Masonry (stonemasons and brick masons who make their living cutting and laying stone or brick); Speculative Masonry (men who seek to improve their morality through the lessons and rituals of Freemasonry); and Esoteric Masonry (men traveling a spiritual path who seek to learn more about themselves and the Deity).

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, page 2

**"What is Masonic Esotericism?"** The word "esoteric" by itself simply means something which is understood only by a select or chosen inner group. Things like automotive repair or tax law might be called esoteric. Freemasons have used the word in a different and more traditional sense. It turns out that esotericism is nothing new. The word itself comes to us from the Greek word *esôterikos* (ἑσωτερικός), "inner thing," and is found in many ancient writings to refer to the inner teachings of a philosophical or spiritual group. Freemasons have historically used the term in three ways, denoting:

1. Any of the elements of the Masonic ritual or lectures which are considered secret (i.e., matters reserved for the confines of a tiled lodge, or material that is not "monitorial," as American Masons might say).
2. Any of the meanings which seem to be implicit, more by design than accident, within the Masonic symbolism, ritual and lectures.
3. Any of the subjects generally included under the rubric of "Western Esotericism," including kabbalah, alchemy, hermeticism and other mystical pursuits which gained in popularity during the Renaissance period."<sup>19</sup>

The fact is that Freemasonry has always had an esoteric fabric: the first three degrees of Freemasonry have physical levels as they relate to movements within the degrees; mental levels as they relate to the moral and intellectual aspects of the degrees; and spiritual levels as they relate to what is being taught by the degrees.

Albert Pike spent the latter part of his life immersing himself deeply in the study of the symbolism of the Blue Degrees (*Albert Pike's Esoterika - the Symbolism of the Blue Degrees of Freemasonry*).

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<sup>19</sup> Shawn Eyer, *Defining Esotericism from a Masonic Perspective*, The Journal of the Masonic Society, Issue 2, Autumn 2008, pages 16-21

In the Fellowcraft Staircase Lecture, the candidate is made to take three, and five, and seven steps, which compose the staircase. When the candidate reached the seven steps the candidate is told they represent the *Seven Liberal Sciences*.

In the Scottish Rite, the 30" Degree, that of the Knight Kadosh, or Knight of the White and Black Eagle, the Master Mason again meets the Seven Liberal Sciences on the double seven-rung ladder. An elaboration and use of the Masonic sciences is one of the pathways the Master Mason must follow for Enlightenment.

The Chamber of Reflection is an old custom used throughout history for those preparing to enter upon a new and important phase in life. It is one of Freemasonry's most alluring, thought provoking and esoteric rites. Before initiation, the profane enters the Chamber of Reflection, a dimly light somber room, and there he contemplates his past and future and is asked for his testament toward human existence: the Supreme Being; Himself; and Humankind.



**V.I.T.R.I.O.L.**

The symbols of salt, mercury and sulfur are also provided for contemplation. Salt symbolizes the body, mercury his soul and sulfur his spirit.

*"Vista Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem."* Translated: "Visit the interior of the earth and there, by rectification, shalt thou discover the hidden stone."

Alludes to the search for and accomplishment of one's *Opus Magnum*, or great work, and what one must find.

**V.I.T.R.I.O.L.**

Just as each candidate for Masonry must enter into a world of isolation, to be alone with their own thoughts, and to contemplate the effects of their actions on themselves and others, each of us has the right and obligation to create for ourselves a personal Chamber of Reflection, into which Chamber of Reflection we can retire daily for contemplation and meditation. In all spiritual, esoteric, mystical,

and religious traditions, it is common and encouraged for practitioners, or 'laborers' in Masonic terms, to have a personal place for meditation, prayer, and ritual — the three tools the Apprentice must learn if they are to commune with the Master Within.<sup>20</sup>

Use of the Chamber of Reflection in Symbolic Lodges in the United States reportedly fell by the wayside after the Morgan Affair, but it survives in some of the appendant bodies. It is used, and in some cases it is mandatory, in some jurisdiction in the United States (New England, Louisiana, Michigan), Canada, England, Central and South America, the French Rite, and Brazil Rite.

**The Elu:** The story of the Elu (Elected) is the story of the Fellow Crafts after the discovery of the murder of Grand Master Hiram Abif in the Second Section of the Third Degree. It is the story of the Elu of the Nine (Elect of Nine; Elected Knights of Nine; Master Elected of Nine), the Elu of the Fifteen (Illustrious Elected of Fifteen), and the Elu of Twelve (Prince Ameth). It is how Albert Pike took the Second Section of the Sublime Master Mason Degree and weaved the Hiram Legend for the Scottish Rite Lodge of Perfection complete with points of departure for reflection. The story of the Elu is at the heart of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, because Masonry is not merely speculative, nor is it merely theoretical, rather it is experimental.

The *Elu of the Nine* faced a moral war within themselves, to restrain their frail human nature or espousing pursuit of the assassins. They learn fear and ignorance are the two major enemies which enslave men.

The *Elu of the Fifteen* is a continuation of the Ninth Degree: it is devoted to religious and political toleration and the enlightenment of the mind of soul. The rosettes above the South, North, and East gates (arches) of the Temple represent the ruffians who murdered Grand Master Abif and symbolize Ignorance, Tyranny,

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<sup>20</sup> Mark Stavish, *The Chamber of Reflection*, retrieved October 19, 2014



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and Fanaticism. This degree teaches us to be tolerant and respect the opinions of others. Freedoms of political and spiritual ideologies should be shared by all.

The *Elu of the Twelve* dramatizes the capture, trials, and fates of the three assassins of Grand Master Abif and illustrates the reward conferred by King Solomon on twelve of the fifteen Masters who brought the assassins to justice. Those twelve, chosen by random ballot, are constituted Governors over the twelve tribes of Israel, and advanced to the rank Princes Ameth, meaning a "true man – just, fair, sincere, faithful, fearing God." This degree emphasizes that life is a school for moral and spiritual training; that the entire lesson is a course in virtue, happiness, and a future existence.

As the Elects attain a degree of Masonic virtues, they attained a sense of humanity. The Elu lessons should be seen as directional milestones for a Mason's lifetime journey on the highway of life: purity of Honor, Integrity and Duty.

*"To make honor and duty the steady beacon-lights that shall guide your life-vessel over the stormy seas of time; to do that which it is right to do, not because it will ensure you success, or bring with it a reward, or gain the applause of men, or be "the best policy," more prudent or more advisable; but because it is right, and therefore ought to be done; to war incessantly against error, intolerance, ignorance, and vice, and yet to pity those who err, to be tolerant even of intolerance, to teach the ignorant, and to labor to reclaim the vicious—these are some of the duties of a Mason."<sup>21</sup>*

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<sup>21</sup> *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, Prepared for The Supreme Council, 33°, S.J., USA, 1962, page 219

## Conclusion

The question *Whence come you and whither are you going* is the process of moving from the state of a Rough Ashlar, the point of initiation, to that of a Perfect Ashlar. It has to do with human transformation and change. The history of Freemasonry is twined through both the Authentic and the Esoteric Schools – their departure is not the point of initiation, but on what the man does with his life after being raised to the Sublime Degree both within the Craft and personally. The Sublime Master Mason Degree is not to be a finishing lesson; rather a directional sign on the highway of life wherein man learns to find a series of interpretation, to have his faculties awakened to the vistas of sight, sound and ideas to which he can constantly return for new meanings and fresh understanding. Each man must seek Masonry for himself; each must work out his own understanding, taking as much usable knowledge as possible from others, rejecting the rest, and building his own interpretations.

James Baldwin (August 1924 — December 1987) American author and civil rights activist once said: "If you know from whence you came, there are absolutely no limitations to where you can go."

Let me leave you with a reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (12:1-8; NRSV)

*I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have any members, and not all the members have the same*

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*function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.*

God said, "*Your task is to build a better world.*"

I answered, "*How? There's nothing I can do.*"

God replied, "*Just build a better you.*" (Anonymous)

*So Mote It Be!*

## List Of Existing Manuscripts

This list appeared for the first time in *Co-Mason*, volume. 16, January 1924

<b>Manuscript Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Where Held</b>	<b>Description</b>
Halliwell or Regius	Late 14th Century	British Museum	Vellum, small 40, 64 pp.
Cooke	Early 15th Century	British Museum	Vellum, in original oak binding
Grand Lodge, No. 1	1583	Grand Lodge of England	Parchment roll, 9 ft. long, 5 in. broad, in four stripes pasted together. Dated 25th December, 1583
Lansdowne No. 98 Art. 48	Early 17th Century	British Museum	Stout paper, 4 sheets covering 7 folios
York, No. 1	1st half of 17th Century	York Lodge No. 236	Parchment, 4 sheets formerly a roll. 7 ft. long, 7 in. broad
Phillips, No. 1	1st half of 17th Century	The Rev. J. E. Fenwick, Cheltenham	Parchment book, stitched in parchment, some words rubricated
Phillips, No. 2	1st half of 17th Century	The Rev. J. E. Fenwick, Cheltenham	Parchment book, A copy of No. 6

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Wood	1610	Worcester Masonic Library	Parchment book, some letters illuminated; curious dated title
Sloane, MS. No. 3848	1646	British Museum	Paper. 4 to 13 pp., written by Edward Sankey, dated October 16th, 1646
Sloane, MS. No. 3323	1659	British Museum	Paper. 6 pp., signed Thomas Martin, dated 1659
Harleian MS. No. 2054 (Randel Holme's MS.)	2nd half of 17th Century	British Museum	Folio of 6/5 pp. written on 4 leaves of paper, 12 in. x 8 in.
Grand Lodge No. 2	2nd half of 17th Century	Grand Lodge of England	Parchment roll, 9 ft. long, almost 7 in. broad
Harleian MS. No. 1942	2nd half of 17th Century	British Museum	Paper, both sides of 20 pp.
Lechmere	2nd half of 17th Century	Worcester Masonic Library	Parchment roll
Buchanan	2nd half of 17th Century	Grand Lodge of England	Parchment roll, strips sewn together. 7.5 ft. long, 8.5 in. wide
Kilwinning	2nd half of 17th Century	Mother Kilwinning Lodge No. 0	Paper - small quarto, a Lodge record
Ancient Stirling	2nd half of 17th Century	Previously held with Ancient Stirling Lodge No. 30, Scotland now it resides with Masonic Temple at Stirling, Scotland	Parchment mounted on cardboard, 20 in. long and 2 ft. wide, framed
Aitcheson-Haven	1666	Grand Lodge of Scotland	Engrossed in the Minute Book of the Operative Lodge dated May 29th, 1666
Aberdeen	1670	Aberdeen Lodge No. 1 ter.	Paper, a Lodge record
Melrose No. 2	1670	Melrose Lodge No. 1 bis.	Paper roll 5 ft. long, 1 ft. wide, copied from an earlier MS. by A. M., December, 1674
Stanley	1677	West Yorkshire Masonic Library	Parchment roll, 10 ft. long, 7 in. wide
Carson	1677	E. T. Carson, Cincinnati, USA	Parchment roll, 7 ft. long, 7.5 in. wide

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William Watson	1687	West Yorkshire Masonic Library	Parchment roll, 12 ft. long by 7.5 in. wide. Six slips stitched together. It bears the name of Edward Thompson, 1687. This MS. has a rough drawing of the Masons Company's Arms, a plain chevron between 3 towers.
Thomas W. Tew	2nd half of 17th Century	West Yorkshire Masonic Library	Parchment roll, 6.5 ft. long, 6 in. wide
Inigo Jones	2nd half of 17th Century	Worcester Masonic Library	Paper Folio. The Frontispiece is a very century curious drawing of Masons at work, with the words, "Inigo Jones delin".
Antiquity	1686	Lodge of Antiquity, acting by Immemorial Constitution, London, No. 2	Parchment roll, 9 ft. long, 11 in. wide. Illuminated heading containing the Royal Arms, with the initials I2R (James II. Rex) supported by the Arms of the City of London and those of the Masons company, viz.: sable, on a chevron between 3 towers, a pair of compasses extended.
Colonel Clerke	1686	Grand Lodge of England	Two parchment skins fastened together. 5 ft. long, 13 in. wide. MS. has a finely illuminated heading, containing the Royal Arms on either side of which is J2ndR-1686, supported by the City Arms and those of the Masons Company, a plain chevron and three Towers.
Embleton	2nd half of 17th Century	West Yorkshire Masonic Library	Vellum, six strips sewn together; 12 ft. long, 5 in. wide. Portions at end seem to have been added.
Weistell	1693	West Yorkshire Masonic Library	Paper, six pieces stitched into roll, 7 ft. long, 6in. wide, signed Henry Kipling, 1693

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York, No. 4	1693	York Lodge No. 236	Paper roll, 10.5 ft. long by 6 in. wide, written by Mark Kypling
Hope	2nd half of 17th Century	Lodge of Hope, No. 302	Paper roll mounted on parchment, 6 ft. long, 6 in. wide
York, No. 5	2nd half of 17th Century	York Lodge No. 236	Paper roll, 7.5 ft. long, 8 in. wide
York, No. 6	2nd half of 17th Century	York Lodge No. 236	Parchment roll
Colne, No. 1	2nd half of 17th Century	Colne Lodge No. 116	Paper roll with rough sketch of Masons Arms, plain chevron and towers
Clapham	2nd half of 17th Century	West Yorkshire Masonic Library	On 6 sheets of paper 8 in. by 7.5 in., evidently sewn together in book form at some time.
Dumfries, Kilwinning, No. 1	2nd half of 17th Century	Dumfries Kilwinning Lodge No. 55	Paper, 3 sheets, 15 in. by 12in.
Hughan	2nd half of 17th Century	West Yorkshire Masonic Library	Parchment, 5 strips 8.5 ft. long, 6 in. wide over roll
Dautesy	2nd half of 17th Century	R. Dautesy, Manchester	Paper book, 21 pp.
Dumfries, Kilwinning, No. 2	2nd half of 17th Century	Dumfries Kilwinning Lodge No. 53	Paper roll, 3 sheets, 4 ft. long, 7.5 in. wide
Dumfries, Kilwinning, No. 3	2nd half of 17th Century	Dumfries Kilwinning Lodge No. 53	Vellum Roll, 7 strips joined, 14.5 ft. long, 5 & 6 in. wide
Harris, No. 1	2nd half of 17th Century	Bedford Lodge No. 157	Parchment roll, 9 ft. long by 8.5 in. wide
Alnwick	1701	Alderman Robertson, Alnwick	Written on the first 12 pp. of the Record book of the Company and Fellowship of Freemasons, Alnwick. Dated September 29th 1701.
Dumfries, Kilwinning No. 4	1st half of 18th Century	Dumfries Kilwinning Lodge No. 53	Book form, 8 in. by 4 in., formerly a roll.

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