SYMBOLIC MASONRY

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THE CONFUSION OF THE 3RD DEGREE
HAZING IS A NO NO, AND TEACHES NOTHING ABOUT FORTITUDE

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Throughout the years in Freemasonry, many have gotten the perception that many things in Freemasonry are to be taken literally. Freemasonry is a science that enables us to better understand the images conveyed by its symbols. Symbols can mean many things to many people, but some are basic in form so that they bluntly represent the fundamental aspects of truth. In the first degree, we are given an oath or what we consider an obligation. Accompanying that obligation is given to us a penalty should we intentionally fail our word, or fall victim purposely to the obligation we took. The symbology of that penalty is to set in the mind of the one taking it that it is a serious bond we make before God and Man of our honesty, our dedication, our devotion, and more importantly, a promise that we would never neglect nor betray our connection with our Brethren.

In everything, we must consider “Common Sense.” Common sense, as my Father told me in my youth, is not often common. In the 1st degree we know by common sense that should a Brother fail in his obligation to the fraternity, we have no right legally nor morally to execute literally the words spoken in the penalty of that degree. Common sense tells us that if we should ever exercise the penalty on any Brother for failure to keep his word, criminal prosecution would be undertaken against a man who had committed such a horrendous act. The penalty in that degree is symbolic, and very misunderstood.

In the second degree we are given another test or trial. We agree in taking a further obligation, which teaches us many things within the scope of that degree, that it also connects us more closely to the preceding degree. Again, we give another oath, or obligation, soon after which the penalty is explained and in which one would truly have to be a surgeon to actually exercise this procedure, should someone fail in keeping this obligation. Freemasonry teaches lessons in forms of strong symbolic suggestions that should a sick mind enter the portals of Freemasonry; we indeed will be faced with a serious dilemma, shaming our honorable ancient institution. In fact, consider the cost to the Order when either madmen or fools are admitted. This is why we must strongly explain to the young and old that Freemasonry teaches by symbols and allegories. The second-degree penalty is symbolic.

Reaching closer to my point, we are now faced with the last degree in Craft Masonry, which is the Third Degree. One of the most beautiful degrees in Freemasonry, it is full of symbols, allegories, teachings, symbolic legends and many esoteric sciences when one truly understands. This degree, so full of life, teaches us the reality of the ruffians and
villains in our lower consciousness. It connects us to the first and second degree in Freemasonry by symbolically explaining what it’s like to have no power over your passions. The ruffians in this degree legend attempted to accost our legendary and heroic image, the “Grand Master Hiram Abiff,” the Widow’s Son. In this legend many things are explained. We have spoken of the penalties of the previous degrees so I am not going to venture into a discussion of the last penalty, as I believe my message has been understood. But I will bring to light other things within this last degree we should take into consideration.

If Freemasonry teaches us by symbols, and if we do not take the penalties of the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd degrees literally, why should we take a legend that never historically existed, such as our legend of Hiram Abiff, and assault our newly made Brethren in what we call the “Gates?” We tend to use the excuse of teaching “fortitude” to justify the brutality we commit against our Brothers, and clearly ignore the fact that our actions are “illegal” by all laws in the United States.

Hazing is an illegal act that has no place in Freemasonry. If we accept the fact that all other things within Freemasonry are symbolic, why is it we now use the excuse in the third degree that it is testing fortitude. The person, or rather Brother, you are attacking first came into the doors of Freemasonry because he was well recommended, duly and truly qualified, and a vote or ballot was taken for his acceptance into your Lodge upon which all agreed - and now you want to test his “Fortitude?” It is amazing to me, the ignorance that we have accepted throughout the years.

“Fortitude” is that noble and steadfast purpose of the mind whereby we are enable to undergo any pain, peril, or danger. This explanation of fortitude, although it is only the monitory or rational explanation, and not the esoteric one, is still a reality; nonetheless, it does not mean that we should test our Brethren to see how much pain they can take. This lesson was taught in the first degree to explain the ******* of the breast, which also is symbolic.

“This virtue is equally distant from rashness and cowardice, and should be deeply impressed upon the mind as a safeguard or security against any attempt that might be made by force or otherwise, to extort from you any of the secrets with which you have been solemnly entrusted.” This is also symbolic, as I know no man who has been taken and has had a gun or any weapon placed to his head to get any Masonic Secrets.

This is another form of symbolically teaching you to honor your “Word” as your word is the make up of your conscious and character, as well as alluding to more esoteric lessons. Should you fail at your word, you have failed in your character and make up, shaming your temple in all aspects and bringing your level of consciousness and your whole state of being to a lower state of existence. “This virtue was emblematically represented upon your first admission into the Lodge, when you were received on the point of a sharp instrument ******* your nkd lft brst.” So how did Brothers get the idea of testing “Fortitude” in the third degree?
When we do not understand what is symbolic and what is literal, we destroy the beauty of Freemasonry as a whole because the concept is lost, as is the Word we seek, forever made void of the truth it is intended to teach us. Man must evolve in the light of knowledge and not continue to live what had been practiced thousands of years ago. Thousands of years ago, in several African and European cultures, they used the literal form of testing fortitude as initiations into the inner circles of their religions and faiths.

We are now in the 21st Century, and barbarianism should be placed aside. All things that have been good for the times of the past are not necessarily good for this era. Evolution is one of the primary keys to growth and so we cannot be stuck in time but use time to elevate our states of consciousness. We need to understand that what was a ritual in many cultures was the ritual for that time, and we must accept the fact that many things done today should complement the growth of Man, and not leave Man stuck in a time warp of the past. Symbolism, my Brothers… Symbolism is the key to all understanding, if one uses the higher faculties of his inner self, and removes the immature spirit of childishness.

The third degree is an extremely important part of Freemasonry for no completion of the circle of Craft Masonry would ever be truly possible without it. So, we must seriously consider our actions in this glorious ceremony we confer on Brothers. There are many other things to take into consideration, and we must study our work. Is it to truly teach the candidates? Is it to feed our yearnings for enjoyment [entertainment?] in this rough play because of our childish and immature instabilities of our lower self? Or is it to take deep-seated angers and frustrations for conditions in our lives over which we feel powerless, and vent them on our Brothers while they cannot see who is violating them? There is one passion we should - must – subdue, and that is the passion of overly aggressive behavior to those we call “Brother”.

In final, my Brother, live in peace, and may the God of love and peace, delight to dwell with, and bless you.