

T.F.S.
Three, five, and seven
3 5 7
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“Sincerity and truth are the basis of every virtue.” Confucius

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“Think no vice so small that you may commit it, and no virtue so small that you may overlook it.” Confucius

Cardinal

January 1, 2010. This is the first issue of T.F.S. for the new decade beginning with 2010. I heard an interesting comment on TV the other day: “The 21st Century is 10% gone.” Well, we are only 90 years away from the 22nd Century. Forward thinkers most likely are thinking about the 22nd century when it comes to the important parts and roles of our lives. When we think of our children and grandchildren being alive and celebrating the turn of the century on December 31st 2099 we most likely will be smiling about all the enjoyment they have ahead of them as they live long and happy lives. If we think of our Masonic Lodge on the same date, and the Masons within our jurisdiction I wonder if we will be smiling and have the same sense of enjoyment and pride about their journey over the next 90 years. What vision do you have of your Lodge 90 years from now? What vision do I have of mine? Is it sobering, or do we have a big smile? If we don't like the vision we have, maybe we each can do something to help make the future a little brighter.

One of the things I thought about for this issue of T.F.S. is the hinge: That on which something turns or depends. A new year is a new beginning, so January 1st is a very obvious hinge, a new beginning, on which our future turns; I like the phrase “Today is the 1st day of the rest of my life.” Any day can be a new beginning. If we get off to a rough start, if we don't quite stick with a resolve we pledged to on December 31st or January 1st we don't need to give up, we can have a do-over and begin again. However, we can't continually repeat these do-over's. If we have trouble sticking to a resolve to make a change we need to overcome that problem. We need to put bad habits, along with some other things into a symbolic burning bowl: As one clergyman I know says; “If we have something we don't want to carry into our New Year we need to do the forgiveness work, (all that forgiveness entails,) before or as we let it go, then put it into that burning bowl, so we don't carry it into the rest of our lives.”

What is true for individuals is true for Lodges as well because, a Lodge is simply a group of individuals who need to let go of the lesser in order to reach the greater. A Lodge's annual installation of officers for the ensuing year signals a new beginning for a Lodge, but any Lodge communication can be the beginning of something new and effective to make a difference for the Lodge's future. As one friend says; 'let's bring gentleness and tolerance into the New Year.'

What got me to thinking about a 'hinge' is the word 'Cardinal,' it comes from the Latin word “Cardo,” which means hinge; in my Latin dictionary it says that it also has a meaning of turning point. Today, being the first day of the rest of my life can be a turning point for me if I want it to.

The Freemason first hears about the word 'Cardinal' in his first degree. Many new Entered Apprentices, when they hear the word, just accept it as they listen to the 3rd section of the lecture and learn a bit about the Cardinal Virtues; many others know how important a virtue is because it is called a Cardinal Virtue. I'm not aware of any Mason who takes the virtues for granted, but of the virtues mentioned in the first degree: Faith; Hope; Charity; Temperance; Fortitude; Prudence; and Justice; the 1st three are the Theological virtues, and the last four are Cardinal Virtues. Cardinal because they are of fundamental importance, and on them Freemasonry depends.

When it comes to Cardinal it's not only the four cardinal virtues Masonry is concerned with; Masons are also concerned with the cardinal points of the compass. However, this isn't mentioned in the Lectures of the degrees, so there are times when we Masons don't spend much

time thinking about the cardinal points of the compass. The cardinal points of the compass are East, North, West, and South.

The Master of a Lodge sits in the symbolic East of his Lodge. (It is nice if a Lodge can actually be situated due East and West, but for some Lodge buildings that just isn't possible. However, it is the symbolism that is important, and inside of the Lodge room we do have the symbolic cardinal points of the compass.) East has always been considered peculiarly sacred, because it is the place where the Sun rises and light dawns. Masonically we travel from the West to the East by way of the North, thus we travel from darkness to light. The Masters station is in the East, and it is to him we all, as candidates for each of our Masonic degrees have gone to for light. "In the Bible [The Great Light of Masonry] the East is the determining point of the compass. Sometimes the word translated 'east' literally means 'sun rising,' sometimes 'before' 'in front of.'" An example of this is in Job 23:8 "Behold I will go forward (east), but he is not there; and backward (west), but I cannot perceive him." As Brother C.C. Hunt says "The words in parentheses above are the literal translations of the word preceding."ⁱ

In Speculative Masonry we term the North a place of darkness, because at King Solomon's Temple the Sun could not shine over the north wall. In The Great Light of Masonry, (the Holy Bible,) the North was also mentioned as a place of darkness, because the countries to the north were then unknown. Brother C.C. Hunt adds some commentary to 1 Kings 7:25 – "The Molten sea 'stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north (hidden, gloomy, and unknown, used only of the north,) and three looking toward the west (the sea), and three looking toward the south (Egypt), and three looking toward the east (sunrise); and the sea was set above them, and all their hinder (west) parts were inward."ⁱⁱ

Masonically, because the West is the place of the setting Sun, it symbolizes the end of our earthly life. Also because the candidate enters the Lodge from the West and travels by the North to the East he is said to emerge from darkness to light.

The South is said in Speculative Masonry to symbolize life at its prime; this is because the Sun is the strongest when it is in the South: It is the time of refreshment after the morning's work. Brother Hunt tells us that "in the time of the Bible there were two Hebrew words translated 'South.' One used 17 times means 'the right hand,' this is the position of the South [The Junior Warden's station] as we face the East. The other word means the 'desert' and is found ninety-eight times in the Old Testament [Tanakh]. This is natural, for the country south of Palestine is desert."

When we think of the Cardinal Virtues the early Masons called Temperance 'the guttural point' from the Latin Gurrur, meaning Gullet and Throat. Temperance teaches us to stand in awe of the Presence of God within us. Temperance relates to efficiency; efficiency is the measure of temperance; how much to eat, to drink, etc. to obtain physical efficiency.ⁱⁱⁱ Possibly we might stretch temperance as it relates to efficiency to include eating healthy meals.

Fortitude is the steady purpose of the mind, which enables us to endure life's trials, misfortunes, pains, and dangers. Fortunate is the person who avoids these kinds of events as he travels through youth, manhood, and age. Fortitude was called 'the pectoral point' by our ancient brethren, because it is from the Latin 'pectus,' meaning breast, but it also has additional meanings such as; heart, soul, courage, feelings, mind, understanding, and character.

The Cardinal Virtue of Prudence was, again by our ancient brethren, called 'the manual sign' from the Latin word Manus, which has a meaning of Hand. You might find it interesting as it relates to Prudence that the Latin phrase 'in minibus habere' has a meaning of personal valor; in manu alcis esse has a meaning of 'to be in one's power.' These phrases relating to Prudence and the hand are interesting to think about; to be prudent in our conduct in all situations takes control and personal valor: When we are in control and not reacting to situations, being proactive (in modern terms); we are demonstrating prudence, and we are demonstrating self-control. As another friend observed; 'it's not good enough to hold principles and virtues if we don't work them into our lives.'

The Cardinal Virtue of Justice is associated with the Plumb: In Speculative Masonry we will see that the Jewel of the Junior Warden is the Plumb Rule and not the plumb-bob and line. When

you're in Lodge next time take a look at the Jewel; a just man is upright, and only as a Mason is just and upright can he build a spiritual building in which God, (The Great Architect of the Universe,) may dwell.

Our ancient brethren called Justice the 'pedal point' as it comes from the Latin 'Pedes,' which has a meaning of 'foot.' It also has an additional meaning of being a walker, a foot soldier. Masons being seekers of truth, truth students if you will, are like foot soldiers for right and just conduct; when a Mason's feet are planted on principle there should be no shifting.

"Persevere in virtue and diligence." Titus Livy

Words to live by: "All virtue is summed up in dealing justly." Aristotle

From volumes of Sacred Law:

"Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy." Psalm 82:3 Tanakh

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 4:8 American Standard Version of the New Testament

"Abraham was indeed a paragon of virtue, obedient to ALLAH, ever inclined to HIM, and he was not of those who set up equals with ALLAH;" Qur'an 016:120 (an-NAHI: THE BEE – Sher-Ali Translation

Please remember: if you would like to participate in the latest Masonic Monday Question, please go to <http://www.lodgebuilder.org> and click on the Lodge Education forum. When you have an answer send it to masonicmonday@gmail.com the Masonic Monday Question for the week of 01/04/09 is: **What are the ornaments of a Freemason?**

"Search others for their virtue and yourself for your vices." R. Buckminster Fuller

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"True courage is not the brutal force of vulgar heroes. Rather the firm resolve of virtue and reason." Alfred North Whitehead

"The virtue of justice consists in moderation, as regulated by wisdom." Aristotle

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TFS & Masonic Matters can also be read on Ed's Face Book page; just search for Ed Halpaus on Face Book.

With "Brotherly Love",
Ed Halpaus
Grand Lodge Education Officer

**Seek to mentor a Brother Mason:
It's good for him, it's good for you, and it's good for Freemasonry!**

ⁱ Masonic concordance of the Holy Bible.

ⁱⁱ Ibid

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid