

T.F.S.
Three, five, and seven
3 5 7

By Ed Halpaus, Grand Lodge Education Officer.
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“Whenever something is beyond our control at the present, being impatient about it is counterproductive.”
Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

Dear Masonic Student, Another of the Masonic newsletters I receive, which I really enjoy is the Wayfarer from Minnesota River Valley Lodge # Worshipful Brother Allen Greene was the Chaplain there and write excellent articles for his Lodge's newsletters each month. It was obvious to many Masons what a good job he did as Chaplain, and it's evidenced in his articles as well as in his person. He is now the Grand Chaplain for the Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Minnesota. Below is an article he wrote some time ago, which I am certain you will enjoy reading. - Ed

The Chaplain's Corner

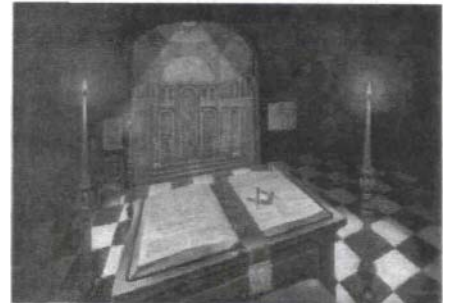
Patience

Patience is remaining calm and relaxed in the face of delay or provocation without becoming annoyed or upset; or exhibiting forbearance when under strain, especially when faced with longer-term difficulties. That's the dictionary definition, but patience is so much more. It is also used to refer to the character trait of being steadfast and having forbearance. What could be better than forbearance as a Masonic virtue!

Patience is often described as a core virtue in religion or spiritual practices. For example, Job is a figure that appears in the Hebrew Bible, Christian Bible and the Qur'an; his story is considered a profound religious work. We have all heard the phrase "He has the patience of Job". Well this theme is about the coexistence of the devil and God. The application of patience is highlighted as the resolution of the earthly struggles caused by that co-existence. The theme of Job in these Holy books is that Job endures near-catastrophic calamities without losing his patience or reproaching the Creator. In the Qur'an, the person of Job is actually known as Ayyub, which is a name that is symbolic of the *virtue* of patience.

Patience and fortitude are prominent themes in Judaism. The Talmud extols patience as an important personal trait. The story of Micah, for example, is that he suffers many challenging conditions and yet endures, saying "I will wait for the God who saves me." Patience in God, it is said, will aid believers in finding the strength to be delivered from the evils that are inherent in the physical life. In the Hebrew Bible, Ecclesiastes, it is said: "Better is the patient spirit than the lofty spirit. Do not in spirit become quickly discontented, for discontent lodges in the bosom of a fool."

In the Christian religion, patience is one of the most valuable virtues of life. Increasing patience is viewed as the work of the Holy Ghost in the Christian who has accepted the gift of salvation. Patience, is one of the seven virtues, alongside chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, kindness, and humility. In Islam, patience is one of the best and most valuable virtues of life. Through patience, a Muslim believes that an individual can grow closer to Allah and thus attain true peace. It is also stressed in Islam, that Allah is with those who are patient, more specifically during suffering. The Qur'an states that Muslims should "Persevere in patience and constancy" and "be steadfast in patience". It notes that "No one will be granted



such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune."

Interesting, but what does this have to do with us? I'm glad you asked. One of the fundamentals of Freemasonry is patience or tolerance. The Old Testament tells us that we should conduct ourselves with all humility and gentleness, with patience showing tolerance for one another with love. Being tolerant and indulgent with those whose opinions and practices differ from ours. It also means being free from intolerance and bigotry, or severity in judging the opinions or practices of others. John F Kennedy summed it up nicely "tolerance implies no lack of commitment to ones own beliefs, but rather it condemns oppression and persecution of others".

Speculative Masonry, like Operative Masonry, cannot make a Perfect Ashlar out of an imperfect specimen: Speculative Masonry admits only good men; just as the Operative Mason will work only with good stone; flawed material cannot be made perfect. 'A rough stone can be made smooth, but it must be capable of taking the polish or the work will be in vain.

Making a stone perfect, much like perfecting a man, or carving a statue, is not done by adding something; it is done by taking away: removing the superfluous, brings out what is within and thus is found what is closer to perfection; this takes time and patience. Sound familiar?

As Masons we are taught the Cardinal Virtues through the respective lectures of the three degrees, and which, we are taught are the formula to govern the conduct of every Mason. Fortitude, Temperance, Prudence and Justice are impressed upon us early in Masonic learning and are an included part of the Entered Apprentice degree. Fortitude means we stay the course. It does not permit us to give up. Temperance dictates moderation in all things and therefore, the practicing Mason is not excessive in his living habits. Again, there is nothing particularly spiritual in that practice. Prudence requires that a Mason use good judgment in all that he endeavors as he goes about the business of daily living, and Justice dictates that he would practice the biblical lesson that "he would treat others as he would be treated." The preceding describes those attributes required for a stable, happy and productive life in the material world. They work quite well when followed and certainly have withstood the test of time as a formula for constructive-action.

Continuing the degree work we hear also of Faith, Hope and Charity and we are told that of these the greatest is Charity. Faith and Hope are clearly functions of the mind. A Mason has Faith that he will achieve a unity with Deity. In his mind he Hope(s) to fulfill his goal. Neither Faith nor Hope can occur outside of man's thought process and so must be attached to the Fellow Craft degree as that is the degree of a thinking Mason who is able to apply his gavel in the horizontal to remove rough edges and achieve an ashlar of not only horizontal dimensions, but also of true perpendiculars.

Charity, being the greatest of the virtues and the third of the group presents its own special considerations because it is found in both our earthly life as well as our spiritual world. As the third of the group it creates the number three. Therefore, it is also a characteristic of the Fellow Craft degree. It is also a spiritual act insomuch as Jesus said, "that which you do to the least of man, you do also to me." Thus, it ties directly to the Master Mason degree since the Master Mason is supposed to be a Master in his understanding of the ways of the Craft. Finding these parallels, Charity could be said to be a giving act, prompted by thought, and that we are all part of the Divine.

These then, are the 7 Cardinal virtues that govern the conduct of every Mason and determine the traits of a Freemason, and Patience is a trait to be desired within the heart of every Mason if they will grow in Light on their Journey. What does a Mason do when he meets another with differing views? Nothing - he patiently listens.

Words to live by: “The way to patience is to think; ‘Life is made up of a series of projects and goals. I will enjoy the involvement.” Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

From volumes of Sacred Law:

“The end of a matter is better than its beginning; patience of spirit is better than haughtiness of spirit.”
Ecclesiastes 7:8 NASV Tanakh (Old Testament)

“In purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,”
2 Corinthians 6:6 NASV New Testament

“O you who believe! Seek assistance through patience and prayer; surely Allah is with the patient.”
Qur’an 002:153 Shakir 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 08/16/10 comes again from our Good Brother Glenn Kiecker; here is his question: **Who was the Master Mason that officially turned down an offered Medal of Honor? When was it politely rejected? Where was he made a Master Mason and in which Grand Lodge did he affiliate and serve?** As a hint I will add that this Brother Master Mason served as Grand Master in his jurisdiction.

“Each breath is a gift. Our sight, hearing, being able to talk and walk are all gifts. The food we eat and the clothes we wear are gifts. Being alive is a gift. Making constant gratitude your reality is the path to joy.”
Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

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“What is the difference between growing up in a home with patience and a home where this is constantly lacking? It is the difference between walking in a beautiful garden when the weather is perfect or walking in a torrent of rain on a muddy road at night.” “It can be the difference between having a safe haven where you are respected and loved or feeling like you are among enemies.” Rabbi Zelig Pliskin [Rabbi Pliskin’s quote certainly relates to home and personal life, but it can also relate to a Masonic Lodge.- Ed]

The Education Videos of the Grand Lodge of Minnesota can be viewed at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=om_yq4L3M_I#!q=glmned

T.F.S. & Masonic Matters can also be read on Ed’s Face Book page; <http://www.facebook.com/ed.halpaus> -

<http://halpaus.blogspot.com> - <http://www.mn-masons.org> - <http://sites.google.com/site/edsmasonicmatters/>

Please remember – Ed’s new email address is erhmasonic@gmail.com the old one is all but gone.

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!**