

Ancient & Accepted
Scottish Rite of Freemasonry

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Pasadena Lodge of Perfection
150 North Madison Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91101-1710
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Scottish Rite Calendar
Keep Friday Nights for Scottish Rite

MARCH

Friday, March 4
Council of Kadosh
6:30 P.M. Dinner
8:00 P.M. Stated meeting
8:00 P.M. Women's Association

Monday, March 14 & 21
Band Rehearsal
7:00 P.M. Downbeat
9:00 P.M. Lastbeat

Friday, March 25
Spirit of Hiram
8:00 P.M. Tiled Performance
Refreshments afterward

Saturday, March 26
Saturday Study Group
9:00 A.M. In the Library

*"Wisdom builded her house;
She has heven out her seven pillars."*
Proverbs 9:1



Pasadena Scottish Rite Bulletin

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Change of Address

Please notify the Secretary's Office of your correct mailing address including ZIP CODE when moving. We will notify the Scottish Rite Journal.

Allegiance

The Bodies of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite sitting in the Valley of Pasadena, Orient of California acknowledge and yield allegiance to the Supreme Council (Mother Council of the World) of the Inspector General Knights Commander of the House of the Temple of Solomon of the Thirty-Third and last degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of the United States of America.

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Language Center Contributions "365 Club"

Your most appreciated contributions to the Childhood Language Center may be made in any of several ways. The first being as an undesignated contribution, the second being a contribution designated as applying toward a "365 Club" membership and lastly as applying to either "in Honor of" or as a "Memorial of" anyone you may wish.

Membership in the prestigious "365 Club" requires a contribution of at least \$365.00 in any one calendar year. The contributions may be made in increments, and are accumulative over any given year and when the goal of \$ 365.00 is met, suitable recognition will be published in the Scottish Rite Bulletin. For the year 2008 the "365 Club" program will be retroactive to January 1, 2008 and will be renewed annually.

Ill. James Halladay, 33°, Chairman Language Center Board

Pasadena Scottish Rite Childhood Language Center

150 N. Madison Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101-1710

CONTRIBUTIONS / DONATIONS

\$ _____ .00 In memory of _____
 \$ _____ .00 In honor of _____
 \$ _____ .00 "365 Club" @ \$365/year

Donor Information:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State. Zip: _____

Send Acknowledgement to:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
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Make checks payable to the California Scottish Rite Foundation, Pasadena
 All contributions are tax deductible.

**Dinner Reservations
Stated Meeting Dinner**

Friday, March 4, 2011

Corned Beef and Cabbage

Number of Reservations at \$8.00 Per Person.....

Last Day for reservations: Wednesday, March 2

mary@pasadenascottishrite.org or 626-795-4213

Fish available if requested when making your reservation.

Good Cheer Report

February 4, 2011

G. Martin Wynne, 32° - Bad fall

Herbert Wilkins, 33° - Bad cold

Please take a moment to call upon your distressed brethren.

**Mission Statement of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry
Southern Jurisdiction, USA**

It is the mission of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, Southern Jurisdiction, USA, to improve its members and enhance the communities in which they live by teaching and emulating the principles of Brotherly Love, Tolerance, Charity, and Truth while actively embracing high social, moral, and spiritual values including fellowship, compassion, and dedication to God, family and country.

**Walter L. Ralston, 32° K.C.C.H.
Commander
Council of Kadosh**

Brothers I want to thank each of you for selecting me as your Commander, Council of Kadosh, for 2011. Along with my great group of line Officers, we are looking forward to our year with a lot of enthusiasm, and learning great Masonic principals.



We expect many exciting events starting with our March 4th Stated Meeting with dinner, and wish your support in attendance at all meetings. March 13th will be our greatest support for our own Language Center breakfast.

Many of you know during 1950 in Colorado Scottish Rite Masons initiated a program to assist in Childhood Language Center, and our own Center is included in over 150 plus Centers, and still growing in the northern and southern Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite. Our own Center Started in 1996 and we have supported and assisted with treatments for over 800 children in Pasadena and this is why our Temple has such good support from our Brothers with our Annual Breakfast. We continue to encourage you and your families to come to support this program.

March 19th is our Demolay Meeting for young men between 13 through 21 which will meet for development into good citizens with solid character. Most of these same men will eventually become Blue Lodge Masons and will develop further light.

March 25th our actors and stage crew will present “The Spirit of Hiram” performance for all Blue Lodge Members. Don’t forget your Blue Lodge membership card for admittance.

Finally on the week of March 27th we will travel to Laughlin, Nevada for fun and frolic.

Have a great month Brothers.

The P.R.'s Corner

Ill. Henry H. P. "Herb" Wilkins, 33° G.C.

*Setting America's Clock
The Beginning of Daylight Saving Time*

*Freemasons have played a key role in
promoting the observance of Daylight
Saving Time*



In just a few days, almost all states of the nation will return from Daylight to Standard time in all of the eight time zones covering the United States, from the Atlantic to the Samoa time zones. This is real progress in time uniformity when we realize that century ago there was a bizarre patchwork quilt of more than 56 irregularly shaped time zones in the United States.

The process of time observance has been with humanity from the first day in history when the sun rose in the morning and set in the evening, both happening with different patterns throughout the entire world. Historians have tracked this phenomenon since the day of Masonic Brother Benjamin Franklin, who served as United States Ambassador to France in 1776-78. During his tenure, he suggested the French people set their clock ahead in the summer to make better use of the extra hours of daylight. Franklin's proposal was ignored.

Thus, Brother Franklin failed in his time to achieve any uniformity of time observance. It is reassuring, however, that other Masonic Brothers have since been more successful.

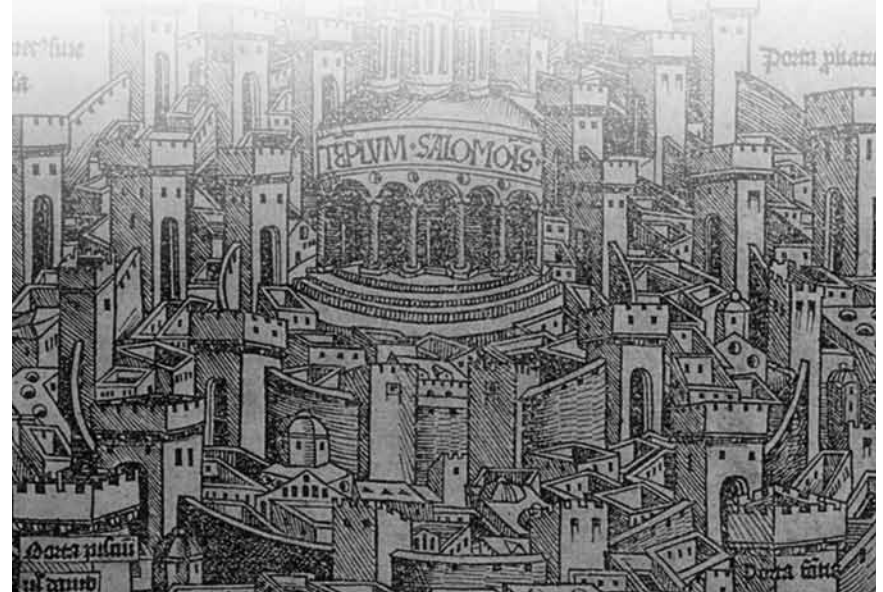
This account leads off with the date on November 18, 1883, when a standardized time regulatory program replaced a befuddling network of local time zones in the United States. This new program was established by the nation's railroads, operating on 78,000 miles of track, to serve their commercial convenience. Some 35 years later, the Standard Time Act of 1918 was enacted by Congress as a wartime legislative measure which set all clocks ahead one hour specified months. After

Witness the tragedy that occurred
at the building of King Solomon's Temple
when it was nearing completion...

The Spirit of Hiram

Friday, March 25, 2011 - 8pm

Pasadena Scottish Rite
150 N. Madison Ave., Pasadena



A TILED PERFORMANCE FOR MASTER MASONS - CURRENT DUES CARD REQUIRED
REFRESHMENTS SERVED AFTERWARD

Childhood Language Center

Contributions Recorded in January 2011

William Miklos, III	Language Center
Mark Breasley	Language Center
Smidt Family Foundation	Language Center
Ionic Composite Lodge No. 520	Language Center
Richard Mosher	Richard Mecham
Old West Demolay	Language Center
W. Bob Turner	Language Center
Todd Nicholas	Language Center
Bruce Chubbuck	LeRoi Crandall
San Marino Lodge No. 408	Language Center
Richard Lundine	Michael McLaird
Harry & Shirley Sprague	Michael McLaird
David Patterson	Michael McLaird
Terry & Dave Cotter	Michael McLaird
A. Bruce Ivie	Michael McLaird
W. Bob Turner	Michael McLaird
Ronald J. Stein	Michael McLaird
The Hortman family	Michael McLaird
James & Brenda Jones	Michael McLaird
James & Brenda Jones	Jan Schofield
James Larson	Michael McLaird
Ronne McLaird	Michael McLaird

Please Remember
the Pasadena Scottish Rite
Language Center
in your will or memoriam

passage of this legislation, the Interstate Commerce Commission adopted regulations incorporating the railroad time zone boundaries. The law was repealed in 1919, revived in 1942 for World War II, then repealed again. Theoretically, the nation was back on Standard Time.

The new public yearning for daylight time was deadlocked until 1961 and in 1962 a National Uniform Time Conference of which Robert E. Redding a Masonic Brother was Vice President/General Counsel of Transportation Association of America (TAA).

Four years of labor were necessary before success resulted. The time Uniformity Committee's goal was accomplished but only after discovering and disclosing that on the 35 mile stretch of highway (Route 2) between Moundsville, V. VA and Steubeville, Ohio every bus driver and his passenger had to endure "Seven time changes".

The final result was that with the Key leadership of Senator Norris Cotton, New Hampshire a Masonic Brother, the Senate passed in 1965 and the House in 1966, the "Uniform Time Act" which was signed into Public Law 89-387 on April 13, 1966 by President Lyndon Johnson.

By June 1967, all states were operating on daylight saving time simultaneously.

Today, Daylight Saving Time begins at 2:00 a.m. the second Sunday in March and ends the first Sunday in November, except for any state that may choose not to go on daylight time at all. This pattern prevails throughout the United States except for Arizona, Hawaii, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the Eastern Time zone portion of Indiana.

Language Center News

Spring is in the air and the language center is buzzing with children. Last month we had forty three children on our case load and completed four hundred and twenty one sessions of therapy. We discharged two children and evaluated two new children who will be enrolled for therapy. Our wait list grows daily as more and more families find their way to our center. The current wait for services is approximately six months. Thank you for your generous donations that allow us to continue to serve the children in our community.

Paschal, Spring Housecleaning, Vernal Equinox & 461 A.D.

by Arthur H. Zabounian, 32° KSA
Librarian

What do all these have in common?

Let us reflect back into the esoteric side of Masonry...

Our Masonic degrees, if applied correctly, will teach us to listen to our inner world.

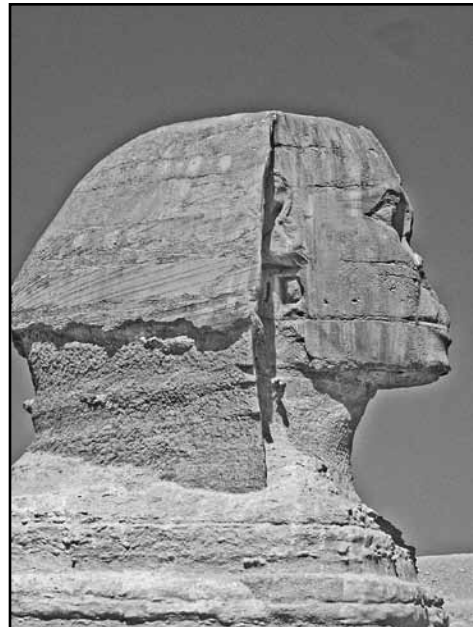
It will refine our senses and emotions. It will awaken us spiritually and provoke our intellect (enlighten us intellectually).

One of the tools that help us in that direction is to master our physical being and have control over our physical needs. One such need is our appetite.

Lent, the start of the Easter (Paschal) observance is a way to subdue that particular passion and discipline our desires towards food.

This year Orthodox Lent will be observed on March 7th and will last for little over 40 days until Easter. (the 40 days is to remind Christians of the time Jesus spent in the desert, fasting).

Two things occur during Lent – prayer and fasting. By prayer we find that equilibrium that helps us keep our spiritual balance. By fasting we abstain from foods that contain products from animals with blood and fish with backbones, as well as other types of food associated with animal by-products. Many give up other nonfood items such as television, the Internet or other things that are of interest to them. In addition to cleansing the body and the spirit, Lent is



Music Notes

Our next concert this year is Friday March 25th at the Pasadena Scottish Rite temple on the auditorium stage at 6:00pm. This is prior to the presentation to The „Spirit of Hiram%. Come early and enjoy. The band has set a goal of one concert a month at your Masonic Lodge for 2011. We know money is tight this year. The good news is there in no monetary charge for your musical program. The band will need six week advance notice that we may clear our calendar. We have appropriate music for all programs. The band would appreciate a follow up on this request from our Ambassadors on their next visit to their Masonic lodge. You may call 626 795-4213 and ask for Don Johansen 33° Band Manager



Women's Association News

We have some people to thank for "rising above and beyond the call of duty". Volunteering to set up tables and decorations for the Installation dinner were Elmer Boomhower, 33°, Eugenia and José Baldonado, 33°, Suesen Halladay, Min Mosher, Virginia Viramontes and Christine Wilkins – Burgess. And for removing decorations afterwards were Suesen and James Halladay, 33°, Dolores and Steve Pashby, 32° KCCH, Eugenia and José Baldonado, 33°. Many thanks to all of you!

Also deserving of praise for bringing their cameras and taking great pictures at this special occasion were Lynda Lockhart, Virginia Barton and Armin Schulhof, 32°. We'll enjoy your photos.

All sweethearts showed up for February 4th Stated Meeting and dinner on Friday. Plans were underway for our "Day at the Races"; scheduled for Saturday, February 19th at Santa Anita Racetrack. The Knights of St. Andrew planned jointly with the Pasadena Woman's Civic League and a great occasion was shared by all who attended. Hope you went home a winner!

The Women's Association has a project underway to assist a high school student on an adventure. Our student, Tomás Morales, was selected by his school to represent it in conjunction with other schools on an educational trip to Australia this summer. It was organized by the Los Angeles Unified School District. You can help him succeed by supporting our efforts.

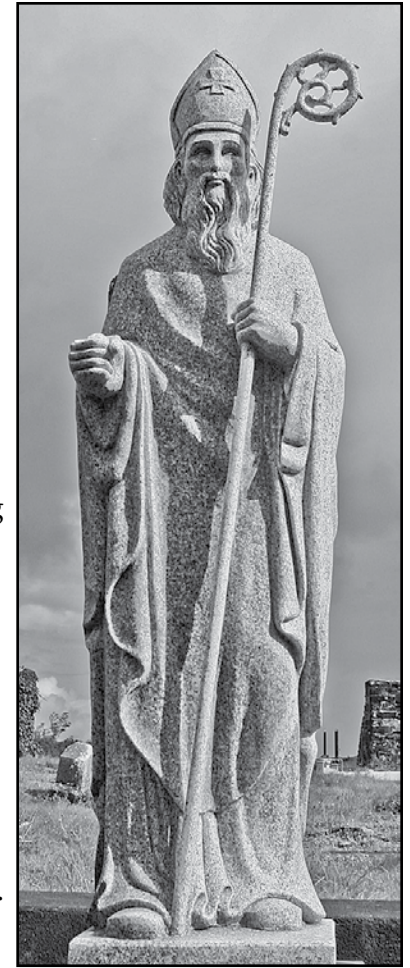


also a traditional time for spring housecleaning.

March 20th also marks the beginning of the spring season, when the sun will cross directly over the earth's equator. This is known as the Vernal Equinox in the Northern Hemisphere (the Autumnal Equinox in the Southern Hemisphere). Translated literally, equinox means "equal night".

It is no coincidence that early Egyptians built the Great Sphinx so that it points directly toward the rising sun on the day of the Vernal Equinox.

And finally, we cannot go through the month of March without remembering Ireland's patron saint, St. Patrick, who used the shamrock to explain the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) to the Irish. St. Patrick died on March 17, 461 A.D. Originally the color associated with St. Patrick's Day was blue...



News of Note

At the recent Annual Meeting of the trustees of the California Scottish Rite Foundation the following was announced: during 2010 there were 14 Language Centers in California and these Centers provided over 37,000 total hours of speech/language services to approximately 600 children per month at a cost over \$3,600,000. There were 775 hours spent evaluating children for the services. 457 children completed their prescribed meetings with the pathologists. The Pasadena Center was a major participant in this great Masonic charity.

Triumph Over Midian

Our Venerable Master has lead the way in seeing to the education of the brothers of the Pasadena Valley for more than a decade in the Reunion Classroom and through our Philosophical Study Group. Now, as Venerable Master of the Pasadena Lodge of Perfection, he's rededicated the Lodge to the study of not only the ritual and history of the Rite, but also to those texts that provide the historical context for our Degrees.

Triumph Over Midian, was written by the author known as A.L.O.E. in 1867. You can find hard backed copies for sale around the internet, as well as a free version in Google Books. The text that you'll read here is taken from the lecture in the third chapter. The lecture, as you will soon discover, mirrors our 15th degree.

From the preface of the Lamplighter Edition:

".. Our familiar characters now engage in such profound personal struggles that the lessons of Gideon and the Midianites jump to the forefront of their consciousness. They learn that the Midianites of the heart trample down our happiness and wreak havoc in our lives - Disappointment, Discontent, Dissension, and Distrust - are foes to be reconed with:

- Disappointment - the intruder who cuts down the green crop of hope, and leaves a famine in the soul.
- Discontent - the thief who robs his slave of all his peace, for peace and Discontent cannot abide in the same soul.
- Dissension - the leader of malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness, who pours gall into the very springs of enjoyment and makes a wilderness of that which might have been as the Garden of Eden.
- Distrust - the most dangerous enemy of all, who presses his iron yoke on the heart and incites paralyzing fear of what the morrow might bring.

The Midianites within must be conquered, and the might which conquers is from God. Gideon had not as yet conquered his foes, but

your nostrils the Breath of Life, and you are "raised from that dead level to a living perpendicular."

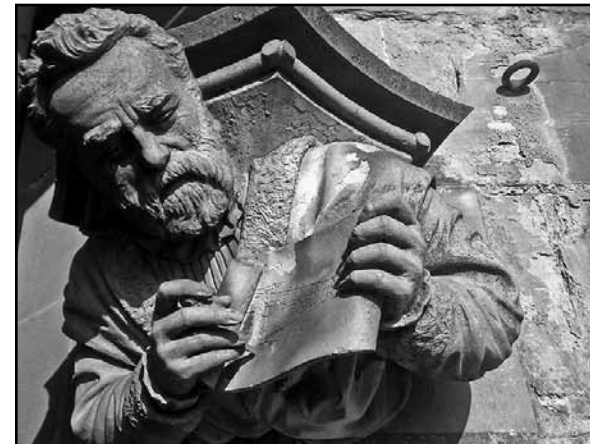
Now that you are "upright" you must set goals for yourself, bringing forth that part of God that is found in all Masons, "a desire to succeed." Therefore, the perpendicular becomes the measurement of your goals, lofty or lowly, all men and Masons must have them. Some set them, others see them set by circumstance, or others. No matter, the Mason lives by his wits, his experience, his responsibilities. How long man has to reach his goal is not in man's perview, for God Himself has set "bounds from which man cannot turn."

How you reach your goal is called by Masons, "your usual avocation" and you find it measured by the same gauge that governs any other man, a twenty-four day that we further divide into three equal parts of eight hours each, Man has no other time than the same twenty four hours that is given to all. Your usual avocations, no matter the area, as long as they are honest, become the hypotenuse. The sum total of your success is equal to the sum totals of your basic ideals (base), plus the sum total of your goal setting, and how hard you work at them.

Finish reading this interesting article by clicking here:

http://arkphagrandlodge.com/pythagorean_theory.htm

Courtesy of the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Jurisdiction of Arkansas, F.&A.M.



supposedly discovered were given to Moses on Mount Sinai when God gave Moses not only the law, but a “pattern of life.” It is hard for the finite mind to accept the idea that this formula could be used years before Moses came on the scene and manifested in the building of the Great Pyramid at Giza. It is a monument to man, a guide to understanding the pattern of all living things, a blueprint to all stately ideas that have come down through the ages. The numbers are: 3, 4 and 5, the pattern of life.

Exodus 27:1 tells us this: “And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad; the altar shall be foursquare: and the height thereof shall be three cubits (emphasis added).”

The numbers 3, 4 and 5 are interesting in themselves, as the first two numbers give us the cardinal number seven (7), the number of a perfect and just Lodge. The latter two, gives us three times three or nine (9); and the sum total give us the ‘number of the people’ twelve (12). However, let us go back to the theorem itself first, and then we will deal with the numbers.

The Pyramid is an example of those numbers, for when you face it on one side, you see an equilateral triangle, or three sided figure; but it sits on a base of a square or four sided figure, and when you count the points of the pyramid, including the apex, you get five. When it is bisected though, the philosophical meaning almost leaps out at you, if you but remember Jacob’s ladder and what he saw.

The base is the individual Mason, lying in a dead level, lifeless, but created in God’s own image. After God breaths the “breath of life” man was raised to a “living perpendicular (living soul).” The Mithraic ladder shows it to be a ‘step ladder’ rather than a common one, and that gives us the hypotenuse, or “angels ascending and descending.” Man’s two beings ascend at man’s final earthly resting place, for his soul ascends to God who gave it, while his body returns to the dust from which it was formed, as it were, “being divested of all worldly goods and honors.”

The base is also you, the individual Mason, coming forth into the world, making your way “through this veil of tears” seeking ways to make your fortune, your spot in this vast world. You are in a “dead level” lifeless, for the Spirit of God is not in you. Then He breathes into

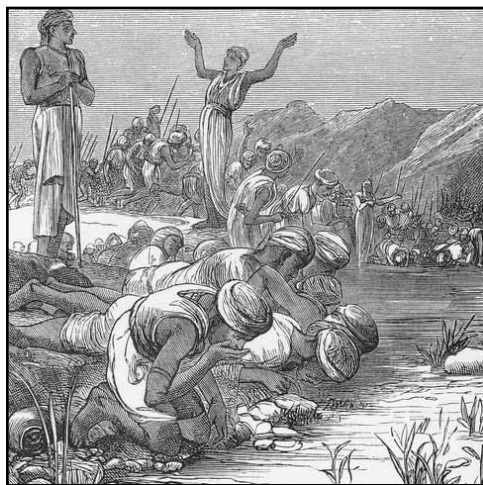
the Lord had promised that he should do so, and the expectation of triumph was before him. And just as Gideon triumphed, so too can we.”

“... The first Midianite chief whom I shall bring before you is Disappointment, the intruder who cuts down the green crop of hope, and leaves a famine in the soul. Whence is it that even the Christian is constantly subject to disappointment? Is it not from habitual disobedience to the divine command, Set your affections upon things above not on things beneath? “We eagerly fix our heart on some worldly object, ambition, pleasure, or gain; like children we build our houses of delight on the sand within reach of the tide, which must sooner or later sweep them away, and then sit down and weep when the flood rolls over the spot which we had unwisely chosen. Let each of us who in the bitterness of disappointment has mournfully repeated the words of the Preacher, Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, see whether the idol in the heart has not been the cause of the Midianites’ invasion, and whether that faith which builds on the Rock of Ages, beyond the reach of desolation or decay, may not yet overcome the power of disappointment to harass the soul. Hopes fixed upon Christ know not disappointment; treasures laid up in heaven can never be lost; ties formed by faith endure throughout eternity; the less our joys are of the earth earthy, the less danger there is that the spoiler can never wrest them away from our grasp.

And whence cometh Discontent, who robs his slave of all his peace? For peace and discontent cannot abide in the same soul. Can he who says to his most bountiful God, not only with his lips but from his heart, “I am unworthy of the least of Thy mercies,” ever know discontent? Must not the peevish, envious, rebellious spirit be ever kept far from his gates? We should deem so, and yet, Christian brethren, do we practically find that it is so? Are we not too often inclined to compare



our lot with that of others, and if not openly, yet secretly repine, as if Providence had done us a wrong? No true servant of Christ can desire to have his portion here; and yet, does not the inheritor of Heaven too frequently murmur because not all the good things of earth are showered upon him in addition? How different his spirit from that of the apostle! He who had suffered the loss of all things, yet could affirm, I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content Had we also learned this lesson, we should find it less impracticable to obey his command, Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say unto you rejoice.



“You have not your due,” were the words which I once heard a wife address to a husband who had been deprived of some advantage which she considered to have been his right. “Nay, God be praised that I have not my due” he replied. “What is my due as a sinner before God? what is my due from a world which I have renounced for His sake? Had I chosen my portion in this life, then only

might I complain of not receiving my due!” Here was a man whom discontent could not rob of his heritage of peace.

To pass on to Dissension, the third enemy to our happiness, who invades many a home, and makes goodly dwellings miserable abodes — to what shall we trace his invasion? Is it not written in Scripture, By pride cometh contention?—would not the soft answer that turneth away wrath often prove as a strong bar to keep him from entering our habitations? But here I must guard myself from being misunderstood. It is possible that dissension may come where the fault lies on one side alone. The Christian may be not unfrequently is called to brave opposition and draw upon himself the anger of men by defending the truth, or taking up the cause of the oppressed. The command, live peaceably with all men, is qualified by if it be possible;

A Look at the Pythagorean Theory: from a Biblical standpoint

Every Master Mason worth his salt, has at least looked at the Pythagorean Theorem, or commonly called, The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid. The geometric equation is known to those Master Masons who study Freemasonry from a semi-deep perspective, and know that in any right triangle, the sum square of the hypotenuse, or $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$.

Many Master Masons find no meaning to this formula, other than it sounds good unless you are an architect or building contractor, or any one that has to work with geometry. The equation is one that seemingly has no philosophical lesson for the Mason, and consequently, many questions about the theorem remain unanswered. I personally believe that every symbol, every emblem, every phrase, every movement in Freemasonry, has some meaning, other than “sounding good.”

We know that in building a roof, a carpenter that know right angles, horizontals and perpendiculars, can cut his rafters on the ground and make them fit together, form his roof, with the pitch determined on the ground or in his head or whatever. Pythagoras spent many hours searching for the answer of the almost perfect measurements of the Pyramid from a geometric point of view, while all the time, the answers could have possibly been found in the religious works of the Jews and certainly, the Egyptians who built the Great Pyramid in the first place. The late Professor George Howard James, formerly on the staff of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, wrote in his book, Stolen Legacy, that the Greeks, under Alexander, stole religious ideas from Egypt, took them to Greece and called them Philosophy. This brought in the “Golden Age of Greece.” It is hard to imagine a barbaric country like Macedonia become such a philosophical nation in such short order, all the while persecuting those men like Socrates and Aristotle for venturing forth ideas of the Egyptians on people that were still worshipping idol gods.

In the Book of Exodus, we find answers to the questions Pythagoras was looking for. The so-called mystical numbers that he

Here is the relevant excerpt from the Book of Judges. The full account is in Chapter 12, verses 1-15:

4 - Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites.

5 - And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, art thou an Ephraimite? If he say Nay;

6 - Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.



for in some cases it is not possible to preserve harmony without giving up principle. Under such circumstances the sacrifice of peace is a sacrifice for God, and the cross is one which is borne-for His sake. But in the majority of cases dissension follows on the footsteps of pride, and is the leader of malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness. Then, indeed, is he the true Midianite who pours gall into the very springs of enjoyment, who casts his venomous arrows on every side, and maketh a wilderness of that which might have been as the Garden of Eden. Better a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. Could we, through the grace of God's Spirit, purge from our souls all malice, all bitterness and wrath—could we love one another as Christ hath loved us, what heart-burnings, what heart achings might be spared, and how often would the brightness of heaven appear to be reflected even upon earth!

Disappointment, Discontent, and Dissension have, as we have seen, much to do with the train of sorrows which have given to God's fair world the name of "a vale of tears." But I believe that the most dangerous enemy of all to our peace, the one who has most often pressed his iron yoke on the hearts of my hearers, is the fourth whose name I have mentioned, Distrust of the love and wisdom of God. This assertion may cause surprise in those who are unconscious of a doubt; but examine yourselves closely, my brethren, observe what has most often clouded your brows, saddened your spirits, drawn the deep sigh from your hearts. Has it been regrets for the past? Has it been the trials of the present? Has it not rather been care for the future, fears of what the morrow might bring? Would not perfect obedience to the injunction of our blessed Redeemer, Take no thought for the morrow, sweep away at once more than half of the troubles that weigh on our souls?



And why take thought for the morrow? We too often appear to forget that the future lies in the hand of One “too wise to err, too good to be unkind.” We act as if we could not, or would not, believe that all things work together for good to them that love God: we are needlessly restless, anxious, unhappy, and exclaim in our trouble, “How heavy a rod the Lord lays upon me!” Way, poor weak unbelieving heart, thou art smitten less by the rod of thy Father, than by the scourge of the Midianite within. If faith could drive out mistrust, if thou couldst in deed and in truth cast thy cares upon Him who careth for thee, then—even here—might God give thee beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning*, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Perfect trust would bring perfect submission, and the peace that passeth understanding.

Gideon, the future deliverer of Israel, first appears before us in Scripture engaged in threshing corn beside the wine-press, in order to hide it from the rapacious Midianites who held possession of the land. From the necessity of concealment he cannot employ, after the custom of the East, his father’s oxen to trample out the wheat; he must himself wield the flail with the strength of his own right arm. Gideon is employed in a task of lowly toil, unconscious at first of the presence of the heavenly Being who has descended to earth, and who is now beside him under the shadow of the oak at Ophrah. And here for the present we will pause, and defer till our next meeting the consideration of God’s merciful promise to Gideon, and the effect which it produced on his soul. If we regard Faith under the emblem of a tree, we have hitherto viewed it as such tree may appear in winter, when there is not a blossom on the bough or a leaf on the spray. There is no outward evidence of life; and though we hope that spring will draw up the sap, and clothe the. Bare branches with beauty, we see no present sign of the change. Such may have been the state of Gideon’s faith, when he thought on the sufferings of his miserable country. The flail of the Lord was upon it, but we know from the result that it was not to crush—not to destroy the wheat, but to separate the chaff from the grain, and so render the latter more fit for reception into the garner of the Lord.”

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The Story of the Shibboleth

A shibboleth is a kind of linguistic password: A way of speaking (a pronunciation, or the use of a particular expression) that is used by one set of people to identify another person as a member, or a non-member, of a particular group. The group making the identification has some kind of social power to set the standards for who belongs to their group: who is “in” and who is “out”.

The purpose of a shibboleth is exclusionary as much as inclusionary: A person whose way of speaking violates a shibboleth is identified as an outsider and thereby excluded by the group. This phenomenon is part of the universal use of language for distinguishing social groups. It is also one example of a general phenomenon of observing a superficial characteristic of members of a group, such as a way of speaking, and judging that characteristic as ‘good’ or ‘bad’, depending on how much the observers like the people who have that characteristic.

A shibboleth is one specific phenomenon involving observing use of language of “out-group” people. It is a linguistic marker that is characteristic of members of a group, which is used by another group to identify members of the first group. Such identification typically has bad consequences for the members thus identified.

The story behind the word is recorded in the biblical Book of Judges. The word shibboleth in ancient Hebrew dialects meant ‘ear of grain’ (or, some say, ‘stream’). Some groups pronounced it with a sh sound, but speakers of related dialects pronounced it with an s.

In the story, two Semitic tribes, the Ephraimites and the Gileadites, have a great battle. The Gileadites defeat the Ephraimites, and set up a blockade across the Jordan River to catch the fleeing Ephraimites who were trying to get back to their territory. The sentries asked each person who wanted to cross the river to say the word shibboleth. The Ephraimites, who had no sh sound in their language, pronounced the word with an s and were thereby unmasked as the enemy and slaughtered.