

March 2025



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A Few Words from the Editors

Dr Harrison has been busy with a speaking trip to Pennsylvania in the USA, where he addressed the 25th annual meeting of the Academy of Masonic Knowledge, a Masonic organisation that celebrates the research of esoteric Freemasonry. Dr Harrison took the opportunity to spread the word about Coronation Lodge, creating interest about W.L. Wilmshurst's teachings and the success of the lodge.

The second meeting of the CL Associates, to which all Full Members and Associates were invited, took place on 25th Feb. It was chaired by Bro Secretary, John Karran, and the speaker was WBro, the Revd Roger Quick. The Topic was – The Need to be Properly Prepared before Embarking on Masonic Meditation. A link to the video recording of the meeting and a transcript of Roger's talk are included in this issue, and a podcast of the Q&A session and discussion will be made available on the CQ portal within the next few weeks, once it has been processed.

When W L Wilmshurst (WLW) founded the Lodge of Living Stones in 1927, over the first few years of its existence he created a series of five ritual books, covering all the main ceremonies of the lodge. When Coronation Lodge (CL) was repurposed The Lodge of Living Stones (LOLS) were approached and asked if CL could use their version of his ritual. That request was refused, as LOLS prides itself on its unique atmosphere. CL and other new esoteric lodges were advised to create their own rituals. This task was eventually delegated to Robert and David, who are both scholars of ritual in general and Wilmshurst's work in particular.

After working through WLW's writings, notes and annotations WLW made in books kept in his personal library, they have cooperated to create a modern reworking of WLW's idea as the first book in a series of five. [Robert has previous experience of publishing modern transliterations of WLW's papers on the First and Second Degree. With *W.L. Wilmshurst - The Ceremony of Initiation: Revisited by Robert Lomas* (2013) . And *W.L. Wilmshurst - The Ceremony of Passing: Revisited by Robert Lomas*. (2016)]

This newly revisited ritual covers *The Ritual of Opening and Closing of the Lodge in the Three Degrees*, and creates a fresh new version of *Wilmshurst's Traditional Rituals and Procedures* which does not contravene LOLS copyright, or unique atmosphere, but closely follows the landmarks of WLW's ideas. **[If you want to see the workings of current LOLS ritual then details of how arrange a visit are in the foreword to the article on The Centre, by the current WM of LOLS, which W.Bro Dean has kindly allowed CQ to publish]**

Working with the new publisher of the White Rose magazine (the quarterly newsletter of the Prov of Yorkshire West Riding) Robert has commissioned the private printing of fifty copies of Ritual Series 1 in a similar style to the original WLW booklets. White Rose have managed to duplicate the original fonts and layouts, produced a stiff card cover in a similar style to the original but is a more convenient format, and printed an attractive, usable, ritual book.

Robert and David intend to present this celebratory set of ritual books to the WM, at the March 2025 meeting. Robert has provided sufficient copies to gift one to each of the subscribing members of the lodge, with one or two spare for future members. Robert and David intend to produce modern revised versions of all five ritual books. They hope it will be possible to make them available to any of the new esoteric lodges which seem to be springing up around the country, who are not allowed to use LOLS ritual.

David's revised paperback of *The Life and Death of John Yarker* is also due to be published soon with Lewis Masonic, as the first edition hardback sold out within a month. The new edition will be available via the Lewis Masonic website or from Amazon.

Please don't forget that the question set by the WM of Coronation Lodge, "To what extent are Masonic rituals Theurgic Rites?" is now the subject of the CQ Quarterly Writing Challenge for June. Please submit your entries to Bro Secretary, before the last day of May, and he will anonymise them and before forwarding for the editors to consider. The winners will be announced by WM at the festive board. All winners are offered the opportunity to publish an article on a topic of their choice in a later edition of CQ. The purpose of a lodge of research is to think, consider and share ideas. The best way to do this is to write an essay on your subject of interest and share it with your brethren.

The CQ Editorial Cooperative

Details of Previous WLW Revisited Books mentioned.

[W.L.Wilmshurst - The Ceremony of Initiation: Revisited by Robert Lomas: Volume 1 \(The Complete Works of W L Wilmshurst\) : Lomas, Robert, Wilmshurst, Walter Leslie: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

[W.L.Wilmshurst - The Ceremony of Passing: Revisited by Robert Lomas: Volume 2 \(The Complete Works of W L Wilmshurst\) : Lomas, Robert: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

[The Life and Death of John Yarker : Harrison, David: Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

Notes from the Secretary

Fraternal Greetings Brethren

Thank you to all of you for your continued support for Coronation Lodge. We continue to move forward with more members and more P Forms in process.

Sadly, we had the Lodge's senior member, W Bro Walter Yule pass to the Grand Lodge above recently. He was a very respected brother and true gentleman and will be sadly missed by this lodge and Freemasonry in general.

The Coronation Lodge Ritual, based on a reworking of the Wilmshurst Traditional Workings is moving on. Robert and David have completed the Opening / Closing, and are working on a WLW based Installation ritual and a Third Degree. We plan on delivering a Third Degree later this year with a couple of Fellow Crafts members of the lodge. We are still in the process of 'fine tuning' but we hope for stability soon.

We have decided that no alms will be given in the Lodge, as per Wilmshurst principles, to respect the sanctity of the Lodge. We will continue to give alms at the Festive Board and look for other ways to give to charitable causes.

As indicated, we continue to attract new members, four Brethren will become joining members of the Lodge at this March meeting, and a big welcome to them. The Associate Membership of the Lodge, for brethren who live too far away from Runcorn is progressing well and has over 40 members from all over the Globe. The recent online lecture by WBro Rev Roger Quick "*The Need to be Properly Prepared Before Embarking on Masonic Meditation*" was an excellent talk. The Journal of the lodge called; 'Coronatio Quadrans' is available all members and Associate Members via the OpenLodge portal. We actively encourage you to use the OpenLodge portal for both Coronation Lodge general business (summons, minutes, etc) but also, and perhaps more importantly, for use of the educational side, the Lectures, the Papers, the Discussion Board, etc. If any brother needs assistance in ensuring connected and how to use, please let me or Robert Lomas know.

Our home at Runcorn Masonic Hall has been very helpful and patient with us and we thank the hall for all their assistance and understanding. W.Bro Tony Stringer and the hall staff have been most helpful. There have been some changes at the Hall is managed but we will have to adapt and be a little more proactive in the setting up of the Festive Board. The wider plan is to see Runcorn as an 'esoteric centre' for those who are interested.

We will continue to look for new and innovative ways to practice our Freemasonry within the Constitution, with the goal of Truth and the 'Return to the Centre'. Our next meeting we will have an interesting lecture from the Worshipful Master which will focus on 'esoteric' freemasonry.

News on the New Chapter – Stayley Chapter of Reason 324, which will move Runcorn. Things are going on behind the scenes and we expect our first meeting in the next couple of months.

We look forward to seeing you all and if you have any other interested brother who would like to visit and / or join us on the journey, feel free. Many brethren feel there is 'more' to Freemasonry which has been overlooked in the current mission of getting: 'more men into Freemasonry'. Our mantra is: 'to get more Freemasonry into men'.

God Bless John

A Message from the Worshipful Master

W.Bro Dan Wilson

Dear Brethren,

As we approach the Vernal Equinox, we find ourselves at a moment of perfect balance, when Light and Darkness are equal, and the Season of Renewal is upon us. This time of year, symbolises the Triumph of Light over Darkness and mirrors the journey we take as Masons — the movement from Ignorance to Knowledge, from Darkness to Light. As the Earth shifts toward longer days, so too does our path as Masons call us, to continually seek the Light of Truth and Wisdom.

But how do we do this? What is an esoteric lodge for?

In my first paper to the Lodge, *"So what is this Esoteric Freemasonry thing, anyway?"*, I will introduce the concept of Esoteric Freemasonry, explain in what ways an esoteric lodge is quite different from other lodges, and propose how an esoteric lodge like ours may conduct its work to enrich our Masonry. I will include some worked examples of how we can use specific keys to unlock hidden layers of meaning within our Masonic ritual.

I look forward to seeing you all again soon .

Grand Master Charles Scott and his Esoteric Masonic Masterpiece.

Dr David Harrison

It was quite rare in England after the union of the Antients and Moderns in 1813, to see any overt Christian references in any published Masonic works. Perhaps with the exception of Richard Carlile's *Manual of Freemasonry*, an unofficial expose, the content of which was first published in Carlile's *The Republican* in 1825. Carlile however was not a Freemason and considered himself an atheist, though he certainly saw the important Christian elements to the Masonic story.¹ There are of course certain references in more general works such as Kenneth Mackenzie's *Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia*, which dates to the 1870s, and there are discussions of Christianity in the Masonic writings of George Oliver, which is another example, though of course, Oliver incurred the displeasure of the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, the Duke of Sussex. It was under the Grand Mastership of Sussex that most of the Christian elements had been removed from Freemasonry after the union in 1813.² Certainly, in regards to the Christian elements of Freemasonry, none of these English works were on the same level as the American Charles Scott's book *The Analogy of Ancient Craft Masonry to Natural & Revealed Religion*, first published in 1849, which gave concise lectures that alluded to Christian lessons from both the Old and New Testaments, and weaved them effortlessly into the fabric of his interpretation of American Freemasonry.³

Charles Scott A.M. (Artium Magister), was a Mississippi based attorney, being elected State Chancellor in 1853 and serving in that position until the Supreme Court of Chancery was abolished in 1857. He also happened to serve as Grand Master of Mississippi in 1848 and again in 1850. He was born on the 12th November, 1811 at Knoxville, Tennessee, and died on the 30th May, 1861, at the relatively young age of 49. His monument can still be seen at Greenwood Cemetery in Jackson, Mississippi. His wife Elizabeth had died in 1859. They had a number of sons.

His work, which he dedicated to his father Edward Scott, was an excellent Masonic moralistic guide in the form of lectures, which included an esoteric exploration of the American Craft, or Blue Lodge rituals. Indeed, influential US Masonic writers of the period, such as Albert Pike (1809-1891), wrote freely concerning aspects of Christianity within Freemasonry, and how elements of Christianity could still be found embedded within the themes of ritual, providing the Freemason with moralistic guidance.

The fifteen lectures presented by Scott featured rich Christian themes within parts of Freemasonry, and particularly emphasised the theme of resurrection within the third degree:

'The doctrine of the resurrection is elucidated in the third degree'. And again, stating that 'The Master's degree testifies our faith in the resurrection of the body'.⁴

¹ For an extensive view of Richard Carlile's ideas on Masonic ritual, see David Harrison, *Rediscovered Rituals of English Freemasonry*, (Hersham Lewis Masonic, 2019).

² See David Harrison, *The Genesis of Freemasonry*, (Hersham: Lewis Masonic, 2009).

³ The author owns a copy of Scott's work, which is a 6th edition, published in 1857, which was kindly donated by Brother Bill Rees from Ontario, Canada.

⁴ Charles Scott, *The Analogy of Ancient Craft Masonry to Natural & Revealed Religion*, (Philadelphia: E.H. Butler & Co., 1857), p.268.

Scott also mentions how the three ruffians were similar to the triple evil alliance of the world, flesh and the devil (opposed by the Holy Trinity).⁵

Scott also discussed the importance of Jacob's Ladder within Freemasonry and how, as a vision, it acted as a revelation of the Messiah, Christ being the connecting medium between heaven and earth.⁶ Scott then refers to the '*masonic ladder*', the Freemason being led through the Temple, passing his respective degrees, which, as Scott puts it, is like God leading Jacob.⁷ Even today, the Freemason, when advancing through the offices in the lodge, is referred to as 'climbing the ladder', particularly in English lodges, the symbol of the ladder still being used on the first degree tracing board in lodges under the United Grand Lodge of England.

For Scott, the journey of the Freemason was akin to the journey of Christian; in the trials of faith and especially in the belief of the resurrection of the soul and the body.⁸ Indeed, Scott emphasises this when he says '*The human body was once a temple in which first innocence resided*' which is similar to the idea of living stones, that of each Freemason being a stone in the temple.⁹ It was also alluding to the Fall of Man, which, as we shall see, formed a vital part of Scott's interpretation of the meaning of Freemasonry.

In discussing how the third section of the Master's degree illustrates certain hieroglyphical emblems, Scott explains the lessons behind the symbols. The first of these was the pot of incense, which, it was explained, was burned by the priest when he entered the Temple. The scent wafted high into the holy place, like prayers ascending to upwards to heaven.¹⁰

Scott also refers to Emanuel Swedenborg, the eighteenth-century mystic, when discussing the importance of incense, Swedenborg's mystical teachings still being an obvious influence. Indeed, Swedenborg would go on to inspire Occult Revivalist such as John Yarker later in the nineteenth century.¹¹

The beehive is then commented upon, an enigmatic symbol that is certainly alluded to in the Christian tradition, Scott discussing how John the Baptist lived in the deserts on locusts and wild honey. Scott also mentions how the beehive is symbolic of work, the bees being the workers, the symbol teaching us to become '*faithful and diligent members of society*'.¹² The symbol of the beehive was one that appears to have been abandoned in England after the Union of 1813, though it can still be found on pre-Union lodge furniture.¹³ In the US however, the symbol survived, being featured in part of the Preston-Webb ritual as a symbol of industry.

To Scott, Christ was compared to a cornerstone that was rejected by men, and points out that Christ was sometimes spoken of as the foundation of the church. Scott also puts forward how the Temple was similar to the Garden of Eden, both being designed by God and both being emblems of the church

⁵ Ibid., p.367.

⁶ Ibid., p.66.

⁷ Ibid., p.69.

⁸ Ibid., p.274.

⁹ Ibid., p.287.

¹⁰ Ibid., p.306.

¹¹ For a comprehensive examination of John Yarker and the Occult Revival, see David Harrison, *The Life and Death of John Yarker*, (St. Neots: Lewis Masonic, 2024).

¹² Scott, *Analogy of Ancient Craft Masonry to Natural & Revealed Religion*, p.308.

¹³ For an extensive discussion on the symbol of the beehive, see David Harrison, 'The Esoteric Meaning behind the Symbol of the Beehive', *Coronatio Quadrans*, Issue 2, (Summer Solstice, 2024), pp.8-12.

upon earth.¹⁴ Thus, the Temple, constructed with Divine geometry, was a way to find God, and Freemasons, in searching for what was lost, are effectively finding a way back to the Garden, *'his wonderful plans and designs, could only restore our fallen nature through the death, resurrection, and ascension of his only begotten Son...'*¹⁵

Freemasonry to Scott was symbolic of an esoteric Christian journey, building the Temple was metaphorically a way to find what was lost and to make our way back to the Garden of Eden, where, we could find our innocence and purity once again (this innocence represented by the white lamb skin apron of an apprentice). Certainly, Scott believed that the moralistic teachings of Freemasonry, like in Christianity, can inspire Freemasons to improve themselves and to become better members of society,¹⁶ but also to become closer to God and to find our way back to the Garden.¹⁷

¹⁴ Scott, *Analogy of Ancient Craft Masonry to Natural & Revealed Religion*, p.363.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.367.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.365-367.

¹⁷ Perhaps even to commune with the Divine, a discussion of which is presented in David Harrison, 'The Masonic Pathway to Cosmic Consciousness', *Coronatio Quadrans*, Issue 3, (Autumn Equinox, 2024), pp.11-15. See also See also David Harrison, 'The Masonic Pathway to Cosmic Consciousness', *Scriptorium*, Anul II, Nr.2, (Bucuresti, 2022), pp.295-303.

Questions from the Chair of Coronation Lodge

“To what extent are Masonic rituals Theurgic Rites?”

Robert Lomas

Link to Video Presentation of this Paper: <https://youtu.be/sheHCWvfNJI>

Before I begin to answer this question I will need to define some terms. We all know what Masonic rituals are, but what are theurgic rites and indeed what is theurgy? For those of you who are familiar with the concept, bear with me while I give a brief history lesson for those brethren who are not quite sure what it might be.

Broadly speaking, theurgy, is a set of spiritual, or magical, practices aimed at either invoking, or connecting with, divine powers or deities. It is often associated with Neoplatonism, a philosophical system that emphasized the unity of the soul with the divine. The goal of theurgy is to achieve spiritual enlightenment, purification, or union with the Divine through rituals, prayers, and symbolic acts.

But before we can talk about the ideas of a new Platonism it would be useful to first review the original ideas of Plato on which it is based.

The Greek philosopher Plato was born over two thousand years ago, circa 427, and lived until 347 BC. His system of philosophy emphasizes the existence of abstract, non-material forms or ideas, which he says, form the true basis of reality. According to Plato, the physical world we perceive through our senses is merely a shadow, or an imperfect representation, of these ideal forms.

Plato's Key ideas are:

- **His Theory of Forms:** Plato proposed that every object or concept in the physical world has an ideal counterpart, called a "form," existing in a non-physical, perfect realm. For example, a perfect "circle" exists in the world of forms, while any circle we draw is an imperfect copy.
- **His Focus on Reason and Knowledge:** Plato valued the pursuit of knowledge and rational understanding to grasp a truth which lies beyond sensory experiences.
- **His Moral and Ethical Ideas:** Plato argued that aligning oneself with the forms—especially the form of the Good—leads to a virtuous and fulfilling life.

His philosophy has influenced a wide of thinkers ranging from St Augustine to Roger Penrose. It also drove the development of Neoplatonism from around circa 240 BC. Theurgic Neoplatonism grew into an interesting blend of philosophy and ritual practice in the third century AD, primarily through the work of the philosopher Iamblichus of Chalcis.

Iamblichus of Chalcis (c. 245 – c. 325 AD) was a Syrian. Born in Chalcis, (Coele Syria in modern-day Lebanon), he came up with many of the basic ideas of Neoplatonism. He had studied with Anatolius of Laodicea and later under Porphyry, who had been a student of Plotinus.

His major books were:

"On the Pythagorean Life", which was a biography of Pythagoras (known as Peter Gower in Masonic Myth) and detailed the teachings, and some mystical practices of the Pythagorean school of thought.

"Protrepticus – An Exhortation to Philosophy" which he wrote to inspire individuals to pursue wisdom and philosophical inquiry.

But it was his book "**On the Egyptian Mysteries**" which is the treatise where he attempts to justify the practice of theurgy. He wrote this to respond to criticism from Porphyry, who opposed theurgy. *This book defends the use of ritual and magic to achieve spiritual purification and union with the divine.*

Iamblichus's concept of theurgy, was to use rituals, or magic, to invoke the presence of gods. This was a departure from the intellectual mysticism of his predecessors. He was convinced that the soul was embodied in matter and fully embraced the divine nature of the cosmos.

Here's some brief definitions for those terms which I bamboozled you with at the start of this essay.

Theurgy

The term "theurgy" comes from the Greek words "theos" (god) and "ergon" (work), meaning "divine work". It is a methodology of rituals and practices designed to invoke the presence of gods or divine beings to achieve spiritual purification and union with the divine. This practice is also known as henosis.

Neoplatonism

Neoplatonism is a philosophical system built on, and extending, the ideas of Plato which emphasized the existence of a single, transcendent source of all reality called The One. (or sometime The Monad) From The One emanates the Divine Mind (Nous) and The World Soul (Psyche), which together form the underlying structure of a Neoplatonic universe.

Now we have established a shared vocabulary let's look at Iamblichus' contribution. He introduced his theurgic practices into Neoplatonism, by incorporating elements of Egyptian and Chaldaean religious rites. He believed that theurgy could help individuals ascend a spiritual hierarchy to reach union with the divine. Unlike black magic, which attempts to manipulate natural forces for personal gain, he saw theurgy as a way to align one's self with the divine will and so elevate the soul. There are certain key concepts to bear in mind about his practice of theurgy.

1. Iamblichus's intended his rituals to manifest a Divine Presence: He believed that theurgic rituals can intensify the presence of higher beings on earth.
2. He argued that ritual actions can transcend intellectual efforts and so is able to demand an audience with a divine presence.
3. His ultimate goal was to achieve henosis, which is union with the divine, so rising above the material world.

There are strongly divergent opinions on theurgic Neoplatonism, some say it is a corruption of Platonic philosophy and others think it is as a profound spiritual practice. I'm in the camp which has doubts about the risks these ideas present when used as ritual spiritual practices, even though I have great sympathy with some forms of Platonic philosophy as I will explain later.

Let's continue with this review of the development of Neoplatonism by looking at another major influencer on its development, Proclus Diadochus.

Proclus Diadochus, usually referred to as Proclus, was a Greek who lived from 412 to 485 AD. He became the Principal of the Platonic Academy in Athens. In my opinion, he is one of the last major classical philosophers of late antiquity and developed an elaborate and extended system of Neoplatonism.

Before I address the WM's question I would like to offer a quick overview of Proclus's teachings categorised by their most important contributions:

1. **Metaphysics.** He expanded the Neoplatonic hierarchy of existence, emphasizing a sort of Trinity made up of The One (the ultimate source of all reality), The Divine Mind (Nous), and The World Soul (Psyche).
2. **Theurgy:** Proclus incorporated theurgical practices, following the lead of Iamblichus. He derived rituals which he thought could help individuals ascend the spiritual hierarchy and so achieve union with The Divine.
3. **Platonic Theology:** He wrote extensively on the spiritual teachings of Platonic philosophy, develop it into a theology for interpreting and synthesizing the works of Plato
4. **The Philosophy of Mathematics:** He made significant contributions to the development of mathematical understanding of geometry, writing a commentary on Euclid's Elements.
5. **Astronomy (and Ethics):** This strange coupling had some overtones of fortune telling, as the separate disciplines of astronomy and astrology were not clearly separated until Newton wrote his *Principia Mathematica*. Proclus believed that the study of the stars and celestial bodies was more than a scientific endeavour, he saw it as also a spiritual one, viewing the cosmos as a harmonious and ordered system which reflects the divine order and unity. This was an idea which Newton also embraced with greater mathematical precision. Proclus tried to integrate Eastern teachings and religious practices into his astrological system and combine it with a theory of the movements of the heavens.
6. **Ethics.** , He focused on the pursuit of virtue and the quest of the soul to unite with The Divine. He believed that true happiness (eudaimonia) could only be achieved through the cultivation of virtues, which he classified into natural, ethical, political, purifying, intellectual, and theurgical virtues. The theurgical virtues were particularly interesting, as they involved carrying out rituals and practices intended to manifest a Divine Presence to enable the soul to unite with the divine. Proclus also discussed concepts such as providence, fate, freedom of choice, and the nature of evil which he integrated into his ethical framework.

Proclus had a lasting impact on Byzantine philosophy and on the development of both Islamic and Scholastic philosophy, and even affected German Idealism, thought his impact on Hegel. But it was his dabbling in Astronomy that inspired a modern philosophy, which I subscribe to, known as Platonic Realism.

One of my scientific heroes is Dr Roger Penrose. He is a British mathematician and physicist best known for his work in mathematical physics, general relativity, and cosmology. His scientific viewpoints, particularly his ideas on the nature of consciousness and the structure of the universe, have distinct roots in Platonism. Penrose's work asks the same deep philosophical questions about the nature of reality, but is grounded in modern scientific principles and mathematical theory rather than the metaphysical and mystical elements of Platonism which Neoplatonism extended.

Penrose's work may be built on modern scientific principles and mathematics, but his philosophical approach shows the influence of Platonism in his view of mathematics. Penrose states that he believes mathematical truths exist independently of human thought, which aligns with the Platonic idea of a transcendent realm of Forms or Ideas. This shows that Penrose's work is more directly influenced by Plato himself, than the later Neoplatonic synthesis. His emphasis on the reality of mathematical objects and the importance of mathematical insight over algorithmic processes reflects a classic Platonic perspective rather than a Neoplatonic one. But, nevertheless, Roger Penrose's have been deeply influenced by the ideas of Plato.

His Platonist view of mathematics posits that abstract mathematical forms and concepts exist in a realm that is independent of the physical world and of human cognition. This aligns with Plato's theory of Forms, which suggests that non-material abstract forms represent the most accurate reality.

Penrose says that the existence of mathematical truth is independent of human thought, and he places great emphasis on the importance of mathematical insight over algorithmic processes. This reflects the Platonic philosophy of perfect forms, such as the Platonic Solids which we Masons use as proof of the independent existence of Truth, in the furniture of a Royal Arch Chapter. His work on consciousness and artificial intelligence also draws on these ideas, implying that human minds can understand truths that are fundamentally unreachable by computational means.

Penrose's scientific statement of Plato's theory of Forms is known as "mathematical realism" or "Platonic realism". I share this belief that abstract mathematical objects and concepts exist independently of human thought and the physical world, just like Plato's Forms.

So, to conclude my basic definitions, to enable me to answer the WM's question, I will summarise my take on Platonic realism.

Platonic realism is a philosophical view that aligns with Plato's theory of Forms. Abstract objects such as mathematical entities, properties, or concepts exist independently of our minds and the physical world. They are discovered not invented. These entities are timeless, changeless, and accessible through intellectual intuition rather than sensory experience.

The Key Points of Platonic Realism

1. **The Existence of Abstract Objects:** Abstract entities exist as of right, not as dependents on physical manifestations or mental constructions.
2. **Independent Reality:** These entities have an objective, independent reality like Plato's realm of Forms, where perfect, non-physical ideas represent the truest form of reality.
3. **Access Through Reason:** Humans can access these abstract objects through reason and intellectual insight, aligning with Plato's belief in the power of the mind to apprehend the Forms.

I find the philosophy Platonic Realism compelling because it is based on a mathematical understanding of the nature of reality. Our ability to use mathematical tools to make accurate predictions about the physical world shows that these methods tap into an underlying abstract reality. This echoes the Platonic view that true knowledge comes from understanding these eternal forms. It also offers an opportunity to understand how self-aware consciousness can allow an intelligent entity to both create and control its environment. It is an indisputable fact that the intention of a self-conscious observer in the present can create a previously undetermined history at the point of probability waveform collapse. But does this have anything to do theurgy? Could henosis be a ritual form to focus the observer's intentions on particular beneficial types of waveform collapse?

The influence of Platonic Realism on Western thought and its enduring presence in philosophy, science, and art suggest that it appeals to deep and significant aspects of human understanding. Many intellectual traditions have built upon the philosophical and practical appeal of Platonic Realism. They suggest that acknowledging the existence of abstract concepts can provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of reality.

Here endeth the history lesson!

But how might this be part of a theurgical motive for opening a Lodge on the Centre?

Having defined the meanings and outlined the origins of the concepts of Platonism, Neoplatonism, Theurgy, Henosis and Platonic Realism, I can now draw on these ideas to address the WM's question, which you might just recall is "To what extent are Masonic rituals theurgic rites?"

Getting to the Point.

Masonic Rituals work on several different levels.

If we think about the first degree, on a superficial level it teaches simple lessons in morality, teaching the importance of empathy, charity and moral treatment for others. At a deeper level it hints at the existence of secrets which require more thought. The poniard in the first degree warns you not to rush forward before you are properly prepared and the cable-tow warns you not to be afraid of knowledge by running away from it. It teaches you that if you face up to your fears then things will not be as bad as you feared. But there is no theurgical undertone to it.

The second degree superficially represents a chance for self-improvement and education, where brethren are encouraged to deepen their understanding of Masonic principles, symbolism, and traditions. But at a deeper level it is an exercise in developing your intellect to learn about the nature of reality, to learn how to seek out truth and recognise it when you find it. And in the closing of this degree, we get a first glimpse of theurgical intent when the wardens describe the symbol of an all-seeing eye at the centre of the Temple, which the first degree told you was a symbol of your soul, and character. The ritual does not try to manifest the Grand Geometrician, but it suggests to you that some greater entity is observing your actions.

In the Third-degree you face what's described as your last and greatest trial. This is the concept of your own death. You enter a darkened lodge room, where the brethren who are accompanying you on this journey are as much in the dark as you are. You have changed from being a poor candidate in a state of darkness entering a lighted lodge, to a degree where both you and the lodge share the darkness of ignorance about its sombre topic. You enter this unknown realm together. But if you are going to learn about Truth you've also got to learn how to overcome your ego, because your ego will try to stop you acknowledging any Truth which threatens its own supremacy. This implies that you must submit your will to that of a higher authority. The description of Solomon's Temple in some volumes of the sacred law suggest that it only had one gate. And yet the temple you explore in the darkened lodge room has three gates, each facing in a different direction and each guarded by a different sort of ruffian who wants to attack you.

You can try to approach the Centre via the Gate of Will, the Gate of Intellect, or the Gate of Spiritual Intention. But none of them are going to take you directly to the answer to that key question, what is the Truth that can be found only at the Centre.

At the South Gate, you try to reach the Truth of the Centre through this Gate of Intellect and Knowledge. You think that you can reason your way out of the dilemma of certain death. Your intellect, afraid of having to trust its feelings, afraid of having to confront deep purposes, afraid even to consider its own death faces the Ruffian of the Gate. who strikes you down with a plumb rule, the symbol of uprightness.. You are so shaken that you go down on one knee, but you don't give in. You continue to seek that Truth which is hidden within you.

You stagger to the North Gate, the Gate of Will. You argue that if you practice charity and good works then you don't need to do anything else. These are the motives of that part of your lower self that doesn't want to reform or curb its excesses. But its brute calculations do not work. You find you cannot bribe your way out by proclaiming your good works of Charity. Your ego, afraid of having to confront your death faces the Ruffian who represents your deep motives, who demands to know the Truth of the Centre. Again, you refuse and are struck down by a Level, the symbol of equality. Your ego is so shocked by this reversal that it throws itself on the mercy of religious fervour and staggers towards the East Gate, the Gate of Spiritual Intention.

Your ego gives itself up to extremes of religious fanaticism, and throws itself onto the mercy of the Ruffian guarding the East Gate who again demands you reveal the Truth of the Centre. When you refuse the Ruffian strikes you dead, with a heavy maul, the symbol of the force of conscience.

Your ego has learned that you cannot escape death. You cannot argue your way out, you cannot bluster your way out, and you cannot entreat your way out. Death is inevitable. It cannot be reasoned away, bought off by charity, or prayed away. This is where you are forced to accept the reality of your own death.

As you lie there, dead and despairing, the real purpose of the degree finally starts to become clear, symbolised by the rising of the Bright Morning Star.

As you lie in your grave you are approached by the principal officers of the lodge, to reinforce the previous lessons of each degree. The Junior Warden tries to lift you with the emotional grip of an Entered Apprentice, but it fails. The Senior Warden comes from the West to try and lift you from your grave using the grip of an intellectual Fellowcraft, but it likewise proves a slip. Only the Master gives you any hope by pointing out that faint glimmer of light in the East. The Master succeeds in raising you, on the five points of fellowship, using the Lion's grip as the Bright Morning Star rises on the Eastern horizon.

You came into Freemasonry seeking light and were placed on the sunrise line of the day of greatest light. As a Fellowcraft you faced up to the trials of understanding Truth on the sunrise line of the day of least light. But you were raised on the sunrise line of the day of perfect balance. You taught the five points of fellowship and shown the emblems of mortality illuminated by the light of the Bright Morning Star to assure that life does have purpose.

You have been told in all the degrees that Truth lies within you. If you can bring yourself into balance, then you will move to your centre. You are told about The Centre during the climax of the ceremony of the third degree, when the master turns you to view the open grave and shows you the emblems of mortality. They symbolise that within your mortal frame resides a Divine Spark which gives you purpose. They symbolise that you are a part of the creative force of the whole Cosmos and must look for purpose within yourself. It's up to you to discover exactly what that means in your life. If you listen to your inner vital and immortal principle it understands as it is entangled with the Cosmos. If you sit quietly and concentrate on reaching that Divine Spark within yourself, it will reveal its secrets to you, so you will learn what Truth is, and what you should do.

This is effectively this is a process of henosis which involves stages of purification, contemplation, and ultimately, mystical union. It's a profound spiritual experience that transcends ordinary consciousness and brings about a sense of divine enlightenment. And it lies within your own Centre.

So "To what extent are Masonic rituals theurgic rites?"

For those who seek to understand the deeper levels of symbolism embedded in the ritual there are theurgical intentions which if you respond to them can lead you to henosis. And this is an experience which Bro W. L. Wilmshurst, calls awareness of the Centre. But as our Worshipful Master pointed out at the last Associate's meeting W. L. Wilmshurst had conflicting ideas about how to approach awareness of The Centre. WLW believed in the concept of transubstantiation in the form of the Real Presence in the Sacrament. In that, he moved far closer Catholic orthodoxy than is comfortable for my Calvinist upbringing. When he says, in his 1910 review of Waite's *The Hidden Church of the Holy Graal*, 'To understand the Mass is to hold the key to all other mystical systems'. He admits to holding a theurgic belief that ritual of the host and wine can summon a Divine presence. Yet in his paper on

Spurious Ecstasy and Ceremonial Magic he denounces theurgy saying: . *'At their best theurgic practice are attempts, disguised as pseudo-dedications of sanctity, to stimulate and exercise occult faculties by constraining to the ends of selfish gratification subhuman intelligences and forces that mercifully remain unmanifested to our ordinary perceptions. At their worst, they are unnameable abominations'*.

Wilmshurst realises that the motive for carrying out theurgic rites is important. If they are carried out with the intent of drawing closer to God, or as Plato called it The One, then they are a good thing but if they are carried out with the intention of harnessing unnameable abominations for nefarious ends then they are dangerous.

He sums up this idea of the importance of having pure motives for approaching henosis by the use of Masonic rituals and mediation, by saying *'There is no terser summary, yet no more explicit and luminous exposition of the one legitimate occult path... at a time when many minds are seeking for sound counsel and feeling after the true way, while temptations exist to divert them towards spurious and dangerous processes'*. He warns that the most important thing to avoid is Pseudo-occultism and Masons should *'Choose ye this day whom you will serve!'*

So, to a limited extent. I suspect that the sequence of Masonic rituals does have some theurgic undertones, and this can lead to unpleasant consequences for the unwary, as Bro Roger pointed on in his paper. But if a Mason remembers the second question asked at their initiation, In whom do you put your trust? then that trust will lead to the application of what WLW calls a "*graduated-fire*" which will induce legitimate growth, and ultimate absorption into the focal source and holy centre of all consciousness and power. This form of theurgic henosis could well provide a ritual path to induce those beneficial types of waveform collapse which I believe are desirable. So, my answer is that I think that the extent Masonic rituals are theurgic rites depends on the motivation of the individual Mason undertaking them. Your own intentions will decide if the henosis is beneficial or destructive.

Therefore, I urge you to be cautious my brethren in what you wish for.

The Need to be Properly Prepared Before Embarking on Masonic Meditation.

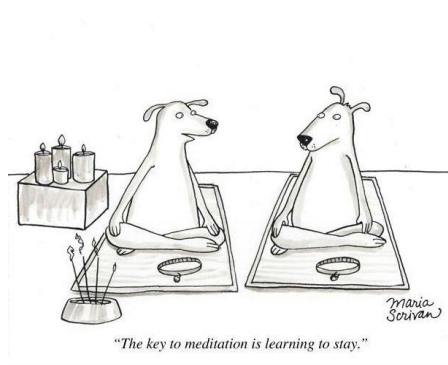
WBro Revd Roger Quick

This is a transcript of the lecture delivered by WBro Roger to the Coronatio Quadrans online meeting in Feb 2025. Here is a link to the video recording of the session. <https://youtu.be/9vp22OyogQw>]

By way of a prolegomenon, let me give you something from Wilmshurst:

The active acquisition of knowledge by reading and working upon abstract problems needs balancing by reflection and meditation. Paradoxical as it may sound, moments of profoundest mental passivity are found by those experienced in these things to be moments of intensest illumination. The unruffled "still waters" of the contemplative mind involve the highest mode of mental activity. Supreme knowledge comes when we still and empty the mind and are content to know nothing. -

The Ceremony of Passing 1933



How do we as Freemasons come to an understanding of healthy Meditation? I believe the answer goes back to the very first questions we are asked at our Initiation. The first question requires us to state our name. For the Hebrews - upon which our Craft is founded - a name means much more than what just what we are *called*; rather it is a definition of who we *are*. Our first answer, then, is to acknowledge our nature and being. The next question: "In whom do you put your trust" relates us to the Almighty. *In God*. Our very beginning in Masonry is therefore Who we are, and in Whom

we believe; however we care to understand that.

Too often, descriptions are taken as definitions, and thereafter anything outwith that is ruled out of order as being outside the given remit. This happens in every area of human life, but is particularly common at present in management and administration. (And, incidentally, in the church). So, I won't begin with any sort of definition.

Nor will I claim to be an expert. There was a survey done a few years ago to explore people's self-assessment of their own physical fitness. Those who scored themselves lowest were the professional athletes. Much the same is true of our spiritual health.

In fact, talking about meditation - or prayer - is rather like talking about music. As the composer Ralph Vaughan-Williams said - more or less: *Would Odysseus have been obliged to be lashed to the mast if the sirens instead of singing to him had given him a presentation copy of the full score?*

My own first career was as a musician, pianist, conductor and composer. A sort of musical odd-job man. I think it is helpful to know something of where someone is coming from when assessing what they have to say. So, I will tell you.

After an over-churched childhood, I had some years as an atheist. This is almost necessary for children of clergy. Two things brought me to some sort of faith; one was a long consideration of who I was. If,



if adults called you an "old soul" as a child that was their polite way of saying "wow you're only 12 and you've already lost all your serotonin"

according to the most popular models of the 1970s, I was simply a bag of genetic material shaped by my environment; what was left for me? I had a clear sense of *being*: of *selfhood*. Then, when I was 23, my friend and mentor died, by his own hand. This happened just after I had taken a job as a church organist because I needed the money. Just coincidence, of course. For me, believing revealed a sense of vocation.

It's only in the last few decades that there has been a general rediscovery of the Western tradition of meditation, which certainly gained impetus from T.S.Eliot in 1942. quoting Julian of Norwich; ironically probably the most difficult of the mediaeval contemplatives.

Since then, we have rediscovered Teresa of Avila, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*; Meister Eckhart; and Hildegard of Bingen, to whom music is itself a contemplation.

But the only mainstream Christians who consistently meditate - or use collective silent prayer - are the Quakers. I remember chairing one local ecumenical project, and suggesting that each group contributed something of their own charism, taking six minutes each of the allotted hour. The Quaker present said; *Well, six minutes is a very short silence*. I told her I was going to tell that to my congregation.

Many of us find blessing in the Rosary; repeated short prayers accompanying contemplative prayer - not least because it engages both conscious and subconscious: I can say more about that later if anyone wants me to.

But I remember one particular moment when my vicar rushed off to deal with a life-and-death emergency (this was in the vicarage on the notorious Gipton estate; it happened most days) and I asked what I could do. He said *You can do the washing-up*. I was a bit disappointed. I was hoping for something more exciting. But I washed up; and found that by making that a prayer, it became a most blessed, transcendental thing. I saw how beautiful soap bubbles are: I noticed the sun shining through the window. As the poet George Herbert says; *Who sweeps a room as for they laws.... Makes drudgery divine*. And he concludes, tellingly: *This is the famous stone that turneth all to gold*.



We expect to find treasure far away, when all the time it is right in front of us.

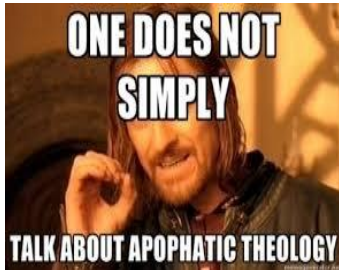
One of the difficulties we have when meditating on masonry, is that most of our images are rather dark, e.g. all the penal signs. But this is not all, by any means; meditation on the three greater lights and the three lesser lights can - I know from experience - prove hopeful and life-affirming. Similarly, the moment of Raising, and the five points of fellowship. Or - and I have found this particularly useful -

going quietly through a complete ceremony; pausing to contemplate the significance of each moment.

I learned that this was useful after I had had experience of meditation during ordination training. The monks who trained us for ordination spent part of each day in meditation, and required us to do the same: at least two sessions of twenty minutes daily. The first before Morning Prayer at 7am. So, from soon after 6.30am each day I became used to the discipline of meditation. I believe the discipline is important. It engages all of you - our whole being - in a way that *doing it when you feel like it* doesn't. I was to some extent used to this; not least because of having been a professional musician, which requires discipline - an estimated 16,000 hours before attaining a basic level of professional competence.

But all music comes out of silence, and returns to it. As the artist Kandinsky says; *White acts on our psyche like the great silences in music*. It is a silence that is not dead, but pregnant with possibilities. White has the appeal of the nothingness that is before birth, of the world in the ice age.

Meditation then was often useful and calming, in the midst of a very demanding course of training. But I was having difficulty during my first term with meditative prayer. My tutor, who was a very wise monk, and gloriously practical, suggested *apophatic* prayer, which I had never encountered.



It involves allowing any thought, any prayer, to come up; and then saying to it; *No*. In other words, to say what God is not. I found it tremendously liberating.

We were each encouraged at that time to produce a *Rule of Life*. Very Benedictine. Some people like lists. I tried it, but found it mostly just produced guilt when I didn't do it.

We had other periods of silent contemplation; for example, sitting in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament - that is, the consecrated bread - for an hour or two.

I have worked with a contemplative community, who spend much of their time looking after retreatants. This is a common occurrence - one might almost say *problem* with the contemplative life. I've only - so far as I know - met one hermit. They don't get out much. This particular one was gloriously grumpy. He told me that he could spend all his time talking to conferences about what it was like to be a hermit. *And then I'd have no bloody time to do it!*

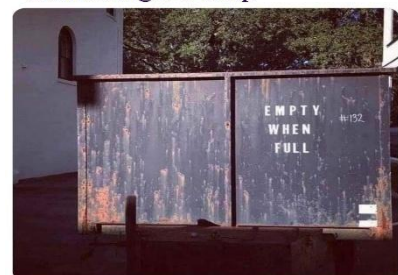
Real saints, in my experience at least, are very well-grounded. They don't deny the physical; they aren't floating an inch off the ground; they're not, as has been said, *So heavenly-minded they're no earthly good*.

Some things help. Maybe others don't. I have used the runes; specifically, the Elder Futhark which I engraved onto slips made from the branch of a yew tree, cut by hand. I had some doubts about using it, then remembered *The Golden String* by Bede Griffiths - a Benedictine who founded an Ashram - where he says *It's just another way of calling home*. In my experience it is at least an effective way of exploring the subconscious. I would say the same of the *I Ching*: it has an openness, and a wisdom.

The *Tarot* I haven't used - so far - mainly because it has darker images than I want to embrace. But then, my own tradition of Christianity has at its heart the image of someone being tortured to death. But I should add that - again in my tradition - that that death is followed by a glorious Resurrection.

Like many aspects of these things, I think those things which are sometimes used to try and predict the future (rather than to better understand the present) are probably alright in themselves - that is, to use a term from gaming, they are *neutral*: like all tools. But I think they are problematic when we try to base our lives on them.

Schrodinger's Skip



When I worked as chaplain to the homeless of Leeds, our people would sometimes tell me of their - frequently most painful - early lives. And I would respond, *That's a reason but it's no excuse*. You see, they had to be given *agency*. They had to know that *change was possible*. As Dr Johnson said, after a long discussion regarding predestination: *We're free, and we know it, and that's an end on it!*

In those nine years working as chaplain to the homeless and vulnerable in St George's Crypt, I found that Meditation was one of the most useful tools I could give them. I offered weekly guided meditations of about 40 mins. This would lead to the regular question: *Hey Rog, are you doing that Medication this week?*

The form I frequently used was a version of *The Secret Garden*, which changed over the years we used it. I generally kept my own eyes open - at least after someone complained that a neighbour had groped her. (Now *there's* an unexpected negative result of meditation.)

It was there too that I sometimes used music as a vehicle for meditation. Sometimes monastic plainchant (we had recorded a cd of this during my time at Mirfield); sometimes repeating fragments of music - either Taizé chants, or e.g. Gavin Bryars' beautiful meditation on the song of a tramp, *Jesu's Blood*. Or otherwise, gentle and calming music, such as Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending*.

But gentle and calming is not the only useful music. My friend, the musicologist Stephen Johnson, wrote in his account *How Shostakovich changed my mind* of how a string quartet was performing in a mental hospital. Usually, they played some jolly pieces of Mozart or Haydn, but on one occasion, finding themselves short of rehearsal time, they played a movement from a quartet by Shostakovich. This was, typically, extremely dark and pessimistic. The reaction was remarkable; the patients found it cathartic and healing. I have myself sometimes recommended music which travels from darkness to light, generally music without words, which can get in the way. And without the beat of a drum kit, which can distract the body too much.

Music, therefore, can help draw us into a meditative state. But all music proceeds from silence, and returns to it, if we will let it. The written word will also sometimes strike a chord in us. I think especially of Evelyn Waugh's novel *Helena*, and of this passage in particular, which I read on the Feast of the Epiphany; the coming of the Magi:

"You are my especial patrons ... and patrons of all late-comers, of all who have a tedious journey to make to the truth, of all who are confused with knowledge and speculation, of all who through politeness make themselves partners in guilt, of all who stand in danger by reason of their talents. Dear cousins, pray for me ... and for my poor overloaded son [Emperor Constantine, who is not yet a Christian]. May he, too, before the end find kneeling-space in the straw [beside the Christ Child] ... For His sake who did not regret your curious gifts, pray always for all the learned, the oblique, the delicate. Let them not be quite forgotten at the Throne of God when the simple come into their kingdom."

Evelyn Waugh, *Helena* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1950), p. 224

And, on the subject of the Epiphany



In terms of ecstatic utterance, I have not been given the gift of tongues. (Nor of Administration; St Paul lists them together.) But I have friends who have the gift, and have sometimes asked for them to pray over me *in the spirit*. Once or twice, I have been part of larger groups singing together in the Spirit. In both Pentecostal and Catholic congregations. I have myself, usually when alone in a church, been moved to sing wordlessly, in what has felt like an ecstatic utterance.

And I remember one particularly significant moment, the memory of which came to me when one of my pupils after we had been discussing Buddhism, asked me, with all the innocence and courage of a young child: *Sir, are you enlightened?* She wanted a real answer. And what came to me was an experience not long before, when I had been contemplating a stone - a crystal of some sort - as I looked out across the beautiful valley. I had the most wonderful, extraordinary sense of being at one with the nature of this tiny stone, and with everything around me; a sense which expanded to contain all of creation. I told her that; and simply answered that it was maybe just a glimpse of what Enlightenment might be, and that I hoped for even more one day.

I taught - so far as one ever can - the nature of Enlightenment with what are sometimes called Magic Eye pictures. I would give each of them one of these pictures, and ask them to look at their picture until it went into 3D. The room would be silent, and then suddenly one of them would say *Wow!* And the others would say, *What is it?* And I would say, *Just keep looking until you get it.* So they encouraged one another to look for something they couldn't explain; even after they experienced it.



Something of the same happened with meditation. I regularly introduced my pupils - aged from 8 to 18 - to meditation. The youngest ones I introduced by giving them Smarties. I would distribute these, telling them that they couldn't eat them yet. (Deferred gratification is such a middle-class thing). And then I would say that they should eat them in a very particular way; closing their eyes and focusing on the experience of tasting their own particular Smartie with every fibre of their being. And that would be for a full minute; and that they were to keep their

eyes closed until I told them to open. Then we would talk about it. It would be called Mindfulness now. By the time they had their last class with me, some years late, it had become their favourite lesson.

Some things I never got round to. This is a common occurrence with regard to meditation - and prayer. Everything else seems more important. I had intended to introduce them to Tai chi, which is sometimes - and rightly - called physical meditation. We had quite a few Chinese pupils; from both the mainland and Hong Kong. I asked them occasionally if they had ever practised Tai Chi. The reaction was always the same; a slightly embarrassed silence before one of them would say *my grandma does it*. In much the same way that British children might say, *My grandma goes to church*. The loss of the spiritual isn't just a Western thing.

Having said that monks taught me how to meditate well, it may be useful to turn to the experience of another monastic contemplative: Thomas Merton in *The Inner Experience* says this:

One of the strange laws of the contemplative life is that in it you do not sit down and solve problems: you bear with them until they somehow solve themselves. Or until life itself solves them for you....

And finally, [this book] contains no meretricious promise that one can become a kind of superior being by enrolling himself in an esoteric elite of so-called contemplatives....

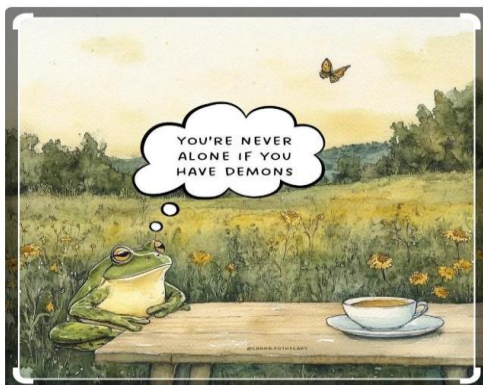
Merton believed that meditation had to have a firm basis in life. For us as masons, I believe this means being rooted in the Craft degrees. We need frequently to return to *that peculiar moment* when we were made masons. It centres us.

Much as we would like our own desires and experience to prevail, it is clear that we need the beliefs of others to moderate, or even keep us sane. Though we need to choose our others carefully. I remember as an in-patient on a secure ward seeing a Victorian funeral procession pass through the day-room. I turned to my neighbour for confirmation. *Did you see that?* He helpfully replied *Oh yes*. That was decades ago, in case you want to question my sanity as well as yours.



There are many good reasons for practising meditation; physical, mental and spiritual. But we need also to explore reasons why it may be contra-indicated. The first of these is connected with mental illness. I would suggest that anyone with a history of severe mental illness should be cautious, and approach extended meditation with care, and probably under the advice of a medical practitioner, or experienced counsellor, who knows them well. This is by no means to say that meditation is always unhelpful in such cases; far from it - the use of mindfulness is ubiquitous, and shown by various clinical trials to be of use, particularly with regard to mild to moderate depression and anxiety. It might be cynical to suggest that one reason for this is that it is much cheaper than extended psychotherapy or medication.

One lunchtime, one of our people at the Crypt was looking particularly unhappy; knowing that he heard voices, I asked if they were bad that day. *No!* he said. *They've stopped!* I commented on how wonderful this was. He was exasperated with me: *No! You don't understand. I don't know what they're thinking!*



Receiving counselling is itself not without risk. I remember being given a Gestalt exercise once which went badly wrong, and ended with me screaming, and curled in a foetal position in the corner. The skilled counsellor brought me out of it with coffee and cigarettes. I have also had the unpleasant experience of going Catatonic in the middle of counselling.

If therefore you have a history of mental illness, use meditation with care. *I was taught to be cautious.*

There are, however, other aspects which I think need to be considered regarding meditation. One of these is *motive*. Why do you want to meditate? Wanting to gain power or control - over oneself or others - are, in my view and experience at least, contra-indicators.

It may even be that within masonry this is a particular temptation. We say that we are all on the level; but we know that our organisation, particularly without understanding, can appear to be extremely hierarchical. One antidote to this is to remember Wilmshurst saying, on the too-frequently missed significance of the Second Degree:

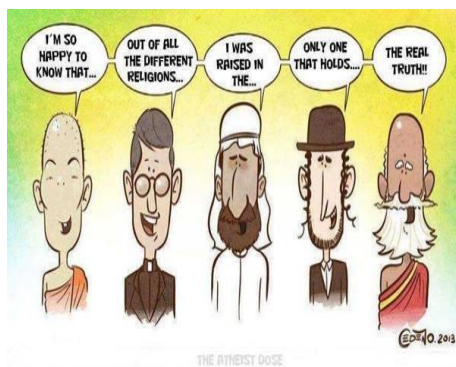
*...had we not better inquire whether the fault lies rather in our own lack of perception than in the Ceremony? Do we ourselves possess the insight requisite for the understanding of a Ceremony which claims to mark a much higher degree of progress in the work of making a Mason and assisting him to a much more advanced level of spiritual attainment than he has yet known? **Lodge Paper 19***

And here, it may be worth reflecting for a moment on Wilmshurst's own Christian belief. In terms of the relationship between the physical and spiritual, he certainly believed in the Real Presence in the Sacrament, which is closer to Catholic orthodoxy than it is to Calvinism. He says as much in his 1910 review of Waite's *"The Hidden Church of the Holy Graal"* Wilmshurst writes: *To understand the Mass is to hold the key to all other mystical systems.*

This may be important if we wish to really understand where Wilmshurst is coming from. On the other hand, it may just be because, like myself, he was born on the Summer Solstice.

This is one reason why I suggest turning towards the Good as a desirable preface to any meditative practice. And, indeed, in the middle of that practice as seems appropriate. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer says: *We must be willing for God to interrupt us.* (Wir müssen bereit werden, uns von Gott unterbrechen zu lassen).

Preferably, I think it means offering oneself in prayer to a Higher Being; and further, to a Higher Being characterized by Love. Rather than, for example, the Norse wolf-god Fenrir, the "Beast of slaughter" who eventually slays Odin, or indeed the Egyptian *Apep*, an Eater of Souls.



I say this because, at even a psychological level, contemplating fear, evil and destruction, aligns our thoughts towards those parts of ourselves; it's not a good place to begin, and a worse one to end up. I've not met *many* Satanists - so far as I am aware - though I remember one colleague in the chaplaincy of a top-security prison who found himself rather exquisitely conflicted because he was technically chaplains to all prisoners of whatever religion, which in this case included a couple of Satanists. That was how they introduced themselves to me, at least. It is easier for me,

since I believe we are all climbing different sides of the same mountain.

Evil itself is a term requiring some unpacking. Is it a thing in and of itself? Well, we use the word *dark*; when we know it is in fact the absence of light rather than a thing in itself, but it is a useful shorthand, and we know what we mean by it. Augustine's privative theory of evil states that "*evil is the absence of something that should be present in a thing.*" This means that evil is not an objective reality, but rather the absence of something. For myself, I believe that the dark side cannot create, only corrupt. But then, is there an encounterable manifestation of evil, such as the devil, or demons?





C.S. Lewis says that the two errors the human race can fall into about devils are either not to believe in them, or to take an unhealthy exaggerated interest in them. He may be right. Certainly, his *Screwtape Letters* is both funny and thought-provoking.

I once had a conversation with a Muslim taxi-driver, who asked en route to Castle Grove where it was I was going. I explained that it was a masonic hall, and that I was a Freemason. Ah! he said, *you worship devils*. I foolishly tried to explain to him that, as a priest in the Church

of England, bowing down before *Shaytan* was not one of my hobbies. (Whatever the Baptists think of Anglicans). But I could see he wasn't convinced. Prejudice survives any amount of evidence.

My own approach, for what it's worth, on encountering what we may by shorthand call *evil*, is to remember that *Perfect love casts out fear*. And from within my own belief-system, evil cannot prevail against the holy name of Jesus. *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.* καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

One renowned Yogi says the same thing: In case some echo of that dark experience is still lingering with you, try working with this affirmation by Yogananda:

"I am submerged in His eternal light. It permeates every particle of my being.

I am living in that light, for the divine Spirit has filled me within and without."

That is not far from St Paul:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, 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. Phil.4:8

Such has been my experience. Mostly. Severe, prolonged, intractable mental illness requires medical help, which is a different profession, training, and mind-set.

These caveats, then, are by no means limited to my own tradition. The ancient Buddhist Śūraṅgama Sūtra addresses at length the dangers inherent in meditation.

Rabbi Natan Shlomo, in talking about meditation in Judaism says:

There is one last meditation type called Prophetic meditation which stay away from. The greatest sages of Israel alive warn against this today and do not teach this as a normative practice any longer.

This is the emptying one's mind after achieving the null meditative state through complete self control and removal of pride through real humility. This method can be dangerous for those with any type of ego or negative habits. It most always leads to delusions of grandeur in such case or even



seizures when the null state is reached due to an ego fracture. I do not know anyone alive today who engages in Prophetic Meditation that cannot be described as mentally ill.

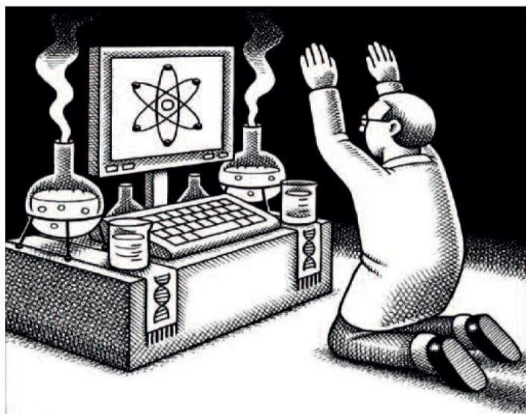
Rabbi Natan Shlomo <https://www.quora.com/What-is-meditation-in-Judaism>

This is why I would always advise prayer before meditation. That is, in masonic terms, to direct ourselves to the Centre before journeying *in search of that which was lost*. There are a number of good reasons for doing this; and no compelling reasons for not doing it.

It may help us to consider what *prayer* is. Or rather, what it is not. In a time of diluted spirituality like ours, many - if not most - people's perception of prayer is simply asking God to do what we want. The answer to this in the Christian tradition is found in [Philippians 2:5] *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus"*. It is about aligning yourself with the meaning and purposes of the Higher Power; of choosing to place yourself with the grain of the universe - not across or against it. It may not help to remember the words of Emo Philips: *"When I was a kid I used to pray every night for a new bicycle. Then I realized that the Lord doesn't work that way so I stole one and asked Him to forgive me instead."*

A child wrote a letter to Einstein, asking the good question *Do scientists pray?* She maybe had this sort of image in mind:

Einstein's reply took her entirely seriously, and is gracious:



...everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that some spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe, one that is vastly superior to that of man. In this way the pursuit of science leads to a religious feeling of a special sort, which is surely quite different from the religiosity of someone more naïve.

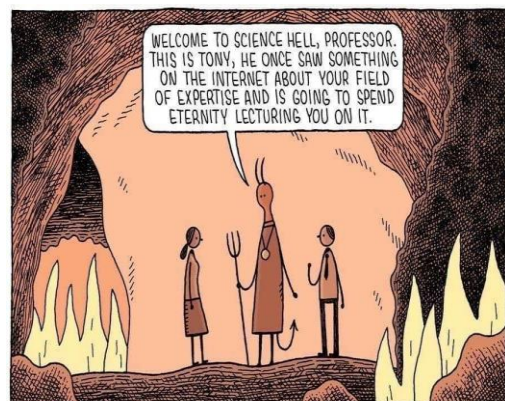
The *someone more naïve* makes me think of Richard Dawkins, who puts up the most naïve expressions of belief in order to knock them down.

By entertaining contrast, try searching Youtube for Marcus Brigstocke on *Religion* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSahVoFoHOE>

And in the meantime:

One of the questions I was frequently asked as a school chaplain was *Sir, do you believe in Vampires?* It was as though, once the way into the supernatural had been opened by a belief in a god, then anything could happen. Anything was possible.

I see this as a reaction to the loss of a generally agreed faith - that is, at least a notional Christianity such as prevailed in this country - and as evidence of our needing nonetheless a spiritual context, or at least some plausible explanation of the inexplicable



Nicholas Carr [<https://www.newcartographies.com/p/glitching-towards-bethlehem>] [quoted by Andrew Brown CT 14Feb2025] writes:

Perception is a neurological phenomenon but also a social one. In seeing things, we mimic the way others see things. I don't think it's a coincidence that the re-enchantment of sensory perception is happening just as people are habituating themselves to living in a technologically mediated world, a world constructed of images rather than things.

In replacing objects with representations of objects, with information, we have slowly but inexorably dissolved reality. We have opened — “widened” might be the better word — a portal to the paranormal. Aberrations of vision spread through media as easily as aberrations of behavior do. The demon is the perfect manifestation of the hyperreality in which we live today.

Whilst this seems at least arguable, it tends to presuppose an objectivity of perception, which is difficult to sustain. Montaigne, writing over 500 years ago, said

We cannot know what things are truly in themselves since nothing comes to us but what is falsified and altered by the senses.

This is necessarily different from the dangers encountered within Masonry itself. One of the Additional Orders includes this:

Man, in his ignorance, at the commencement of his pilgrimage believes himself secure, and, oftentimes discarding the use of the unerring compass, strays from the true course, and thus incurs the risk of being overwhelmed by the waters.

There is additionally, in some places, pressure to have had personal experience of another spiritual plane. This happens in some parts of masonry, and it certainly happens within Pentecostalism, where so great a stress is laid on this personal experience, that people end up pretending they've had it. Perhaps *pretending* is too strong a word. They may end up convincing themselves.

Much of this is covered in Wilmshurst's brief, but telling, essay on *Spurious Ecstasy and Ceremonial Magic*. He argues against methods of seeking out *ecstasis* and says:

Some of these... when they enter the region called occult, many become wholly evil even when initiated with good intentions.... Of the evil methods it may be premised that they are the shadows and perverted forms of the wholesome way...

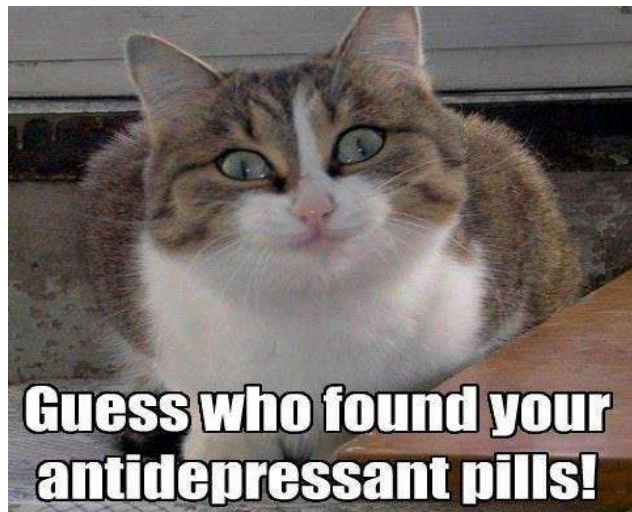
Our *intention* may well determine what we encounter, or even manifest.

Wilmshurst similarly argues against the use of narcotics:

He firmly opposes *Theurgy* - the summoning of spiritual forces, which he describes as *unnameable abominations*....

He continues:

That definite results accrue from magical practices is of course indubitable, but if from following them one were to gain the whole world, or even an inconsiderable portion of it, there is probably no surer way by which to disintegrate eventually one's own soul.



The whole essay is well worth reading, particularly if you have, or contemplate having, such experiences. [The Complete Essay is republished in this edition of CQ]

I am particularly obliged to our Brother of this lodge. Zach Cotter for furnishing me with the details of some scientific papers which examine the effects of meditation. *Dynamic change of awareness during meditation techniques: neural and physiological correlates* (Jerath et al 2012) presents some most significant findings on what happens to the body during *and after* meditation, which are very measurable.

Another paper, from 2016, examined *experienced shamanic practitioners* during ritual drumming, and concluded:

...trance involved coactive default and control networks, and decoupled sensory processing. This network reconfiguration may promote an extended internal train of thought wherein integration and insight can occur.

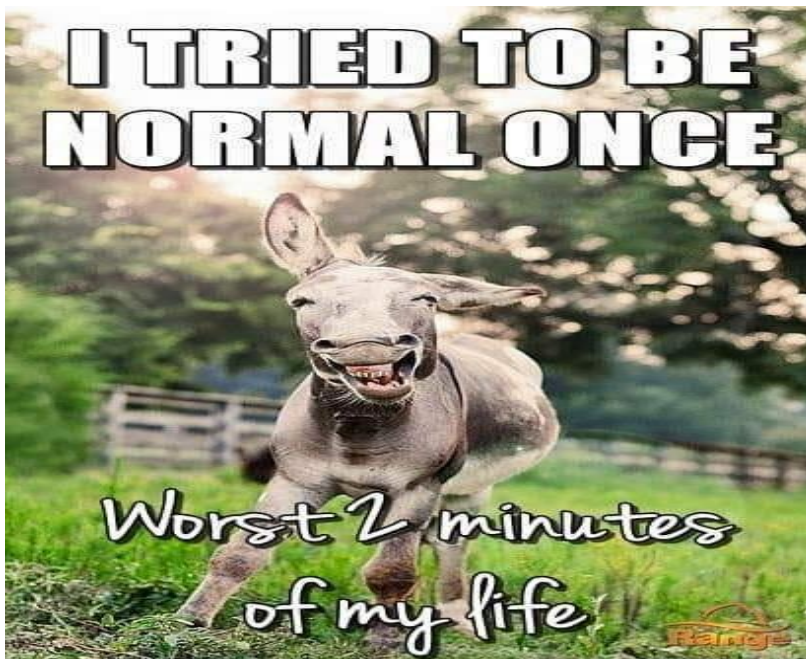
Brain Network Reconfiguration (Hove et al in Cerebral Cortex, July 2016)

Now whilst we don't usually employ ritual drumming in open lodge (I don't think the knocks count), this is a valuable exploration of the neural mechanisms in altered states. As an aside, concerning what we do in the lodge; on one level, the process of learning ritual can itself be thought of as meditation; at least, where we truly *know it by heart*.

A paper in the Journal of Religion and Health (2020) helpfully examines Internal Dialogue as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Prayer and Well-Being.

A multicentre survey entitled *Unwanted effects* (Cebolla et al, 2017) found that:

...long meditation periods can be contraindicated for people with psychiatric problems, as they promote the precipitation of mental illness and psychosis.... The most severe cases reported include the precipitation of psychosis, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and epileptic attacks....



This all sounds rather scary. But most studies seem to accept that about a quarter of those practising Meditation experience some Unwanted Effects, and of these the majority have a history of mental illness. It may be worth noting that one of the signs of some mental illness is a refusal to acknowledge that anything is wrong.

In conclusion, I should emphasise that I believe meditation, used advisedly, is overwhelmingly a good - I may even say *vital* - practice. Like

any tool, it can be used for good or ill.

I want to end with two quotations.

The first from Wilmshurst:

The fact that there exists a higher and more secret path of life than that which we normally tread, and that when the outer world and its pursuit and rewards lose their attractiveness for us and prove insufficient to our deeper needs, as sooner or later they will, we are compelled to turn back upon ourselves, to seek and knock at the door of a world within; and it is upon this inner world, and the path to and through it, that Masonry promises light, charts the way, and indicates the qualifications and conditions of progress. This is the sole aim and intention of Masonry.

The Meaning of Masonry

And, finally, T.S.Eliot, from the ***Four Quartets***:

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love,
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

Some Thoughts on Meditation

W.Bro Prof. Marios Adamou

First, let us define our terms. Meditation, in its simplest form, is the practice of focusing the mind—whether on a single point, a question, or simply the breath—to achieve clarity, calm, and insight. Freemasonry, on the other hand, is a fraternal organization that uses rituals, symbols, and moral teachings to encourage personal and spiritual growth. Its members are often told to seek "more light"—a metaphor for wisdom and understanding. At their core, both meditation and Freemasonry are about transformation: turning the rough stone of our raw selves into something polished and purposeful.

Now, you may wonder: where do these two meet? Freemasonry does not explicitly teach meditation as we might picture it—sitting cross-legged with eyes closed, chanting a mantra. But if we look closer, we see that the Craft is steeped in practices that mirror the aims of meditation. One of the most striking examples is the Chamber of Reflection. In many Masonic traditions, before a candidate is initiated, they are led to a small, dimly lit room adorned with symbols like a skull, an hourglass, and phrases urging contemplation. They are left alone there to reflect on their life, their values, and their mortality. Is that not a form of meditation? Sitting quietly, pondering deep questions, letting the mind settle on what truly matters?

This is not just a one-off ritual either. The entire system of Freemasonry—its degrees, its symbols, its working tools—invites us to pause and reflect. Take the square and compasses, perhaps the most recognizable Masonic emblem. The square teaches us to regulate our actions, to live with integrity. The compasses remind us to keep our desires within due bounds. To truly understand these lessons, we cannot simply memorize them—we need to sit with them, turn them over in our minds, and let them sink in. That is meditative work. It is about taking the symbols off the lodge floor and into our inner world.

Let us consider the rituals themselves. When we participate in a Masonic degree, we are guided through a story—a journey from darkness to light, from ignorance to awareness. The words, the movements, the symbols all draw us into a kind of focused attention. It is not unlike a guided meditation, where a voice leads you through a landscape of thought. Each degree peels back layers of meaning, asking us to consider who we are and who we could become. The Entered Apprentice degree, for instance, introduces us to the rough ashlar—a stone that is unpolished, just as we are when we begin our Masonic journey. Through reflection and effort, we shape it into a perfect ashlar. That process is not rushed; it is deliberate, quiet, introspective—much like meditation.

Historically, this linkage is not accidental. Freemasonry draws on ancient traditions—think of the mystery schools of Greece, the Hermetic teachings, or even the contemplative practices of alchemy. These were systems that valued silence and inner work as paths to enlightenment. Pythagoras, whose influence echoes in Masonic symbolism, taught his followers to meditate on geometric forms to unlock universal truths. The Chamber of Reflection, with its sombre stillness, feels like a nod to those older practices. Even the layout of a lodge, with its sacred geometry and orientation to the east, invites a meditative mindset—a space where we align ourselves with something greater.

So, how can meditation enhance our Masonic experience? Let us get practical for a moment. Imagine this: before a lodge meeting, you take five minutes to sit quietly, focusing on your breath or a Masonic symbol like the all-seeing eye. You clear your mind of the clutter of the day—work, stress, distractions—and centre yourself on the values of the Craft: brotherly love, relief, truth. When you

step into the lodge, you are present, focused, ready to engage with the ritual. That is a small shift, but it can transform how we experience our time together. It is like tuning an instrument before playing a symphony—the notes ring clearer.

Meditation can also deepen our understanding of Masonic teachings. Try this sometime: take a working tool, say the trowel, which spreads the cement of brotherly love. Sit with it in silence. Picture it in your mind. Ask yourself: How am I spreading unity in my life? Where am I building walls instead of bridges? Let the answers bubble up naturally, without forcing them. This kind of contemplation does not just make us better Masons—it makes us better people. It is a way to live out the virtues we profess, like temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice.

There is another layer here: harmony. Freemasonry thrives on the harmony of the lodge—brothers working together as one. Meditation fosters that too. When we calm our own minds, we bring a steadier energy to the group. If every brother took a moment to centre themselves before a meeting, imagine the focus, the unity, the peace that could fill the room. It is not about changing the ritual; it is about enriching it with intention.

Now, I will admit, meditation is not named in our rituals or charges. You will not find it in the monitor or the old lectures. But its spirit is there—in the call to study the hidden mysteries of nature and science, in the encouragement to know ourselves, in the quiet moments of reflection that punctuate our work. Some lodges, like those in Latvia's Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, have even formed meditation groups to explore this connection explicitly. They have found that meditating on Masonic symbols opens new doors to understanding—doors that lead beyond the intellectual and into the intuitive.

So, to wrap up, what is the linkage between meditation and Freemasonry? It is this: both are paths to the same destination—self-awareness, improvement, and a connection to something larger than ourselves. Meditation gives us a tool to quiet the noise and listen to the lessons of the Craft. Freemasonry gives us the symbols and structure to make that inner journey meaningful. Together, they are like the square and compasses—one grounds us, the other lifts us higher.

As Masons, we are builders, not just of temples but of character. Meditation can be our trowel, smoothing the rough edges of our thoughts, binding us closer to our principles and to each other. So, I will leave you with this suggestion: next time you are in lodge, or even at home, take a moment to sit in silence. Pick a symbol—the gavel, the pillar, the light—and let it speak to you. See where it takes you. You may be surprised how much more light you find.

Spurious Ecstasy and Ceremonial Magic

W. L. Wilmshurst

[Published in the Occult Review July 1911]

THE strongest evidence of man's dissatisfaction with his present status and surroundings is furnished by his desire to transcend the drab routine of life and to escape from himself. The yearning for "*ecstasis*" — the desire to stand out beyond his physical limitations — manifests in many ways. Some of these — conventional amusements, aesthetic or religious emotionalism — are innocuous enough, but when they enter the region called occult, many become wholly evil even when initiated with good intentions, whilst one only is otherwise than entirely spurious, transient, and imperious. Of the evil methods it may be premised that they are the shadows and perverted forms of the wholesome way; the homage of imitation and imperfection that vice pays to virtue and its attainment. The vulgar drunkard, for instance, enters after his own manner a spurious temple of the Mysteries to seek the joys of the pothouse, and his cup runneth over as surely, if in a grosser fashion, as his who is inebriated by the mystic Grail in the sanctuary of his own soul. The exhilaration of the aviator is a low-grade replica of that of the religious aspirant who, sighing for the wings of a dove, learns to soar — *superasque evadere ad auras* — otherwise than in modern airships. But the mild delights of the bottle and the thrills accruing from venturesome sports pale to nothingness before the gorgeous illuminations of consciousness inducible by certain drugs and anaesthetics. Few, however, care to undertake the experiences of the opium and hashish eater in view of the reaction and inexorable penalty exacted by outraged Nature from those who wilfully or through moral infirmity explore the caverns and abysses of the subliminal mind. Of recent years experimental psychology has probed this matter, and Professor James has described very graphically the effects upon himself of intoxication by nitrous-oxide gas. There is produced, he says, an intense and rapturous metaphysical illumination in which truth lies open to the view in depth beneath depth of almost blinding evidence; where subject and object, *meum* and *tuum*, the centre and periphery of things, become one; and where one becomes consciously blended with the Infinite.

Important philosophical deductions result from these experiments and a treatise upon The Anaesthetic Revelation by an American citizen is, in its way, of undoubted educational value.* [* See Prof. James's The Will to Believe, pp. 294-8 ; and his article in the Hibbert Journal, July, 1910.] But what is the effect of these practices upon the personal organism of the experimenter? It will vary in individuals proportionately to their native moral or immoral condition, and it may be assumed that in the morally degenerate the results would be much more appalling than those attending alcoholic delirium. But even the average clean-minded man, actuated by the good motive of scientific inquiry, testifies in the person of Professor James himself that he is left with " the sense of a dreadful and ineluctable fate; a pessimistic fatalism; depth within depth of impotence and indifference ; . . . terminating either in a laugh at the ultimate nothingness, or in a mood of vertiginous amazement at a meaningless infinity." So far, then, so bad; even at the best. The immature Icarus flying to the sun, gets his wings scorched for his pains and falls back into a sea of trouble.

Contraband illuminism is obtainable also by certain oriental yoga-practices and by the frenzy of the dance as exemplified by the whirling dervish who performs his gyrations with the object of deadening the senses and awakening higher centres of consciousness than those to which the senses are the portal. The dance has been used in the rites of sanctity, and perhaps even in connexion with the Christian Mass; but it has also served in the mysteries of iniquity as a sensuous and illicit attempt to capture elements latent in the depths of human nature to the legitimate possession of which that

nature has not yet attained. This latter was the classic sin of Prometheus in stealing the Divine Fire and using it for carnal ends. But it is perhaps little known that the excitation of psychic passion and the promoting a spurious ecstasy by unlocking an imprisoned essence which, by its proper user, may be suffered to act as the purifier and baptizer of the lower nature, is illustrated, beneath a thick veil of dramatic imagery, in the biblical reference to the lascivious dancing-woman whose object was to reduce into possession what is figuratively described as "the head of John the Baptist in a charger."

The practices of Theurgy and Ceremonial Magic are cognate in character to those already named. At their best (if the epithet be not an abuse) they are attempts, undercover of pseudo-dedications of sanctity, to stimulate and exercise occult faculties by constraining to the ends of selfish gratification subhuman intelligences and forces that mercifully remain unmanifested to our ordinary perceptions; at their worst, and even at a stage far anterior to that, they are unnameable abominations. As one of the great series of studies upon the varied manifestations of the Secret Tradition in Christian times upon which Mr. A. E. Waite has now for long been engaged we have before us an elaborate volume, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic*;^{*} [^{*} *The Book of Ceremonial Magic*, including the Rites and Mysteries of Goetic Theurgy, Sorcery and Infernal Necromancy. By A. E. Waite. 376 pp. with 180 engravings and plates. William Rider & Son, Ltd.] a most comprehensive treatise in that it supplies the texts of all the chief magical rituals extant, describes the methods and operations, and supplies much historical and critical commentary. But the author's avowed purpose being to show that Magic, Sorcery, Necromancy and their cognates are perverse corruptions and fungoid growths upon a body of doctrine that is high and holy, the book is negative rather than positive in value; its motive is that of the Spartan fathers when they paraded drunken helots in the presence of their sons; namely, to show them something well worth avoiding.

That definite results accrue from magical practices is of course indubitable, but if from following them one were to gain the whole world, or even an inconsiderable portion of it, there is probably no surer way by which to disintegrate eventually one's own soul. It is significant that these operations demand from their devotees preparations as arduous as, and certainly far more ingenious and troublesome than, are required from those who aim at that genuine occult wisdom of which art-magic is the complementary foolishness. The doctrine of both prescribes rigorous discipline of body and mind, but whilst in the one case the end proposed is that of assisting the Divine in man to find its rest in the Divine in the Universe, in the other it is to provoke auto-hypnosis and self-hallucination, to indulge in vanity and self-glory, to truckle with obscene powers, to steal nefarious marches upon and influence the freewill of one's neighbour, and to obtain abnormal facilities for practising lewdness unperceived. *Corruptio optimi pessima*; or as S. Francis of Sales once said in taking the pure and sweet-scented lily as the symbol of the perfected soul, there is no scent so foully malodorous as that of rotten lilies. Mr Waite has performed considerable service, though doubtless a disagreeable task, in collating the literature of Ceremonial Magic, in indicating its methods and aims, and especially in demonstrating the invalidity of the distinction popularly made between magic that is thought to be White and that which is admittedly Black. It is perhaps too much to hope that efforts towards attaining artificial illuminism or that the prostituted use of occult powers will cease to be made as the result of this volume, but, so far as literature can pronounce it, for all but the ignorant, the imbecile, or the wantonly wicked, this book is as the Last Judgement thereupon.

One turns with relief from contemplating the ways of vanity and evil, to the one remaining path leading to the true ecstasy and veritable Magia; the path which I have said above is alone legitimate and safe as it alone is to be computed genuine occultism and the only one worth any one's while to pursue. Given the fact, which lies at the basis of all occultism, that high and hidden centres of consciousness and power exist sealed up within the human organism, there exist also alternative ways

of unlocking them. One is by forced, illicit methods conducing inevitably to mental and moral disintegration; the other is by a "graduated-fire" and methods inducing legitimate and normal growth towards, and ultimate absorption in, the focal source and holy centre of all consciousness and power, where, voided of all vain desires and in utter immunity from any peril, the soul

*In the ultimate Heart's occult abode
May lie as in an oubliette of God.*

As regards the former of these methods the best of all authorities stigmatised as thieves and robbers those who sought to "climb up into the sheepfold by some other way" than that of growth in grace and sanctity and through the strait gate and narrow way prescribed by the law and the order; whilst a lesser one who learned the Secret Doctrine independently of the Christian fold has also testified that those few who find the hidden door legitimately are such as have been found specially worthy to be interiorly illumined or have won their title to the heights by an inflaming passion for holiness;

*Pauci, quos aequus amavit
Jupiter, aut ardens evexit ad aethera virtus,
Dis geniti potuere.
[Virgil, A en. VI. 129—131.]*

I will add but one word, lest Mr. Waite's new volume should by any be thought negligible because it treats of a subject that is so. In a succinct and powerful introduction, he has himself provided the antidote and counter-thesis to the main subject-matter of his book. No terser summary, yet no more explicit and luminous exposition of the one legitimate occult path, as often defined and often traversed during the age of Christendom, has to my knowledge appeared in public literature. And at a time when many minds are seeking for sound counsel and feeling after the true way, and yet when, to meet this demand, glittering temptations exist to divert them towards spurious and dangerous processes, Mr Waite's introductory pages to the collated records of Pseudo-occultism come as a warning to inexperienced aspirants and as a trumpet-challenge that says, "Choose ye this day whom you will serve!"

The Centre

Bro Dean Magee-Tingle - Worshipful Master of The Lodge of Living Stones 4957

[Bro Dean is an honorary associate of Coronation Lodge and has visited the lodge during his time at the helm of Wilmshurst's Lodge of Living Stones. At the last informal meeting of the Lodge of Living Stones in Feb, he gave this paper, which he has kindly agreed can be shared with the brethren and associates of Coronation Lodge. For those of you who are interested, The Lodge of Living Stones will undertake a full working of WLW's Book of the Perfect Lodge at their meeting on fourth Friday in March at Castle Grove in Leeds. Contact them at <http://www.lodge-of-living-stones.org.uk/>]

From the moment we consider the centre with regards to any aspect of freemasonry, we ought to quietly contemplate and ponder whether it is a physical, spiritual, ethereal, abstract, or even come to the conclusion it is completely nonsensical. Whatever your considerations be, it is your truth and therefore should not be disregarded because it does not fit some popular narrative.

To consider the origins of the word or idea for a centre, the Latin '*centrum*' was the fixed point of the two points of a drafting compass. Prior to that, the Greek word for 'centre was' *Kéntron* meaning 'sharp nail'. It came to be used for the point in the middle of the circle, with later reference to the sharp tip of a pair of compasses. The French, in the 14th century, certainly used the word *Le Centre* for the middle of a circle and it is from there that the English took the word.

In Walter Leslie Wilmshurst's article 'SPURIOUS ECSTASY AND CEREMONIAL MAGIC' written for the Occult Review (July 1911) he wrote:

'Given the fact, which lies at the basis of all occultism, that high and hidden centres of consciousness and power exist sealed up within the human organism, there exist also alternative ways of unlocking them. One is by forced, illicit methods conducing inevitably to mental and moral disintegration; the other is by a "graduated-fire" and methods inducing legitimate and normal growth towards, and ultimate absorption in, the focal source and holy centre of all consciousness and power, where, voided of all vain desires and in utter immunity from any peril, the soul'.

Interestingly Bro Wilmshurst alludes to the location of the centre being sealed up within the human organism and he takes it further in his paper '*The Tracing Board at the Centre*' where he certainly makes his opinion plain to the audience when he says '*What then is this "Centre" that by reviving and using which we may hope to regain the secrets of our lost nature?*'

We may reason from analogies. As the Divine Life and Will is the centre of the whole universe and controls it; as the sun is the centre and life-giver of our solar system and controls and feeds with life the planets circling round it, so at the secret centre of individual human life exists a vital, immortal principle, the spirit and the spiritual will of man.

By using this faculty, when we have found it, we can never err. It is a point within the circle of our own nature, living as we do in this physical world.

If Bro Wilmshurst considered that the spirit was the centre of man, then the late Bro Arthur Ralph penned a beautiful description in his paper 'Substituted Secrets'. He looked at this matter differently and considered who raises whom in the 3rd degree saying, '*The Eternal Divine Principle of their own being, raised them on their own centre, and brought them to the realisation that they were One in Essence with that Divine Principle; that despite all-seeming there is only One. This is the revelation that*

is the key. When this symbolic action becomes a reality one knows, without a shadow of a doubt and without taking thought, what the genuine secrets are.'

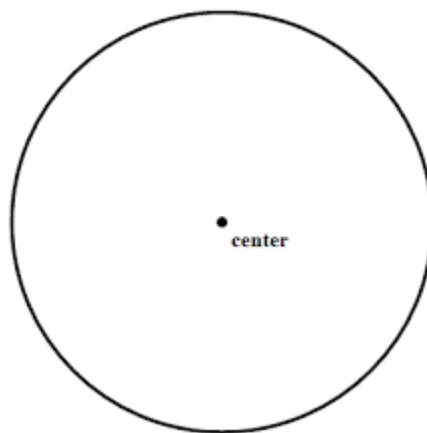
Some may take these words to be self-indulgent at first, however their premise is one of humility, saying that there is no superiority, we are of one – The Divine. In Arthur Ralph's paper *You – Life* on page 2 he further contemplates the centre by saying '*Do you think the One can create anything less than Itself? Or can there be something else besides the One? Or anything inferior to Itself? Remember that YOU are part of that creation; remember that there is a Sacred Symbol of the Godhead at the Centre of your Temple, your Being.'*

How is it possible to attain this state of awareness, at the centre?

It is not an uncommon theory, that to feel at One, you must pray, meditate or observe, as we do in the Lodge of Living Stones during, 'the dark silence' where we dwell within our centre, to consciously prepare our whole selves for The Divine-The Oneness- The Universe - God if you like. We silence our minds for a good reason, and it is to assist our concentration on the task in hand, rather than thinking about any other worldly thoughts.

How do we consciously recognize the centre within us?

If I told you I felt I was with my centre, even insisted and if you doubted me I jumped up and down on the floor in a tantrum, would it help? How do we then guide others to the truth in themselves when words fail us? This can be achieved through symbology. Although a symbol is not enough on its own, as it is a subjective picture, with guidance and the key, it morphs into a realization, and for many it confirms the truth.



To attain the realization of our centre, perhaps we ought to abide by rules written by man, perhaps the code of the Zoroastrians, which is 'good thoughts, good words and good deeds', or the Egyptian forty-two precepts of Ma'at, or the Indian concepts of Dharma. Would all this man-made goodness assist in our quest to be at one with our centre? Even though we might already be there! If we are there, as freemasons, dare we ask, "What is the point of searching?"

In these modern times, when organized dogmatic religion is waning, be under no illusion that this is happening for a reason: we are entering the age of enlightenment. The moment you try to nail down higher spiritual concepts such as God or Holy Ghost, this is the moment when the mystery and awe begin to die. They become weakened because you have lost sight of the thing, and are holding onto a metaphor/ word that pales in comparison. If you separate The One, it is unnatural, like splitting an atom, its consequences are detrimental. It is up to the individual and their relationship with their

centre; it should not be enforced as we have free will. An American poet called Ella Wheeler Wilcox in her poem 'The Law' wrote in her last verse:

"You are your own devil, you are your own God, You fashioned the paths that your footsteps have trod, And no one can save you from error or sin, Until you shall hark to the Spirit within."

The spirit, the centre, the divine, your physical body, it is all one, the oneness. Perceive this and be complete. Do not doubt your divinity, it is the truth of everything.

The Spiral Staircase

W.Bro Phillip Harris

Why am I a Freemason? Why do I stay a Freemason? What has held my interest for these last 30+ years?

Listen while I recite the words of Psalm 37:23. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in his way".

Are my steps ordered and is my Lord delighted? I must admit I don't know but I do know that I am driven to understand my Craft's objective and destination. I strive to learn of those things, visible and invisible.

Cardinal Newman says in his Hymn, "the distant scene I do not hope to see but lead me on". So, my love of the Craft calls me to follow to seek a place where I might hope to see a brighter light.

When I reached the rank of Master Mason, I thought I was at the pinnacle of masonic experience. I still didn't know where I was, or why I was there. I understood little of what had happened to me, or where I was bound. I had no clear objective. I became lost on the first tread of the Spiral Staircase of the 2nd degree.

Then I read about a wonderful, freestanding spiral stairway in the Loretto Chapel, in the heart of historic Santa Fe New Mexico. I was inspired. This structure attracts people from all over the world who call it, "the miraculous staircase". It climbs 20 feet to the choir loft, encompassing two full turns, all without any external support. It offered me a model of progress and experience, with each step presenting a different viewpoint. Each tread symbolising a gain in spirituality, insight, learning and drawing me ever closer to an understanding the philosophy of our Craft.

That miraculous staircase stands firm because it relies on the craftsmanship of a good builder for its support. And its twisting helix echoes the DNA of life. The stairs wind around an invisible Masonic Centre, just as when we open a lodge in the third degree we seek to align ourselves with that Centre.

Each turn on the masonic path offers a new view, improving as we progress. First we see the liberal arts and sciences, and then the more hidden mysteries of nature and science. Each upward step develops that most interesting of all human studies, that of our self. Masonic progress starts with being prepared in our hearts. Something both you and I confronted at our initiation.

Over the years any progress was hindered and sometimes discouraged. There always seemed to be one more step to take before the secrets of wonder and knowledge would be revealed.

My first steps were obtuse and mysterious, always leading upwards but often encountering opposition from discouraging 'wait and see' experts, indifferent brethren, and condescending leaders.

Each of the steps had a window looking outward, some steps had rooms to enter, some offered panoramas of earth, water, fire and air. Others were barred with signs saying "Enter at your peril".

On my climb I encountered fellow seekers. The first was an individual called "Don't". He advised me "Don't expect anything, it's a lot of monotony and repetition. Find what you want and live with it. Don't get involved with visiting, or socials. The cost is high and who wants to know what other monotony is elsewhere".

Behind his shoulder I could see a window overlooking vast expanses of wonder, truth, and purpose. "Don't" had not noticed this view as his eyes were cast permanently inwards and downwards.

Moving on, I met a lost individual clutching a battered second-hand bag, holding the apron his father had once worn with pride. He was stuck, Neither moving forward or aware of where he had come from. He had had Freemasonry done to him, but the experience had not changed him. Sat alone on his step, giving nothing and accepting nothing, he wallowed in his bewildered and empty aspect. Sadly, I passed him by and left him to wonder why he bothered to continue his father's forgotten tradition.

I soon learned not to ask questions, "Wait and see. You won't make friends by asking questions". I was told whilst being assured "it will all become clear in the 3rd degree". It didn't, and this unquestioning crowd stood before a window veiled by a curtain of ignorance, closed by a reluctance to learn, and cloaked with a suspicion of knowledge. I hoped for more, but had yet to meet anyone with answers for my unwelcome questions.

Surprisingly on the next step, where I stopped to talk with a brother called Mentor, he told me, "Don't worry about all this, I haven't a clue what it's about. I'm not interested; and you will also get by".

As he had 30 years' experience I felt I must ask what was his attraction to Freemasonry? "It's a good night out from the family, and we get away for weekends at times". On his step, the window he stood in front of, was blocked with clay and rough stones, but lacking the binding mortar of Brotherly Love. I moved on.

On the next step I was started by a vision of bright colours and gold braid Before me stood a large man, constrained by gold chains. His name was Ego. He asked me "What are you?". I could only answer "a Master Mason." "Walk in-step behind me as I go forward." He boomed, "I am already worth of three salutes, it will soon be five. I am first in procession, moving towards my next advancement which will be soon. I am what I am".

Looking out of his window I saw, a beautiful vista, a happy holiday scene with music playing on a sunny beach as he hummed "I do like to be beside the seaside". He seemed impressed with this vision, I wasn't.

Another step upwards offered entrance to a room full of wonder. I saw shelves of rare and mystical books, of science, religion, and philosophy. Brethren milled about shushing for silence while they read and scribbled frantic notes. In the distance, several brethren engaged in intense argument over various important points of detail. I am sure I heard the question of which end of a boiled egg goes into the egg cup be asked. Were they still debating Gulliver's question from ancient times? These men had grown masonically old without progressing beyond hoary old arguments amid mouldering books. But as we must live our own experience, and cannot reincarnate those of our favourite sage, no book or argument will find our light for us.

On the next step I met some of my former brethren, those who joined around the same time as me. They no longer wore the badge, or carried the sign, of a Master Mason. They looked bewildered and bereft of enthusiasm although they still wore a cable tow about their necks. They were the Brethren of the Lost. I tried to reason with them, encourage them back to Lodge, or even offer to help with arrears. None accepted my advances. They murmured reasons why they must abandon their masonic path. One had been refused admission to practices as his £60 jeans were unsuitable dress. Others were told they were not good enough to play a part in the ritual. Yet others had become bored of waiting on tables, fetching drinks, and missing their own meals on every lodge night. Sadly, others

could not meet the ever-growing demands for cash to support they knew not what. The raffle had become a symbol of oppression rather than relief for them.

The next step had a window adorned with curtains of dark blue and gold. Its sill was packed with trophies, certificates of merit, records of contributions, and Masonic Jewels. No one seemed to notice the bright light of the noon day Sun shining behind the closed curtains, which swayed slowly in the breeze from the open window.

Moving on I entered a whole lodge of identical brethren. All wore black jackets, striped trousers, and looked very smart. Some hogged the window, others sat admiring those at the window. Some grovelled at the feet of little groups of men clinging on to what they said was tradition. "We are who we are". They told me. "If you move away from we then you will not be of we anymore".

Sadly, they had no one to encourage them to look out through their window. I caught a glimpse of high mountains silhouetted against a new dawn. As I moved forward for a better look, those by the window hurried to protect the sight from my impudent gaze.

The next step was fashioned from black onyx, pure and shining. I knew instinctively, this sign of mourning heralded my darkness of my 3rd degree. Through the window I saw the five points of the bright and morning star to give me hope. There I met a guide, who navigated me through the dark valley of death, to knock on a door marked Challenge.

With my guides' help I studied myself. I reflected on my understanding of truth, my beliefs, my attitudes, my rebellions, and my acts both good and bad. As I looked out of the window I saw in the distance a door leading to personal stillness and harmony, which I knew opened onto a convention of true seekers. The door of Challenge proved also the portal to the secrets of an Excellent Master. Now I had some answers. I had been challenged to discover my soul and evaluate the squareness of my ashlar.

I had undergone strict examination to prove myself a Master Mason. I had worked on shaping my Ashlar at each step. Now I had returned, full circle, to that badge of innocence and bond of friendship which shone as white as the light streaming through the window onto this step.

I now knew I was a Master Mason, and there is nothing and no one greater. My pilgrimage had challenged my progress at each step with due trial and examination. Although my heart yearns for those who felt by the wayside, I cannot force them to join me here. I can only sow ears of corn far and wide from this lofty summit and hope to bring forth more brethren who will become "we and those like we".

Why did I persevere? What kept me going? The fact I was prepared in my heart long before I knocked on that first closed door. I was driven by my wish for light, so I did not heed the obstacles or the negative advice of others. I found a guide in the West, and he bought me safe towards the East. Now it is my turn to bring others from the West to the East.

The steps up the Spiral Stairway have led me towards the Centre. But I still seek a daily advancement in masonic knowledge and hope to win greater understanding of the mystery of the Centre which forms the hidden support for the Craft's free-standing steps.

Thank you guide.

Grasshopper!

W.Bro Simon Richardson

(With attribution and thanks to John Fleetwood and Lewis Masonic)

There are many remarkable passages within the three degrees in Freemasonry as well as in the Holy Royal Arch ritual but the one that is not in Emulation, but some Lodges use in the third degree and has made an impression with me during the period of my forty plus years within the Craft is from the Volume of the Sacred Law.

Many Lodges during the third-degree Raising ceremony include the "Grasshopper" passage from Ecclesiastes 12 during the period of darkness. It is this passage that highlights the rigours of the ageing process and provides a poetic description of the inevitable toll of old age.

This passage is often attributed to King Solomon, however the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes was actually written by a Jewish teacher known only as KOHELETH and the book written sometime between 300 and 200 years BC.

Such was the understanding and practice of medicine in the third century before Christ when Koheleth undertook the allegorical description of senility in Ecclesiastes. Figuratively, this poem constitutes one of the loveliest descriptions of a clinical eternity in all literature.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth"

The hindsight of age is ever the genesis of advice to youth

"While the evil days come not, nor the times draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them"

This description of the unhappy state of mind that often coexists with the infirmity of old age characterises the attitude that has surrounded the elderly person for countless centuries

"While the sun, or the light, or the moon or the stars be not darkened"

Dimming light is an expansive metaphor frequently used to symbolise old age and is found in literature with such phrases as "the twilight years" and "sunset of life"

"Nor the clouds return after the rain"

This identifies the loss of elastic response characteristic of the aged patient. In aged tissues, no longer does rest refresh or recuperation renew.

"In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble"

To name the hands "the keepers of the house" is metaphorical eloquence. This will have particular appeal to the surgeon whose hands have often brought order to "the house". That ageing fingers must tremble until they are incapable of "keeping the house" is perhaps the saddest of these similes.

"And the strong men shall bow themselves"

This shows the degeneration of the ageing musculoskeletal system. Although ageing in skin, teeth and hair and even in the organs of special sense without affecting the total body may occur

"And the grinders cease because they are few"

This refers to the loss of teeth which is closely related to old age.

"And those that look out of the windows be darkened"

The author has achieved a metaphor which depicts the loss of sight in old age as well as the soul looking from within at the signs of decay of the temple.

"And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low"

This depicts the situation when the bazaars are closed at the end of the day. When the sound of the grinding of one's teeth is decreased, the deafness of old age must be inescapable.

"And he shall rise up at the voice of the bird"

It is the trait of most old people to be early risers!

"And all the daughters of music shall be brought low;"

Changes in the vocal chords with resultant coarseness and decrease in the musical quality of the voice are alluded in this instance.

"When they shall be afraid of that which is high and fears shall be in the way"

This relates to Achrophobia in old age, a fear of heights, sometimes when not high up. It also refers to change or fear of change. Also the fear of many things that were once tackled with abandon.

"And the almond tree shall flourish"

The delicate snow white blossoms of the almond tree have long been used as a poetic symbol for the dignity of white hair.

"And the grasshopper shall be a burden"

It is thought that the author's intention was the representation of so light an object as a single grasshopper as a heavy load. It could also refer to a plague of locusts which the younger farmer could survive in future years however the older farmer might never recover from this plague.

"And desire shall fail:"

The gradual decrease in physical desire is another attendant of age in both male and female. The desire to dream dreams and to plan ahead is also diminished with advancing years because of them being unlikely to come to fruition.

"Because man goeth to his long home"

This is a straight reference to the move from this earth to the next i.e. a long journey!

"And the mourners go about the streets"

This obviously refers to those who have been left behind knowing that you will be sorely missed.

"Or ever the silver cord be loosed Or the golden bowl be broken,"

There are two trains of thought:- one uses the interpretation using ancient symbolism - the lamp of life was envisioned as a lamp hung in a golden bowl suspended by a silver cord - this being a climactic reference to the end result of the ageing phenomenon. The second being an anatomic allegory that the silver cord being the spinal cord and the golden bowl being the cranial vault. It is the gradual decline of the mental powers that has come to be accepted as senility.

"Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain,"

The symbol of the broken pitcher the old clinical recorder has conveyed the "drying up of urine" of elderly persons who suffer from renal disease. There is another more general application where old things can be described as "withered". The skin of old people is often likened to parchment.

"Or the wheel broken at the cistern."

The simile here referring in graphic fashion to cardiac failure.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was;"

"And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

We still repeat the words "dust to dust" in the internment of the dead, being a requiem as old as mortality. This beautiful extract or poem moves through a description of the deterioration of the

individual parts. It is the journey through life producing a burnished wisdom.. The same ageing process that wears away the physical powers leaving a state of quiet dignity. The anxieties, physical hazards, regrets and discomforts must surely be overbalanced by the treasures of memory, refection, comradeships and experiences. Old age no longer need be synonymous with "the evil days" but rather "the season for reaping and storing the final harvest of life".

Stay Safe Online-Prevailing Threats–Mar 2025

Bro Chris Eyre

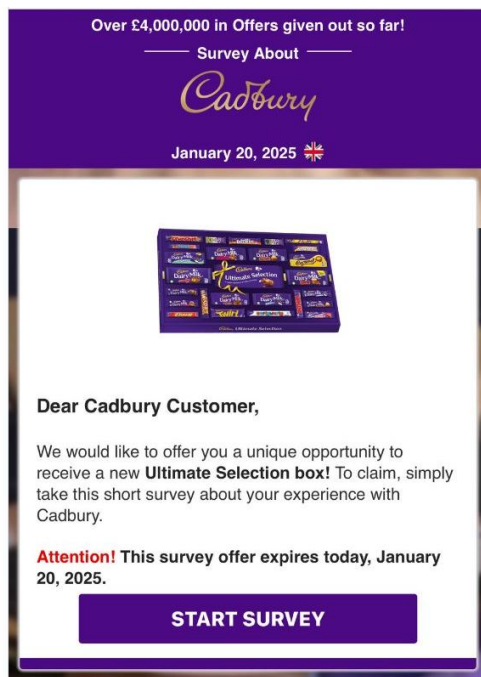
Stolen ID for rights to work purposes:

A family friend recently received a dreaded brown letter through the letter box to find out their tax code was going UP, this was a real shock as this adult was full time parent of 3, from nursery age to school leavers, so to exceed the £12,500 allowance was a real shock, upon investigation the 'other job' was in Greater London, and the individual is being investigated by The National Crime Agency.

The Moral of the Story: Please watch what you do with Personal Identifiable Information (PII), it sounds funny to suggest "who would want to steal my identity!?", with only a small amount of personal information someone can create a Direct Debit with a discarded Bank Statement, maybe for their apartment in Greater London, once someone has an address, they can apply for a new 'proof of right to work' letter to their new address, now you can get a job. Now your employer can have your salary paid into that new bank account at branch near your new pad Down South, once employed you are entitled to the benefits of, 'Pay A You Earn' tax through your Personal National Insurance Number, and to prove to your employer what Tax Code you are on. This information is easily discarded from a lost or mislaid pay-slip, P60, or Pension Tax Statement.

Buy a Cross Cut Shredder, and shred anything you don't want to keep.

Free Cadbury Chocolate eMail Threat:



It looks like there's a scam going around involving fake emails and social media posts claiming to offer free Cadbury chocolate. These scams often ask for personal information or even bank details, which can lead to identity theft or financial loss.

Here are some tips to stay safe:

Verify the source: Check the sender's email address and look for any signs of a fake domain.

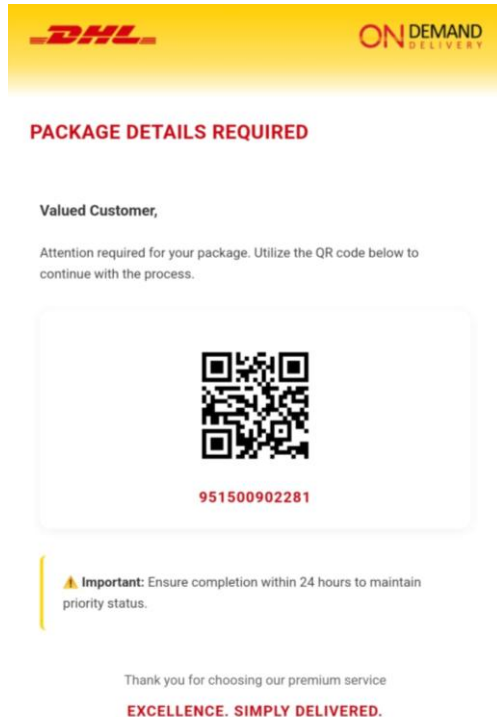
Avoid clicking on suspicious links: If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Do not share personal information: Legitimate companies will not ask for sensitive details through unsolicited emails or messages.

Use security software: Reliable cybersecurity solutions can help block phishing sites and prevent malware infections.

If you receive such an email, it's best to delete it and report it as spam. Stay safe!

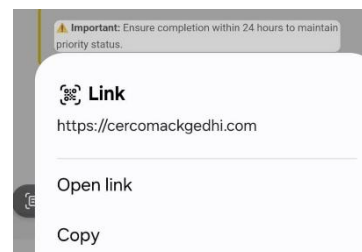
DHL QR Code Package Details Required



Another QR code scam, similar to the ones we've seen on previous articles, this one seems to want some more information on a package you are about to receive?..?..?..

Are you awaiting a DHL parcel? Is this the correct reference code, or a game of chance?

Check the Link: If you hover on a link on most systems (mobile/desktop specific), with a QR code a phone camera can also give you an indication of where you are heading before you click through.



As we see the link doesn't go to DHL, I suggest you don't click through this one.

Small Bank Transactions

I thought I'd mention this one, as the old ones seem to be the best, as this is still about...

Scammers often make small, unauthorised transactions to test if an account is active before attempting larger fraud. Here are some steps you can take to protect yourself:

Do not share personal information: If you receive a call asking for sensitive details, hang up and contact your bank directly using the number on your bank statement, bank card or bank website.

Monitor your accounts: Regularly check your bank statements and online banking for any unauthorised transactions.

Report suspicious activity: Notify your bank immediately if you notice any unknown transactions.

Be cautious of urgent requests: Scammers often create a sense of urgency to prompt quick action.

If you suspect fraud, it's crucial to act quickly to secure your accounts.

Lastpass Hack – OLD NEWS?

Hackers used data from the 2022 breach to steal over \$5 million from users' cryptocurrency wallets. This incident highlights the importance of securing your digital assets and being cautious with where you store sensitive information.

LastPass has been facing ongoing challenges since the major, despite efforts to improve security, the breach compromised users' personal data and sensitive vault information. This has led to significant concerns about the safety of using LastPass.

Here are some key points to consider:

Data Compromise: The breach exposed unencrypted customer account information and encrypted vault data.

Security Measures: LastPass has implemented additional security measures, but the impact of the breach has left many users wary.

User Recommendations: It's advised to change all passwords stored in LastPass and consider using a different password manager.



If you're still using LastPass, it's crucial to stay vigilant and take necessary precautions to protect your data.

Remember: Security systems are only as strong as you make them, don't make your master password your Mums cats name, colour and DOB.

Use a memorable phrase:

If you can't think of a password, or don't want suggested ones, use a favourite line from a poem, movie, or song, throw some mathematical symbols in too: "i'//_be_b4ck" – please don't copy mine.

Three random words:

A great strategy from the UK National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

Combine three random words to create a password that's 'long enough and strong enough'.

New Job at Tic-Toc?



Hi, I'm from Tiktok HR department, we have viewed your CV and your CV is a perfect fit for us, we are pleased to invite you to become a part time partner, pay £200-£500 per day, please contact me for job details: wa.me/447378963776

MMS
09:59

I really had to rack my brain how I receive this:

1, I don't use TikTok

2, My CV hasn't been updated since TikTok has been around

3, My CV doesn't fit the one of an internet influencer

Or maybe...no really...I was here before the internet...boring.

If you do meet some of these criteria, beware:

Do not respond: Ignore the message and do not click on any links or provide any personal information.

Verify the sender: Genuine job offers from TikTok will not come through unsolicited text messages.

Report the scam: You can report the message to your mobile carrier or use your phone's built-in spam reporting feature.

Block the sender: On most smartphones, you can block the

number to prevent further messages.

Stay cautious and always verify the legitimacy of **unexpected** job offers, as **unbelievable** as they sound.

Contributions to the Writing Challenge.

When establishing CQ the Editors announced a new **Quarterly Writing Challenge** for any member, or corresponding associate, of Coronation Lodge to develop their writing talents. Going on to say:

“As both Co-Editors are experienced university academics, they appreciate the benefits of anonymous marking and have long familiarity with applying it. And anonymity also has a glorious history in the practices that Bro Iolo Morganwg laid down for the prestigious Eisteddfod competitions of The Chair and The Crown. A topic is set in advance, and a deadline set. All submissions are put forward under a penname. Only after the work has been adjudicated, performed, and judged adequate for publication is the writer asked to stand up and reveal their identity. It won't be possible to facilitate quite such a dramatic reveal as the eisteddfod, but the principle can still be followed.”

The topic for the Winter Solstice was question set by the WM to the Mentor. Why is it Important to Memorise Rather than Read Ritual.” The task is to write an essay answering the question from your own viewpoint. Freemasonry does not lay down dogmatic beliefs which must be followed to the letter. Its teaching is told by peculiar rituals and illuminated by symbolic understanding. There is room for many different interpretations and the answer provided by the Mentor can only be his personal view. You may have a completely different idea, which the lodge would also like to hear. And if you summited it by the last day of Feb it could feature in the fifth issue of CQ. **The Quarterly Writing Challenge** is open to all members and corresponding associates of Coronation Lodge, with the exception of Drs Harrison and Lomas. Here are the rules.

“Your essay will be anonymised by email it to Bro Secretary who will allocate it a unique number, whilst recording the name of the writer, before forwarding the now numbered essay is to the Editors for consideration. They will judge it on the quality of the writing, the clarity of expression of its argument and the degree of supporting evidence for the views expressed. The winning essays will be published, still anonymous, in the Vernal Equinox Issue of CQ and the writer will be contacted by Bro Sec and invited to submit an article on a topic of his own choice for the Summer Solstice Issue to be published under his real name. In this way the Editors hope to encourage the competitive development of the writing skills of the brethren and improve the body of literature on Masonic Topics of interest to the lodge. “

Brother Secretary has received three anonymous submissions for **The CQ Quarterly Writing Challenge**, and all have been found worthy of publication. The articles are reproduced below and numbered. The authors who, at the moment are only known to Bro Secretary, will be revealed by the WM, at the Festive Board and in the next issue the writers will be invited to submit an article on a topic of their choice for that publication.

A new CQ Quarterly Writing Challenge, with a deadline for the last day of May, is now open with the topic being the new question from the Chair of Coronation Lodge, which is “To what extent are Masonic rituals Theurgic Rites?” The Lodge Mentor's response to the question can be found in an earlier article. And if you prefer to listen to the paper instead of reading it there is link to an unlisted YouTube video. But we would also like to hear the views of other brethren.

Why is it Important to Memorise Rather than Read Ritual?

Contributor No 1

In the ideal world of Craft Masonry, it has always been expected for all the ritual to be learnt "off by heart" with no exceptions. This was the case over 40 years ago. Lord Northampton was a great advocate of sharing the delivery of the ritual so that great swathes of learning the ritual could be shared. At one time, the prayers were all expected to be learnt but more recently it was agreed that all prayers should be read, thus giving these prayers the solemnity that they deserve.

Times have changed, working habits have changed, working hours have been reduced but quality time with the family is more important than learning ritual! This is a fact!

Have younger Masons enough time to learn the ritual? With spare time being at a premium there is less time to sit down and learn the ritual!

However, I don't have a problem with reading the ritual when seated (this does happen a lot in some of the other degrees) but when a WM or Brother is addressing the candidate (or brother) on a 1:1 basis then this is when the ritual should, or must, be learnt. Again, I don't have a problem with delegation. Sincerity is most important for the candidate or initiate.

So, I would prefer reading the ritual on a sincere and meaningful basis than stumbling, stuttering and endless prompts of a poorly delivered ritual.

Why is it Important to Memorise Rather than Read Ritual?

Contributor No 2

Background

Working with professionals who have to learn lines for film and television I have learnt the necessity to distinguish between those who memorize their lines and those who work from crib-sheets. It is not uncommon to find actors with post-it notes hidden within their sight, that they read from. Whilst others labour to learn their parts, repeating over and over, and acting out each line with some feeling and becoming charming, or sincere in their presentation.

Marlon Brando would use large boards with his lines being held up before him. Whilst Bill Tarmey would use notes just out of camera range to prompt him. From the great to the soap opera, all have their methods.

Vivien Leigh was an actress in one of the most successful films ever made. *"Gone with the Wind."* She remembered each line of the script and appeared in all scenes throughout the presentation. Quiet an effort and much acclaimed over the years.

Work in the Temple

Delivery of ritual from a crib sheet is not ideal as the player appears to sustain one character, a singular presentation that is often flat and without charm or emotion. Such appear as themselves without costume, or direction they are not the best of actors.

Those who learn their work present as character actors, able to empathize with their subject. This is the essential part of any verbal presence, *"be the words and the audience will believe it."*

There is an exception that we do see in our work. This is the ritualist who may learn and know the ritual well. They fail as a monologue at 78 rpm fails to deliver the meaning and the essence of the words. The words might be remembered but the delivery is absent of any value.

Mind over heart or heart over mind.

As an observation, I was watching a young actor learning his lines for a longer scene one afternoon. Taking himself away with an annotated script he read over the lines and repeated the words over and over. It was not long before he moved with the words as if acting them out. This was changed to no script and moving, gesturing with his hands and body as he moved about in the wings. Emotions started to flow as his heart engaged with the meaning. He became so believable a bystander would want to ask if he was well.

This was a demonstration of where the heart took over. He was living the part and the character the words became his and the charm, essence and the purpose was made clear.

Delivery

Whilst we deliver our ritual to candidates or even a lecture we have to consider where our words come from. As children we might have had to memorize poems, passages from Shakespeare, or even prayers. Mechanical, monologue, uninteresting, chants that meant little to us.

Those days are gone, indeed long gone, for many of us. Our work is that of the method actor, we live the ritual daily as well as in the Temple delivery. Parsing the parts of our mind to work to become one with that essential emotion and heartfelt belief in our script.

How many have noticed the main word of the Northeast Corner of the 1st degree? The word is YOU. It puts a whole different light on the subject matter. Masons would say that the purpose of this ritual is Charity. They are wrong as they do not understand the meaning of the words and the importance of YOU.

The ritual is about empathy. As such it must be delivered with empathy. Get inside the poor, and penniless, the destitute and realise that dignity, self-respect, and love is what is being communicated. A man is being transformed from one existence to a life of service and improvement.

Ritual can be transforming and make us see deeper things than the words themselves. I have mentioned Shakespeare, I could have mentioned many more. Those who teach us about life, conflict, love, passions, greed, ego etc. We learn and we take on board the lessons of the meaning of the written word. Our whole person should be motivated as the young actor living the words to be that character.

Masonic Light

Did we ever find our way to the 3rd degree by empathy, developing from an Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft? I doubt either ceremony had such an effect on us. It was probably only when we had to do Freemasonry to others later, that we learnt the essence and meaning of masonry. It makes such a difference to the Candidates if time is taken to express the ritual with some emotion, and a sense of feeling for ritual's purpose, and expressing the words from our hearts to the Candidate. It's worth taking some time to do good work and make a meaningful delivery.

I would point out the Scripture of the Sermon on the Mount. Our thoughts are superficial to the fullness of the passage. However, when we look again and consider with that part of our mind that looks for the essence it takes on a deeper meaning. It is not just masonic ritual that transforms us. While reading equips us with words, it is understanding that transforms us and that comes from learning by heart. So that the delivery of the ritual that helps promote understanding from the beginning of our masonic journey.

Why is it Important to Memorise Rather than Read Ritual?

Contributor No 3

What follows is not intended as an essay, but is more in the nature of headrambles, random thoughts on a topic.

Man is, by his very nature, a narrator, a teller of tales and histories, a dream weaver, a prophet. From the grunts, facial expressions, and gestures of early cave dwellers to the development of language in all its diversity, eloquence, elegance, oratory, or the mangled 'yoof speak' of today, man has recited, remembered, and repeated. He was telling and re-telling stories long before he learned to read and write. He is an actor on life's stage, whether bit-part or star.

And here is the crux of my support for learning ritual. Before he performs an actor will read his lines over and over to gain an understanding of the meaning behind the words, of the nuances of the language, then, when he is alone, he will speak them aloud to get the feel for his part, the pauses and inflections necessary for a meaningful delivery. Only when he is satisfied that he understands his part will he stand before an audience and tell his story with sincerity and from the heart. An aspiring mason whether Inner Guard or Worshipful Master should attempt to do the same, the better to instruct the brethren in freemasonry.

I hear you say 'I'm not a thespian, I'm a naturally shy and retiring person, I lack confidence, I can't remember things'. Well, these things apply to me, but it doesn't stop me trying and giving whatever it is, my best shot, stumbling and hesitant as it may be.

Masonic ceremonies are stories; allegories, designed to impart knowledge and understanding. The ancient philosophers and sages sat with their acolytes and told mythical tales of heroes and demons, of everyday truths, of rituals and ceremonies, of the meaning of the world and its natural phenomena. They did it by recitation and repetition until the acolytes, in their turn, became teachers. In a similar manner we too should teach our brothers the secrets and mysteries of freemasonry. We need to lead by example and inspire them to discover the meanings behind the symbolism and words. My contention is that this can best be done by talking - our basic instinct, our genetic inheritance.

But why not just read ritual and have done with the complications of learning? After all life is short, time is precious, and there are a thousand and one things we always need to be doing. Reflecting and remembering, sometimes arcane, stuff' is for oldies with time on their hands. Yes, that may be true, but let's think about reading. It's a short-cut, sure-fire way of getting ceremonies done efficiently - agreed, but so often that's all it is, a quick fix for a busy mason. Pick up the book on the night and read the words but they become meaningless, lacking emotion and sincerity.

If we are going to read ceremonies, then a similar amount of time has to be spent as in committing them to memory. An actor, reading a story on the radio reads it over and over, understands and empathizes with the characters and their messages, long before he sits in front of the microphone to tell the story - his story - to a rapt audience who want to hear more. So should it be if we are to encourage reading in open lodge.

There are two sides to this argument, both involve hard work and preparation if they are to be successful. Perhaps we should encourage those who find learning by rote difficult, to talk to the members of their lodge, ask them to spend more time in helping and tutoring them so that, bit by bit,

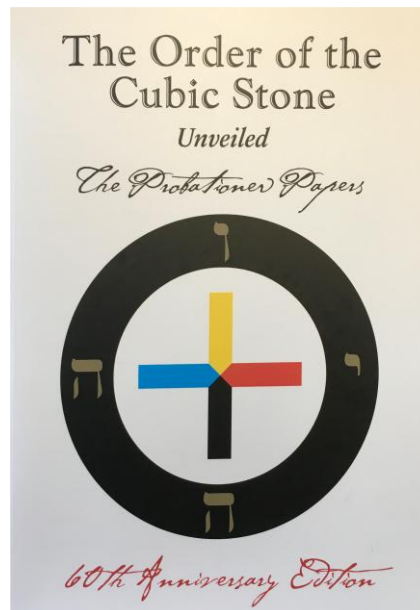
they too can sit around the proverbial log fire telling stories of derring-do, heroes and villains, interpreting the mystic signs, symbols, omens and portents of the world around them just as their early ancestors did but now with reference to 'a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory, illustrated by symbols'. There's nothing like a well-told story to bring to life the magic of masonry.

For me, there is only one way: retaining, recalling, reciting give me a sense of achievement that reading alone cannot give. At the end of the day, I can say with some satisfaction 'at least I tried'.

Book Review

The Order of the Cubic Stone- Unveiled -The Probationer Papers

By Frater Firestone



Published by Cubic Stone Publications – ISBN 978-1-83-654355-8 Email: theoecs@protonmail.com

Reviewed by Robert Lomas

This is an unusual book which isn't about Freemasonry, so why am I reviewing it? Well, my reasons are two-fold. One, it offers greater insight into the topic of Theurgic Rites and is a volume I consulted whilst researching my answer to the WM's question.

Two, it describes a new incarnation of an order which captivated one of my scientific Masonic heroes, Jack Parsons. He's a fascinating figure in the history of rocketry and space exploration, who was born Marvel Whiteside Parsons on October 2, 1914. He became a rocket engineer, chemist, and theurgic occultist. Parsons was one of the principal founders of both the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and Aerojet Engineering Corporation. He co-founded the Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory (GALCIT) Rocket Research Group at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech), which evolved into NASA's JPL and played a crucial role in developing the first rocket engine to use castable, composite, solid, rocket propellant. His work facilitated the solid-fuel boosters which propelled the Shuttles into orbit.

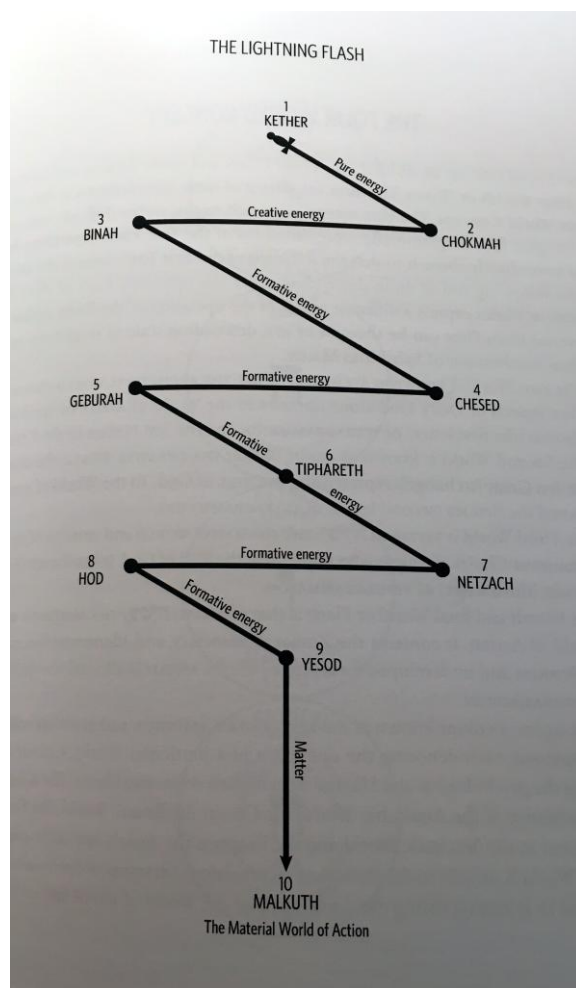
Jack Parsons' life was a blend of scientific brilliance and unconventional interests. His interest in the mystical began with Freemasonry then extended into the study of the occult. He became a member of Aleister Crowley's *Ordo Templi Orientis* and the spin-off *Church of Thelema* which practiced sexual magic. His involvement in these pseudo-Masonic practices eventually led to his dismissal from JPL and Aerojet in 1944. Sadly, he accidentally blew himself up in 1952, in own garage, whilst preparing solid rocket fuel blocks for testing. He had lived to 1965, when he would have been 51 years old, then I suspect he would have been intrigued by the objectives of the Order of the Cubic Stone.

Despite his controversial lifestyle, Jack Parsons' contributions to rocketry and space exploration remain significant. He laid the foundation for many advancements in rocket technology and is a father of our present space age.

But what has this got to do with this book? The common thread are Rosicrucians. The author, *Frater Firestone* in his introduction mentions that he feels he is following in the footsteps of Israel Regardie wrote the first guide to the Order of the Golden Dawn, but to my mind Firestone seems to be travelling a path which Robert Wentworth Little (the founder of Societas Rosicruciana) followed many years earlier. Whatever, this book unveils a set of instructions and explanations for a range of theurgic, kabalistic and meditative practices which have been collected by the founders and fratres of this non-Masonic Order.

Firestone tells that, the Order of the Cubic Stone was started in 1965 by two friends from Wolverhampton: Robert Turner and David F. Edwards. They had a passion for the practical use of ritual magic (and other occult things). Although both seem to have been Masons, they advocated avoiding whispering 'words of power', which they claimed are often misunderstood, and sneered at silly Masonic handshakes to prove what 'degree' you are in, while freely offering to show anyone who wished to take part, exactly how theurgic ritual was done.

Firestone has created a veritable encyclopaedia of spiritually inspired methodologies.



Part 1 covers an overview of esoteric traditions, the objectives of the newly formed (although to be fair it is forty years older than the Order of Athelstan) Order of the Cubic Stone and a short introductory course in kabalistic thinking. I must admit having experienced a lightening near miss I was interested to read a ritualistic explanation of how a lightning strike can be used as a metaphor for how matter becomes self-aware.

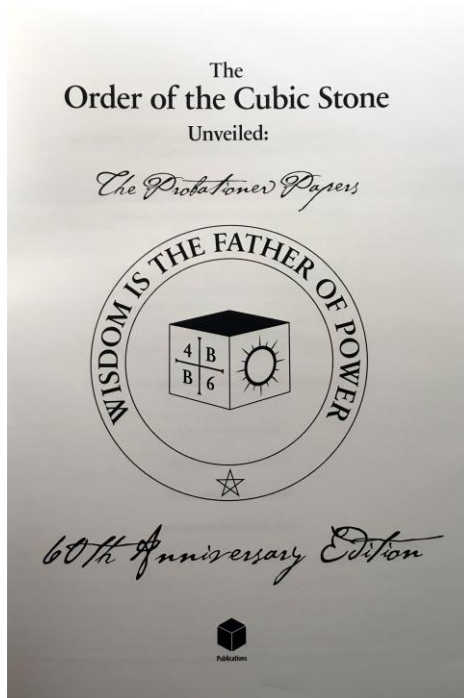
Part 2 extends the material on the Kabbalah along with a series of detailed investigations of meditative techniques and discussion of their practical applications.

Part 3 returns to Kabbalistic Basics with highly detailed explanations for the curious. It contains everything you might want to know and then some more. It also includes examples of turning these ideas into ritual practice.

Part 4 covers mainly what the text calls Allied Subjects. These are Karma & Reincarnation, Tarot, Talismanic Magic and the ritual structure of the Temple of Ezekiel. I've previously written about The Tarot (In *The Second Messiah*) and the Enochian and Ezekiel Temples. (In *Uriel's Machine*)

and I found the explanation of the layout of Ezekiel's temple interesting as it explores a temple with three gates which is ritually related to the third-degree myth of the Craft.

It took me some time after my initiation to realise that Freemasonry has two separate and different histories. One is a mundane history concerned with who did what, to whom, where and when? This route led me back to the first documented lodge in Aberdeen. Although interesting in explaining where Freemasonry came from, it does not explain why it began, what its purpose is, or why it has remained so popular for so long? These questions can only really be answered by studying and understanding its mythical history. A myth is more than simply a fanciful ramble. The most powerful myths contain levels of truth which have been made easier to grasp by hiding them within a “good story”.



The power of a story can take hold of person's mind and be so convincing that it sounds as if it simply must be correct. For many years the church believed, and taught, the myth that the sun went round the earth, because it was such a convincing story. When Galileo invented the telescope and found that it wasn't true the myth was stronger than the science and Galileo had to state his public belief in the myth he had just disproved. In this case the story was stronger than the truth and it served the church's political purposes better. But sometimes thinking in terms of myth and metaphor can bring about change. But as Daniel C Dennet said in *Breaking the Spell- Religions as a Natural Phenomenon*, “One of the few serious differences between the natural sciences and the humanities is that all too many thinkers in the humanities have decided that it's all just stories, and all truth is relative.”

I have been a physicist longer than I have been a Freemason, but ever since I first wore a Fellowcraft's apron I have

understood the appeal of the Craft to any scientist. The second-degree myth, teaching the need to study the hidden mysteries of nature and science to better understand your maker, is a powerful incentive to enquire if there are deep truths buried under the layers of enigmatic and bewildering myths of ancient wisdom. The Probationer Papers, catalogues, indexes and explains a wide range of such myths. How much truth is hidden ensconced within this labyrinth of legends? I leave you to decide for yourself, whilst warning you this a book to study, consider, and evaluate, not a piece of light bedtime reading.

Let me finish this review by returning to how Jack Parsons came to study and practice Thelemic and Theurgic magical rites in his spare time, trying to understand their import. He came to accept that they were a possible means of inducing a state of mind, perhaps experienced as henosis, but explainable in terms of quantum physics when an observer's intentions for collapsing a previously unobserved probability wave is able to create a hitherto un-existing past and so cause a present phenomenon.

I remain a scientist and fully understand that *The Order of the Cubic Stone Unveiled* is a book of myth. But like Jack Parsons before me I also believe that there may be scientific truth veiled by its intricate tapestry of folklore. You will not know Brethren, unless you also take the time to study and evaluate the ancient parables which adorned the hinterland of Freemasonry. And this book is a good place to start.

[The Order of the Cubic Stone Unveiled: The Probationer Papers: Amazon.co.uk: Firestone, Frater, Firestone, Frater, Firestone, Frater: 9781836543558: Books](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Firestone-Frater-Firestone-Frater-9781836543558/dp/1836543558)

Notes About Contributors

W.Bro Professor Marios Adamou OBE

Bro Marios is a Consultant Psychiatrist and Non-Executive Board Director with extensive experience in clinical governance, strategic leadership, and service transformation within the NHS. He holds an MD, PhD, MA in History, MSc in Mental Health Studies, MSc in Health Economics, MBA, and LL.M, among other qualifications. He has been instrumental in developing multidisciplinary pathways for ADHD and Autism in adults and is recognised for introducing AI-based diagnostic tools. In addition to his clinical expertise, he has contributed to medical education, financial oversight, and policy development. A Fellow of multiple professional bodies, he has a distinguished career spanning psychiatry, healthcare management, and service innovation.

W.Bro Adamou is a subscribing member of Brighthouse Lodge 1301, Rastrick 4485, Imperial 1694, Asclepius 10044 and an Honorary member of Clifton Lodge 7112 and in many side orders.

Bro Chris Eyre. Associate Member of Coronation Lodge

Chris was born 24th June – in the Feast of St John the Baptist and was ordained as Brother Christopher James Eyre on 11th July 2024, with themonastery.org

He studied at King's School Pontefract 1984-88, and Wakefield College, receiving a diploma in IT and also Electronic Engineering 1988-89. Shortly after he started work at ICL Wakefield, and has stayed in IT ever since, from support to sales, and also management, working in 'cyber security' before it even had a name. He's worked for big brand names like Insight, NCC, ECSC, and also for vendors such as like SmoothWall, and Computer Associates (CA).

Bro. Chris is Senior Deacon at St. Oswald Lodge No. 910 in Pontefract, for which he joined in June 2014, being raised on the 21st October 2015, and was further exalted on 11th December 2024. He is also a member of St. John 280 in Coldstream, and a Companion of Hirsell and Duns SGRAC Chapter No.466.

Chris is passionate about preserving British and Masonic history, and has started to preserve some of his Mother Lodge's history, using Large format scanners and 3D rendering, Here are some examples:

[Hughan Masonic Manuscript - By Bro. William Watson – Dedicated to T. W. Tew \(Our Founding Master\)](#)

[St. Oswald's Church, Heavenfield, Northumberland](#)

His pastimes are: Scuba Diving, Computers, 3D Scanning, 3D Printing, Astronomy, Esoteric Freemasonry, Freemasonry history.

W.Bro Phillip Harris. JP – Member of Coronation Lodge 2927

Bro Phillip was initiated into Leodiensis Lodge 4029 in 1994. He as Passed and Raised in the same year. Suspecting that there was more to freemasonry than the parochial, he moved Lodge to Olicana 1522.

He found the Royal Arch a disappointment and following his exaltation I felt lost. He was installed as a Knight Templar in 1998. But did not find the answers to his questions in the Encampment. He moved to Harewood Lodge 5667. By now he was beginning to suspect that he wasn't going to get answers to his questions. Then, when he joined Chapter Affability 308, he found a community of Companions who had more understanding.

In 2016, he joined Internet Lodge 9659 and never looked back. He was able to visit overseas, brethren who were strong in Masonic light, and began to understand more about The Craft. He visited the Lodge of Living Stones 4957 and found a guide, mentor, tutor, and friend there..

Bro Phillip has papers (*The Excellent Master, The Strait path of the Master Mason, The Sun in Freemasonry.*) published in Masonic Forum, SRA magazine, and has been translated into Romanian and German. He is a former winner of the Quartely Writing Challenge.

W.Bro Dr David Harrison – Assistant Secretary of Coronation Lodge 2927

W. Bro. Dr David Harrison gained his initial degree in Welsh History and Archaeology at the University of Wales, Bangor, in 1997, and went on to gain an MA in 2000, and then a PhD in 2008, both at the University of Liverpool. Harrison also gained a Certificate of Education from the University of Manchester in 2000. He has worked as a history lecturer for the University of Liverpool, University of Hope, Liverpool and the University of Manchester, and as a project coordinator for various History groups around Liverpool and Merseyside.

Harrison has had 15 works published on the history of Freemasonry and Fraternalism and has had numerous academic papers and letters published on the subject in various journals. His works include *The Genesis of Freemasonry* (2009), which was Harrison's PhD thesis, *The Lost Rites and Rituals of Freemasonry* (2017), *The Rite of Seven Degrees* (2021) and his most recent work *The Life and Death of John Yarker*.

He became a Freemason in Cheshire in 1998 and is a Past Master of the Lodge of Lights no.148 in West Lancashire. He is also a member of Quatuor Coronati Lodge No2076

David is currently Assistant Secretary of Coronation Lodge and Co-Editor of the Quarterly Journal of Coronation Lodge, *Coronatio Quadrans* or CQ for short.

www.dr-david-harrison.com

W.Bro John Karran – Secretary of Coronation Lodge 2927

John was born in Liverpool, is an Oil and Gas Consultant and has been married to Sheila for over 40 years with three grown up children and three grandchildren.

He became a Freemason in 1985 and was initiated into Eureka Lodge No 3763 in Bootle. After some years living abroad, on his return he joined Starkie Lodge in the Southport Group in 2006 and became its Worshipful Master in 2013. He became acting Provincial Grand Steward in 2015, and Master of the Provincial Stewards Lodge, Quingenti Lodge No 8516, in 2017.

John was Acting Provincial Grand Senior Warden of the Province of West Lancashire in 2017 and was exalted into North Meols Chapter No 5828 in 2000, installed as First Principal in 2017 and became Acting Provincial Grand Steward in Royal Arch in 2021. He is also a member of Provincial Stewards Chapter.

He is Secretary of Mersey College in the SRIA and their Provincial Director of Studies. He is active in many other Masonic Orders, in the Ancient and Accepted Rite (Rose Croix) where he has attained the 30th degree and is a Acting Officer of Red Cross of Constatine. Has been in both KT & KTP Chairs and is a Mark PM and with acting rank in Red Cross of Constatine plus is in many others including Royal Order of Scotland. As is clear from his CV, John has a strong interest in the esoteric and mystical side to Freemasonry.

Bro Dr Robert Lomas – Mentor of Coronation Lodge 2927

Robert is a British author, physicist, and retired Fellow in Operations Management from the Bradford University School of Management. He holds a First-Class Honours degree in Electronic Engineering and a PhD for research into the quantum properties of solid-state physics and crystalline structures from the University of Salford. He has worked as a consultant on command-and-control systems for various weapons systems, and the emergency services. Before he retired, he lectured on Information Systems, Statistics, and Computer Security at Bradford.

He remains among the longest standing members of The Lodge of Living Stones, where he is organist, and has also benefited from that lodges' resources to study the work and philosophy of founder Walter Leslie Wilmshurst which he strongly promotes.

Robert is currently Mentor of Coronation Lodge and Co-Editor of the Quarterly Journal of Coronation Lodge, *Coronatio Quadrans* or CQ for short.

www.robertlomas.com

www.WebofHiram.org

X: @Dr_Robert_Lomas

W.Bro Dean Magee-Tingle–WM of Lodge of Living Stones 4947 & an Honourary Associate of Coronation Lodge 2927

Dean joined freemasonry in 2011 in the Province of Yorkshire West Riding Prior to joining the craft, he had gravitated towards the study of 'the self - spiritual awareness'. His research was not actively encouraged, shared and discussed within the confines of ordinary craft lodges, then his friend 'Craig Maurier' introduced him the Lodge of Living Stones No 4957 in 2014, what a change in direction that took him on. He served first as Secretary and then became WM in 2023, and began a second year in 2024. W,Bro Dean is a member of the SRIA and says how he has hugely benefited from the enrichment offered by his fellow seekers. He is the current Master in Chair of Living Stones and visits Coronation Lodge.

W.Bro Simon Richardson -Treasurer of Coronation Lodge 2927

Simon's father and grandfather were Freemasons so it seemed logical that he would join. However, it was not until after the death of his father that he did. He was initiated into his late father's Lodge, St James No 6852 in 1981. He has since joined the Royal Arch as well as other side degrees.

Bro Simon has served as Provincial Senior Grand Warden and Assistant Provincial Grand Master for Area 5 in the Province of Cheshire and holds Grand Rank in the Craft and in the Royal Arch. He is a member of Coronation Lodge No 2927, St James Lodge No 6852 and the Lodge of Gratitude No 6329,

ROYAL ARCH: Caerlleon Chapter No 4394, Chapter of Unity No 267, Stayley Chapter of Reason No 324

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR: De L'Isle Adam Preceptory No 234

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR PRIESTS: Tabernacle of Chester Cross No 152

SOCIETAS ROSICRUCIANA IN ANGLIA: Mersey College No 19

PILGRIM PRECEPTORS: Yorfrid Conclave No 32

Simon is a former winner of the Quarterly Writing Challenge.

W.Bro The Revd Roger Quick – Honourary Associate of Coronation Lodge 2927

Roger Quick was born in London and raised in Yorkshire. He trained from the age of thirteen as a Junior Exhibitioner at the Royal College of Music, and took his first degree in Music at Leeds University, where he studied composition with Alexander Goehr and Philip Wilby.

After making his debut as an accompanist at the Wigmore Hall in 1975 he freelanced as a pianist, conductor and composer, working with the newly established *English National Opera North* as a repetiteur and conducting promotional concerts. He has accompanied and worked with a great variety of artists, including Donald Swann, Raphael Wallfisch, William Waterhouse, Eugene Rousseau and Omar Puente. He began his doctorate on Sibelius in 1982.

Roger has written a number of scores for theatre productions, including *Tutte Lemkow* at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh; the *Young Vic*: Leeds Playhouse, and for the first production of John Mackendrick's play *Ludd!*

He taught piano in the Music Department at Leeds University and at the Yorkshire College of Music, conducted Leeds Youth Opera and Leeds Guild of Singers, and was college accompanist at Leeds College of Music.

He was for six years Senior Lecturer and Director of Music at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, working with many of the world's leading choreographers and dancers, broadcasting frequently. Whilst there he conducted his own composition as part of the inauguration of the Symphony Hall complex at Birmingham, in the presence of HM The Queen.

He has frequently improvised music for silent films in the Leeds Film Festival. He enjoys busking on the accordion, and played that extraordinary instrument on the very first edition of *The Big Breakfast Show*.

After studying for the Anglican priesthood at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, and taking a further degree in Theology, he was ordained in 1996. His short Mass setting is included on the cd *Maranatha!* recorded at Mirfield.

As an actor and author, Roger worked with *Jabbok Theatre*. He wrote and presented an occasional series, *Talking Saints*, on BBC Radio 2 for Aled Jones' *Good Morning Sunday*. His presentation of a sermon in Rap for Advent Sunday 2003 was broadcast on BBC television to great, if mixed, critical acclaim. He has written for a variety of journals on law, music, and theology, and in 2008 a number of his poems were included in the anthology edited by Barry Tebb, *Strangers on the Shore*. He completed his first novel in 2016.

His leisure interests have included studying computer science at Kellogg College Oxford, riding, and glass engraving. He has been a member of the Society of Genealogists and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, and in 2018 was elected a member of the Royal Entomological Society.

Roger was for seven years Chaplain & Head of Divinity at Strathallan School. He became Episcopalian Rector of Highland Perthshire in July 2011, where he was chaplain to the Celtic Bishops' Conference, and honorary padre to the Cameronians Regimental Association.

From 2013-22 Roger was Chaplain to the homeless charity St George's Crypt in Leeds; his two books about that work were published by DLT. In 2021 he was part of the *Nursing Times* "Team of the year".

He retired in November 2022, and the following year was chaplain to the Lord Mayor of Bradford.

His son Ben is an artist blacksmith, and his daughter Olivia works with refugees in London.

Bro Roger was Initiated into Headingley Lodge in 1987, and is presently Provincial Chaplain for the Province of Yorkshire West Riding. He belongs to many companion orders, where he is often either Provincial Chaplain, or Organist.