



# Table Mountain Masonic Lodge

# 124

Paradise, California

*Risen from the ashes*



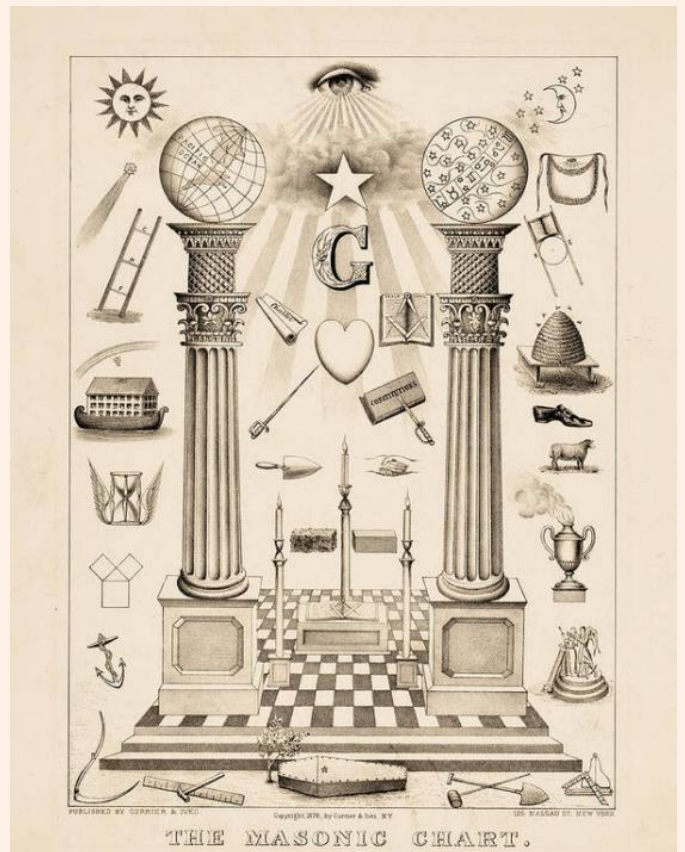
## April 2022 Journal and Trestleboard

Vol 2, Issue 4, Table Mountain Masonic Lodge Journal / Trestleboard

### Worshipful Master's Corner

Brothers and friends,

This month, we begin with the important *calendar of events*, followed by a *review of our last stated meeting*. We then have some information and great pictures about our highly successful *Lodge Workday*. There is an announcement of a *Special Event* for all Masons. Then there is a very informative Masonic Formation essay about *The Symbolism of the Winding Staircase* as described in our 2<sup>nd</sup> degree. Our own lodge research scientist explores the complex question of *How can we accurately describe Freemasonry?* Then in our Freemasonry around the world section, there is the interesting essay titled *From India, a perspective on Freemasonry*. There is also information on how you can obtain a copy of our impressive historical work, *150 year history of Table Mountain Lodge*. Additionally, there is our second article in a series about Masonic youth organizations. This one is about *DeMolay International*. Finally, there is *Contact Information* for our lodge and other Masonic organizations. Your suggestions concerning our monthly Journal and Trestleboard are always appreciated. Please share this Journal / Trestleboard with interested individuals.



# Calendar of Events

## Table Mountain Lodge Events (3 months)

- **April 2, 2022, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch at 1 pm.**
- April 7, 2022, Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree practice starting at 6:30 pm. April 14 and 21, 2022, Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree practice starting at 6:30 pm
- **April 9, 2022, Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> degree starting at 2 pm.**
- **April 16, 2022, Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> degree starting at 2 pm.**
- April 23, Shrine Oasis, time TBA
- **April 30, 2022, Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> degree starting at 2pm.**
- **May 7, 2022, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch at 1 pm.**
- May 9, 2022, Monday, 6 pm, Masonic student of the year
- June 21, 2022, Saturday, possible degree starting at 2 pm.
- **June 4, 2022, Saturday, Stated Meeting starting at 2 pm. Lunch at 1 pm.**
- June 18, 2022, Saturday, possible degree starting at 2 pm.



## School of Instruction (SOI)

- May 23, at Orland lodge, at 7 pm, review basic meeting.
- June 21, at Chico Lodge, at 6 pm, TBA

## Golden Feather Chapter Eastern Star

- May 6, 2022, Friday, Official Visit, 6:30 pm, at Table Mountain Masonic Lodge.
- Regular meetings in June and September.

## Other scheduled Community Events at the Table Mountain Masonic Center

- June 2, 2022, Wednesday, Paradise High School 65<sup>th</sup> reunion social.
- Paradise Rod and Gun Club – Executive meeting first Wednesday of every month at 6pm. General membership meeting third Thursday of every month 6:30pm
- Butte County Family Health classes and counseling, Every Wednesday until May 2022, 4:30 to 9 pm.
- Intermittent use of the kitchen by various contractors, and several private parties are looking to book our facilities on various dates. When the contracts are finalized, those events will be added to the calendar.

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## Our Recent March 2022 Stated Meeting

At 1 pm, just prior to our February 2022 Stated Meeting, Brother Richard Gingerly and lovely wife Gina provided a wonderful lunch of homemade chili with corn bread and salad items. Everyone very much enjoyed the meal.

Once again it was a productive and enjoyable meeting. There was the normal business of paying bills, reading communications and we discussed several projects and ideas. We also reviewed the schedule of upcoming degrees. We still had two fellowcrafts working on their proficiency, two entered apprentice for the next scheduled 2<sup>nd</sup> degree conferral, and one candidate waiting for his initiation as an entered apprentice. Since we have a very full schedule of degrees for April, we discussed the wisdom of doing some of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree on a weekday night, so that the brethren could have more weekend time with their families. There were enough brothers interested in that option, that Worshipful Nelson agreed to review our current schedule of degrees for optional days.

Worshipful Nelson and brother Campbell gave the report of our building association which included our renters, our ongoing improvements and our marketing. We also discussed the upcoming lodge workday and what we hoped to accomplish. We had a very useful discussion of our building's security system and alternative systems, and we reached general agreement of which alternatives should be further investigated.

Worshipful Nelson gave an update on our idea for creating an outdoor lodge area on some accessible forest land of his, and then having an outdoor degree. Some of the brothers did visit the proposed site to conceptualize a general layout. They agreed that the idea is feasible but considerable work has to be done. Therefore, the future outdoor degree will likely be sometime in October of this year.

Worshipful Nelson updated us on the status of our Lodge signs to be posted at the entrance to Paradise. Worshipful Nelson also gave a further update on the planning process for our elementary schools birthday project. We are still looking at starting it at the beginning of the next school year.

Also we discussed steps to be taken to have all members pay their dues as soon as possible. We may have to remove some members from active status, specifically those they do not pay their dues and are significantly in arrears. Brother Campbell offered to provide the lunch for our April stated meeting. The meeting ended in harmony and good will.





## Workday at the Lodge

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, for the first time since the at least the 2018 Camp Fire, and for perhaps a far longer period, Table Mountain Masonic lodge held a workday to explore, clean and reorganize our material and property and to improve the facilities for our use and our renters use.

The reorganizing of the building will result in the downstairs preparation room being converted to a modern and fully media-ready conference room with comfortable seating for 20 people, suitable for rental. Upstairs (on the side of the big lodge room) one of the storage rooms will be cleaned out and converted to a well-organized library and study room, with comfortable chairs and good lighting.

Some of the nicest Masonic memorabilia and pictures will redistribute on walls leading to the upstairs lodge and within the upstairs lodge room to make the room even more attractive. The other upstairs storage room and the downstairs storage were cleaned and reorganized with new adjustable shelving. Suitable adjustable shelving were also added to the area behind the kitchen for more appropriate storage of kitchen materials.

During the workday multiple sets of Masonic aprons and jewels were discovered, appearing to be quite old. We are attempting to have those cleaned for possible use at our future outdoor degree site in the woods. Additionally, many historical items were found that are suitable for framing and display. Preparing those will be an ongoing project.

The workday was a success, and Worshipful Nelson extends his sincere thanks to all the brothers and family members that gave of their time and energy to this important project.







# A Special Event for All Masons

On Saturday May 14, the 222nd Masonic District will present an **outdoor Masonic Degree**, near the Lomo Crossing, Yuba county.

## Itinerary Details:

- 9:00 AM Social
- 10:00 AM Degree
- Lunch follows degree at about 12:30/1:00 PM

Dress is casual; outdoor wear, lodge polo shirts, jeans okay.

**Bring your own lawn chair if possible.**

Lomo Crossing is located just off State Route 99 north of Yuba City and near Pasquini's Restaurant (just south of Live Oak), near the dryer located next to the restaurant. We are attempting to find good driving instructions and a map of how to get there.

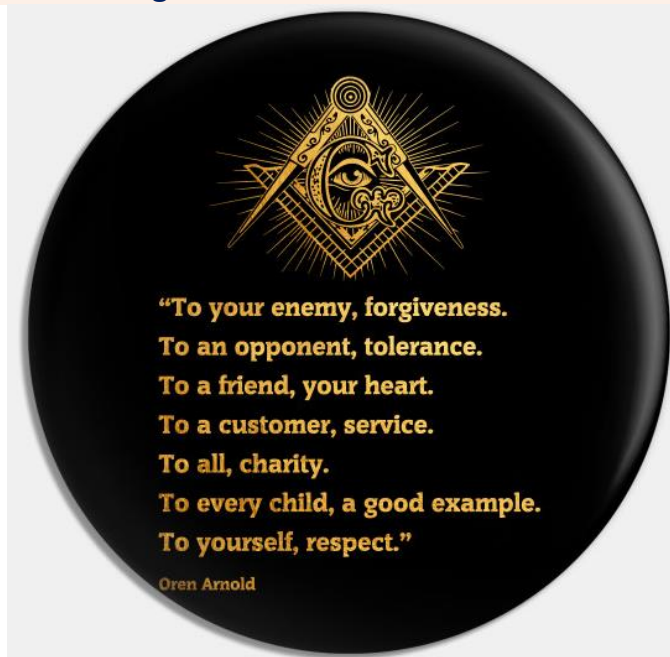
Please **RSVP** to Mike Edwards at (530) 218-4165 or at [sterlingcoins@comcast.net](mailto:sterlingcoins@comcast.net) .

If you are interested in attending, **RSVP** and tell Worshipful Nelson. Arrangements are being made to carpool from Chico's Leland Stanford Lodge.

More information is available at:

[https://freemason.org/gm\\_events/preliminary-outdoor-degree-222nd-district/](https://freemason.org/gm_events/preliminary-outdoor-degree-222nd-district/) .

This we be a good event to attend before we construct our own outdoor lodge and hold an outdoor degree.



# Masonic Formation

## The Symbolism of the Winding Staircase

The lecture of the winding staircase in the second degree of Masonry, is for many brothers, their favorite instruction. The important symbology of the winding stairs was recognized long ago by scholars and religious leaders, and later expanded upon within the teachings of operative Masonry before finding its current form in purely symbolic Freemasonry. The scriptural allusion to the winding staircase in King Solomon's temple is found in the 6th chapter of the 1st Book of Kings in the words:

"The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house; and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third."

In 1296, in an era of operative Masonry, a cleric wrote this interesting description built into Cathedrals:

"Winding staircases, imitated from Solomon's Temple, which winds among the walls and point out the *hidden knowledge* which they only have who *ascend to celestial things*. The *Faithful are the stones* in the wall structure. All the *stones are polished and squared, that is holy and pure*, and are *built by the hands of the Great Workman* into an abiding place in the Temple. Again, in the Temple of God, the foundation is *Faith*, which is conversant with unseen things; the roof is *charity*, which covereth a multitude of sins. The door is *obedience* . . . The pavement is *humility*, of which the Psalmist saith, 'My Soul cleaveth to the pavement.' The four sides, walls, are *the four cardinal virtues - justice, fortitude, temperance, prudence*. Hence the Apocalypse saith, The City lieth *four-squared*."

Note: the author's use of concepts and words (italicized for ease of identification) found in both the ancient and more recent versions of our Masonic degrees.

In biblical times, entering the temple was not to be considered lightly, it was considered to be a serious endeavor. The temple was considered a perfect holy space, unstained by the flawed world or the flaws of man. An individual entered the temple to obtain the divine of God (knowledge and understanding) and to pay their respects to the Creator. This symbolism is still represented within our degrees. The Masonic Lodge is made to represent King Solomon's temple, and our degrees take the candidate within it for knowledge and understanding.

Brother Mackey wrote:

"The Temple represents the world purified by the Divine Presence. The world of the profane is without the Temple; the world of the initiated is within its sacred walls. Hence to enter the Temple, to pass within the porch, to be made a Mason, and to be born into the world of Masonic light."



The Winding Stairs begin after the candidate has passed through the porch (where children were taught), and between the pillars of *Strength* and *Establishment* (a significant symbol to teach him that he had passed beyond the years of irrational childhood), and commenced his entrance upon manly life, the laborious task of self-improvement being his first duty. He cannot stand still, if he would be worthy of his vocation; his destiny requires him to ascend, step by step, until he has reached the summit, where the treasures of knowledge await him. Brother Mackey also wrote:

“Life is said to be divided into the three stages of youth, manhood and old age. In Masonic teaching, the Winding Staircase denotes these states of life and is similarly divided into three sections, comprised of a series of three, five and seven steps. The numbers three, five and seven have special significance in Masonry”.

The three sections of steps alludes to the three principal stages of human life: youth, manhood and maturity. The first section has three steps, and denoting youth. This section teaches preliminary lessons and lays the foundation upon which a Mason begins his moral and Masonic edifice.

The second section of the stairs denotes manhood and is comprised of five steps. These steps represent the five orders of architecture, and also the five human senses. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) is credited with first identifying and numbering the senses in his writing known as *De Anima* (on the soul). The first three of these senses were those held in highest esteem among our ancient brethren. They are said to make up the three component parts of a complete man (mental, physical and spiritual) which are represented by three most important columns. These columns are the supports of both man and lodge, and denote wisdom (to contrive - mental), strength (to support - physical) and beauty (to adorn - spiritual). These concepts build upon the conceptual foundation presented in the previous



section of steps to create a powerful lesson. Ascending the five steps is to ascend beyond the five senses and into advanced knowledge.

The third section is made up of seven steps and represents the ascension to maturity. As we ascend from five to seven steps, we ascend above the material physical plane to the mental plane. These seven steps refer to the seven liberal arts and sciences, which should be the building blocks of an individual Mason's education. These seven liberal arts and sciences come from ancient Greek philosophers. Since they came about 300 years after the construction of the temple, the relationship of the steps to the seven liberal arts and sciences was added sometime later.

The philosopher Pythagoras argued that there was mathematical and geometrical harmony to the universe; and linked the four sciences of *astronomy*, *mathematics*, *geometry*, and *music* into a grouping of study to form what was called the *quadrivium*. Then in 4th-century Athens, *rhetoric*, *grammar*, and *logic* became the educational program known as the *trivium*. Together they came to be known as the *seven liberal arts and sciences*. These arts and sciences were referred to as liberal because studying these were considered essential to being a free person (*liberalis*, "worthy of a free person") and therefore qualified to take an active part in civic life, something that included among other things participating in public debate, defending oneself in court, serving on juries, and participating in military service. This is one of the reasons we are known as **Freemasons**.



The Winding Staircase may mean different things to each individual Fellowcraft. However, the several steps are meant to symbolize the slow, arduous task of building the edifice of a Mason's character, the development of his self-discipline and his movement closer to God. In

addition to their instruction in natural, mathematical and metaphysical science, the steps of The Winding Staircase, like all Masonic symbols are illustrations of discipline and doctrine. The Winding Staircase invites the Fellowcraft to commence his Masonic labor by ascending the stairs. There he will receive discipline and instruction. He must begin his difficult ascent and research, which in the end gives him Divine Truth. To obtain his own self-improvement, a man must not stand still in life to become worthy of his vocation or his destiny. The Winding Staircase provides a portion of the Masonic building known as "Character" ultimately to ascend to the Sanctum Sanctorum in which our souls find rest. To climb the winding stairs implies "Faith." Thus, a Fellowcraft Mason represents a man starting forth on his journey of life, with the great task before him of self-improvement. Faithful performance of his task will give reward to the development of all his intellectual faculties, moral and spiritual elevation of his character, as well as the acquisition of truth and knowledge.

The Winding Staircase is a symbol of the growth of mental and spiritual life, of learning, study and enlarging horizons, and is a symbol of courage of Masonic character. The Winding Staircase denotes the necessity for a courageous ascent. Because the winding stairs do not disclose what is ahead.

Throughout his journey, a Mason contemplates all he receives and continues onward up the Winding Staircase. Because he is a man, a Mason must climb to receive his wages. His lifelong journey is climbing upward and onward to the Middle chamber. It is at this point, after he has reached Masonic maturity, that he has earned the reward and learned that Truth consists of a perfect knowledge of the Great Architect of the Universe.

Note: Portions of this Masonic Formation essay were taken from the following:

- SYMBOLISM OF THE WINDING STAIRCASE Reprinted from an article in the Transactions, Texas Lodge of Research, Volume XXXV, titled The Winding Staircase. Reprinted CANMAS – 1st June, 2006



## The Researcher: How can we accurately describe Freemasonry?

What is a comprehensive and complete description of Freemasonry? Specifically, a description that might truly enlighten the public about our fraternity. If we consider that Freemasonry is a worldwide phenomenon with many accepted variations, then this is a complex challenge.

As Masons, we generally try to describe Freemasonry through our own experiences and direct observations. We refer to the principles, standards, ceremonies and operations of our own lodges and the commonalities of the various regular Grand Lodges within the US. It is altogether natural for us to have a nation-centric or state-centric understanding of Freemasonry. Additionally, the writing of the Masonic authorities that we most commonly see cited in US essays about Freemasonry, generally are focused on the antiquities of English Freemasonry, from which we draw most of our US Masonic practices.

However, a more global exploration of what is recognized as regular Freemasonry reveals significant variations which may challenge our US based assumptions about the craft. The Grand Lodges of the UK and the US, and many other regular Grand Lodges, recognize Grand Lodges and Masonic organizations in other nations that are significantly different than our familiar fraternity.

Globally, regular Freemasonry does not consist of just one set of symbol, rituals, ceremonies, stories, standards or rules. In many other nations the form and organizational processes of regular Freemasonry developed according to the social, religious, political and economic conditions of that nation, primarily in the 1700s and 1800s.

In our US Masonic tradition, a candidate may be of any theist religion, as they must profess a belief in one God, and the possibility of life after death. However, in some other lands, regular forms of Freemasonry require candidates to be of one of a select group of Christian churches, or the state church if there is one. While we memorize our degrees, in other forms of Freemasonry they are read from a book or scroll. While Hiram Abiff is a central character to us, in some other regular Masonic rites he is not mentioned, because they focus on a different character, a different story and even a different lesson. We strenuously shield the content of our ceremonies and seldom change them, but in some foreign regular Masonic rites, changes to the ceremonies are more common, and secrecy less emphasized.

While political and religious discussions are off limits in our lodges, they are accepted or even encouraged in some forms of regular Freemasonry. While we swear compliance to our national authorities, in some forms of regular Freemasonry the lodges still have a revolutionary flavor. While we are visible and engaging with the public, in some nations Freemasonry remains hidden. The ceremonies of various regular Masonic rites can vary



dramatically between nations and even within nations, although there seems to be a common thread that is recognizable to all regular Freemasons.

The most international symbol of Freemasonry is, of course, the square and compass. In the US we have a prominent G in the middle of that symbol. However, in much of the world the G is not used. In some places other symbols are incorporated into the square and compass. In the Swedish rite the square and compass is clearly secondary to the Cross of Saint George.

Additionally, the artistic and spiritual sensibilities and historical perspectives of the leaders and populations influenced the development of the Masonic rituals in various lands. In some places Masonic meetings are historically somber affairs, in other places they are very business-like, and still others there is a more comfortable atmosphere. While some Masonic Rites confine themselves to conventional biblical references, other regular Masonic Rites sometimes include more esoteric ideas, gnostic interpretations and broader sources. Also, some Masonic Rites include a great deal more varied philosophical discussions than ours. Additionally, the art history of the host nation is generally represented in the physical appearance of the lodges, the appearance of their masonic symbols and in ceremonies.

With so many variations within regular Masonry, and the existence of many irregular organizations that confuse peoples' impressions and understandings, it can be difficult for some people to feel comfortable with the Freemasonry.

There are many reasons for the wide variations within regular Freemasonry. During the late 1700s and throughout the 1800s, in some lands, the existing government authorities co-opted the Masonic movement by establishing loyal Grand Lodges with royal sponsorship to monitor its development and direction. In some lands the authorities redesigned and created their own Masonic rites to strictly control the content, the religious orientation and trajectory of the brethren.

In some lands where the monarchy was most repressive and economic conditions most brutal for the population, the authorities did their utmost to repress the Masonic moment which they viewed as possibly subversive. Such repression often made the suppressed Masonic movement more active and committed to political or regime change.

Where the state church was seen as complicit in the repression of the population or any positive social initiative, the equalitarian Masonic movement sometimes grew in opposition to the state church. In some colonial lands (such as the US and in South America) the Masonic lodges becoming meeting places for those with thoughts of independence. In lands where there are significantly regional differences and they had many different religious, social and political movements, sometimes multiple Masonic Rites were created and practiced. Even in the US we have some variations. There are Free and Accepted Grand Lodges, Ancient and Accepted Grand Lodges and the Prince Hall lodges, which are all similar but have their

own variations in ceremonies and practices. Also, the rituals for the degrees vary somewhat between the states. Of course, we also have the York Rite with its culminating focus on Christianity. There is also the Scottish Rite, which evolved in southern France, arrived in America and continued to evolve into a system that today has a much more international and activist flavor, its own degree system, and a more diverse religious perspective. There are also the Allied Masonic Degrees (AMD), which are a series of Masonic degrees conferred by Councils of the Allied Masonic Degrees.

Another nation that is an example of where there are multiples and different regular Masonic Rites is in modern Germany where there are five regular Grand Lodges, each presenting a different Masonic Rite. These five Grand Lodges are loosely linked under the United Grand Lodges of Germany. One of these German Grand Lodges presents the *Swedish Rite*, which I described in a previous Journal / Trestleboard, and is a 10 degree system and restricted to certain Christians. Another German Grand Lodge practices the *Zinnendorf Rite*, similar to the Swedish Rite, and it is also an explicitly Christian and Trinitarian rite but has a seven-degree system. The Zinnendorf Rite is also significant in Austria, and was once found throughout Eastern Europe and into Imperial Russia. Another of the German Grand Lodges uses the *Schröder Rite* which is also found in many other places in Europe, and pre second world war was widespread in central Europe. Now, it is also widely popular in South America. The Schröder Rite is more similar to UK Freemasonry than the Swedish and Zinnendorf Rites, but still rather different from our system, allowing a looser definition of God, is more philosophically oriented and it is continually to evolve. In Germany there is also an American Canadian Grand Lodge, and Grand Lodge of British Freemasons in Germany. There are also lodges aligned with regular justifications in other nations.

Similar to Germany, there are many nations with lodges or Grand Lodges presenting sometime significantly different regular Masonic rites. Some nations have their own specific Masonic Rite, such as in Mexico, and the imported versions have been adapted to their own circumstances, history and culture. For reason of brevity, these are the only variations that will be discussed in this essay; however, there are many more variations of regular Freemasonry found around the world.

The 1700s and 1800s was a period of great historical and societal conflict and change. The demands for voting rights were growing, selfdom and slavery was under attack, monarchies were being challenged to evolve or be removed, the status of state churches who were sometime complicit in oppression were being pushed to retire from political alignment, and the population of many colonies were willing to fight for independence. It was also a period when within and between the great faiths of the world there was often physical conflict, suspicion and hostility, or enforced social and economic distance.

During that period the number of lodges, the size of the craft and variations of Freemasonry grew worldwide with startling speed. It was a time when Freemasonry was mostly focused on

the future, and less constrained by pressures to continue the status quo or to standardize. New and often inventive Masonic rites were developed and spread. Some of the rites had a relatively short life, others were simply adjusted and continued for years or even to this day. The result of this most creative and innovative period is that Freemasonry is a worldwide rich tapestry of forms and rites held together by a few powerful ideals and commonalities.

There are many kinds of descriptions of Freemasonry. They can be short or long, broad or specific, comprehensive or limited, outcome oriented, structure oriented, or process oriented. An adequate description of Freemasonry appropriate to our primary system in the US, will not be adequate as a comprehensive description of the worldwide Masonic movement. Often, we see written that Freemasonry is a “philosophical system taught by allegories and symbols”, yet internationally the philosophy or system of virtues taught in different Masonic rites varies to some degree. I therefore offer the following description as a starting point in the effort to find an appropriate comprehensive description.

**Freemasonry is a historical and a continuing movement that transcends national, language, ethnic, religious and often political boundaries. Freemasonry is a fraternity that has adapted to the circumstances and conditions of each nation and region, and continues to adapt as needed. Thus, Freemasonry has many forms. However, all members, everywhere, share the powerful belief that good men of faith, freely acting together as brothers, with tolerance and respect, and in accordance with sound ethics and virtues, can create and sustain positive personal and social improvements.**

To accomplish these honorable goals, Freemasonry everywhere limits its membership to men who voluntarily and without coercion come to the fraternity sincerely seeking self-improvement and new opportunities to contribute to society. Members are provided guidance and symbolic tools to help them discipline their passions, moderate their behaviors, advance their understanding and expand their minds. Members also receive instruction on moral, ethical and scientific principles which encourages the development of good habits and good citizenship.

Through fellowship, members are provided examples of good behavior and of knowledgeable and logical thinkers. When members are faced with personal challenges, the brothers of fraternity are there to advise, assist and even offer relieve if it is within their power. The fraternity strives to assist communities without fanfare and without personal or organization gain.

Freemasonry adapts and therefore has remained relevant throughout the ages and in all lands, and its core message is as powerful today as it was in the past.





# Freemasonry around the World:

## From India, a perspective on Freemasonry

*Freemasonry is an institution that favorably contributed to the development of the intracultural connections in the British Empire. By creating a global network that had both practical functions and ideological dimensions, Freemasonry played a critical role in building, consolidating, and perpetuating the British empire. However, Freemasonry also contributed to the creation of a united India and of its movement for independence from Great Britain.*

*The British form of Freemasonry found a rich environment for growth in India. Religiously, philosophically, cultural and linguistically India is one of the most diverse regions of the world. Then it was not one nation, but a sub-continent of many fiefdoms that often were in conflict. While this divisiveness assisted the British establishing their eventual control of what is now called India, it was not good for business, and the British were in India for business reasons.*

*The first lodge in India was in 1729. Initially, membership in British Freemasonry was limited to Christians or Jews. Muslims became eligible in 1800. In the 1840s Parsis (Zoroastrians), Sikhs, Jains and some Buddhist were eligible for membership. The first Hindu to join a lodge was in 1870. This was the point where Freemasonry became truly open to all men of faith in India.*

*The Masonic ethic of equality within the lodge, religious tolerance and cooperation without strife found quick acceptance among the educated class and the emerging Indian business class. The following essay was recently published in India in the popular online magazine THIS WEEK. This article was written by an Indian national for readers within India, and presents a very positive perspective of Freemasonry in India. The essay has been slight edited for readability. We hope you find this interesting.*

### **Band of Brothers;**

### **Freemasonry, with its inclusive values, may have much to offer**

*By Anjuly Mathai, December 27, 2020*

From colonial times, Freemasonry has played a role in building the country (India) and shaping its values.

*Vouchsafe Thine aid, Almighty Architect of the Universe, to this our present convention, and grant that this candidate for freemasonry may so dedicate and devote his life to Thy service as to become a true and faithful brother among us. Endue him with a competency of Thy divine wisdom that, assisted by the secrets of our Masonic art, he may the better be enabled to unfold the beauties of true godliness, to the honor and glory of Thy Holy Name.*

The above is a prayer spoken by the Worshipful Master of a Freemason's lodge at the initiation ceremony of a Freemason. This might give the impression that freemasonry is a religious order that swears allegiance to the 'Almighty Architect of the Universe'. But nothing could be further from the truth, says Abraham Cherian, Past Master of Lodge Kottayam No. 245 in Kerala. "Freemasonry requires you to believe in one God, any God," he says. "In foreign countries, normally only the Bible is kept in the lodge. Here, in India, in addition to the Bible, we keep the Gita, Koran, Zend Avesta and Guru Granth Sahib, so that people of different denominations can take their obligation on their book of faith. Inside a masonic temple, when a ceremony is conducted and the name of God is invoked, every person is allowed to invoke the name of his God. It is the most secular organization ever."

It is this flexibility and inclusiveness that make Freemasonry an antidote to fundamentalism and authoritarian beliefs. Ultimately, Freemasonry is nothing but a moral code to help make "good men better". Historian John Dickie, in his book *The Craft: How the Freemasons Made the Modern World*, describes it as "a way of binding males in fellowship that has been propelled across the globe and through hundreds of years of history by the force of its mystique".

Freemasonry has a curious ability to create a powerful sense of identity in its adherents. "The emphasis is on development of the individual to the extent that freemasonry becomes a way of life," says Abraham Markose, who was the Regional Grand Master of the Regional Grand Lodge of Southern India from 2017 to 2020. According to Markose, Freemasonry has taught him to be more compassionate, liberal and broad-minded in his thought and outlook.

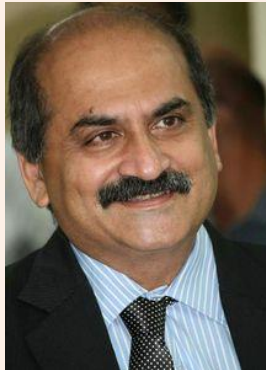
"It has made me a better son to my parents, a better brother to my siblings, a better husband to my wife, a better toiler in my profession, a better father to my children."

Freemasons believe that masonry originated from medieval stonemasons' guilds in England. According to Dickie, medieval trades those days were rich in regulation, ritual and myth. There were rites of passage and oaths to protect trade secrets and reinforce solidarity. These myths and stories were memorized and passed down through the generations. Some of the stonemasons' myths go back to the beginning of time. The most prominent of them is the story of how the biblical Solomon's temple was built employing 40,000 stonemasons. The chief architect was a man known as Hiram Abiff, who features in the third degree rituals of Freemasonry, in which the brethren enact a play about the murder of Abiff. (There are three progressive degrees in basic Freemasonry, and hundreds of higher degrees which only a few freemasons take.) According to masonic tradition, Abiff was killed with a series of blows to the head when he refused to give up the secrets of a master mason.

Over the years, operative masonry (consisting of masons who worked with stone) evolved into speculative masonry (consisting of masons who do not work with stone, but rather “use the tools and skills of operative masons as metaphors for living a good life”.) That is when Freemasonry consolidated from a group of crude craftsmen’s guilds to an elite and international movement, with over six million masons across the world today. It includes in its ranks some of the most prominent figures in history, like George Washington, Motilal Nehru, Amadeus Mozart, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling and Swami Vivekananda. No less than five kings of England and 14 presidents of the US have been masons. In India, four presidents, numerous maharajahs and a few well-known industrialists like Sir Dorabji Jamshedji Tata and J.R.D. Tata were Freemasons.

The most fascinating aspect of Freemasonry is its secrecy. Of course, today this has no meaning beyond symbolism, since all of Freemasonry’s “secrets” are out in the open. Yet, it is this secrecy that has made Freemasonry the subject of endless conjecture. From poisoning Mozart to engineering the French Revolution, conspiracy theories surrounding Freemasonry are a dime a dozen. Although most of these are nothing but myths, according to Dickie. However, the movement’s symbols have sometimes been adopted and abused by some disreputable groups.

Thirty-five years ago, during his initiation ceremony, A.P. Chitra, a former Regional Grand Master from Visakhapatnam, was blindfolded by a man in an apron wielding a drawn sword. His right sleeve was rolled up, and the left leg of his trousers, so as to expose his knee. His arm was taken from the left sleeve of his shirt. A loop of rope was placed over his head. He swore his allegiance to the order and thus began his journey in Freemasonry.



A.P. Chitra, former Regional Grand Master

“Symbolically, if you moved forward, you would be pierced by the sword,” says Chitra. “If you tried to retreat, the noose ensured you died by strangling. I remember being completely awestruck by the ceremony, although I could not understand half of what was happening.” Such elaborate rituals are an inherent part of Freemasonry. It is paradoxical that a movement swathed in so many ancient myths, rituals and allegories would encourage in its followers a scientific temperament and modern outlook. This apparent contradiction in Freemasonry is perhaps its greatest contribution to India. The first masonic lodge in the country was



established at Fort William in Kolkata in 1729, around 12 years after the constitution of the Grand Lodge of England. Today, there are about 360 lodges in 142 locations in India, together uniting 25,000 freemasons. The Grand Lodge of India was established in 1961, in the presence of delegations from the three original Grand Lodges of England, Scotland and Ireland. Within a few weeks, Regional Grand Lodges for eastern, western, southern and northern India were established, with headquarters in Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi respectively. I remember being completely awestruck by the [initiation] ceremony.



Indian's revered independence leader Motilal Nehru was a dedicated Freemason.

From colonial times, Freemasonry has played a role, albeit a small one, in building the country and shaping its values. "Indian Freemasons were often leaders in socio-religious reform movements in their respective communities, whether Hindu, Muslim, or Parsi, and the reformed religions they sought to construct looked much like Freemasonry, in conformity with science, and without barriers such as caste," writes Vahid Jalil Fozdar, a history professor at California State University—East Bay, in *Constructing the 'brother': Freemasonry, Empire and Nationalism in India*.

*The Mother Lodge* was a poem written by Rudyard Kipling in 1895. Kipling had been initiated at the Lodge of Hope and Perseverance in Lahore in 1886.

### **The Mother Lodge**

*We'd Bola Nath,  
Accountant,  
An' Saul the Aden Jew,  
An' Din Mohammed,  
Draughtsman  
Of the Survey Office too;  
There was Babu Chuckerbutty,  
An' Amir Singh the Sikh,  
An' Castro from the fittin'-  
Sheds, The Roman Catholick!*

*Outside—‘Sergeant! Sir! Salute! Salaam!’  
Inside—‘Brother’, an’ it doesn’t do no ‘arm.  
We met upon the Level an’ we parted on the Square,  
An’ I was junior Deacon in my Mother-Lodge out there*

Kipling had always been fascinated by Freemasonry, which makes recurring appearances in his writing, like in his short story *The Man Who Would Be King* (1888) and his novel *Kim* (1901). The Mother Lodge was his distillation of what Freemasonry stood for—a universal brotherhood without the barriers of caste, race or class. The poem was much lauded as Freemasonry’s highest ideal and did its rounds in colonial lodges across the world. But was the universal brotherhood of The Mother Lodge simply a utopia that never existed outside the poem? Not really, says historian and writer Karthik Bhatt, who co-wrote a book on Freemasonry in south India called *Brotherhood and Benevolence*. According to him, there were several heroes of Freemasonry in India who risked their lives to uphold its values of tolerance and equality. He cites the example of Henry Nelson, a Freemason and partner in Parry & Co from 1845 to 1861, who was a vehement champion of Indians. He opposed the imposition of the income tax in Madras, and fought for the Legislative Council to be reconstituted with representation from Hindu, Muslim and Anglo-Indian communities. “It was rare those days for an Englishman to go to such extents to uphold the values of equality and brotherhood,” says Bhatt. In fact, the reason why Freemasons wear gloves in their ceremonies is so that no one can tell the difference between the hands of a nobleman and a commoner. All brothers, claim Freemasons, are equal before God and before each other.

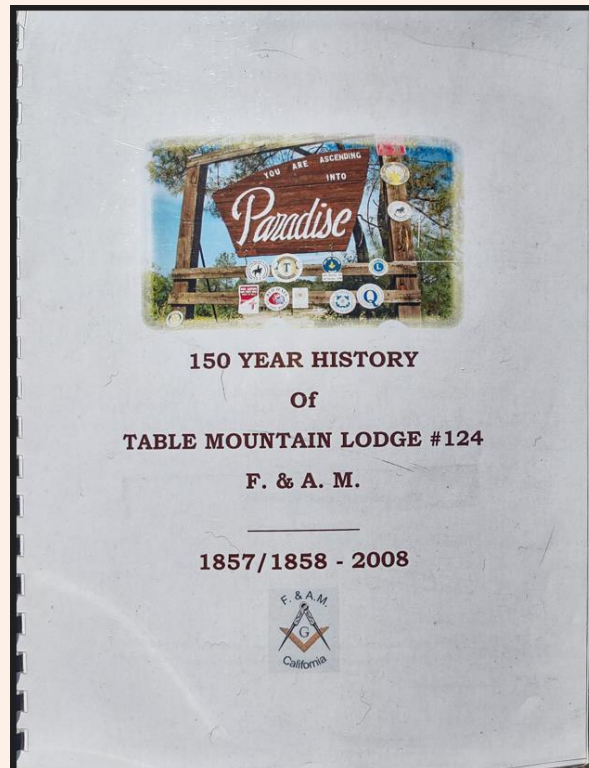
And has this brotherhood percolated down the decades to the India in which we live currently? Although Freemasonry has a reputation of being an elitist organization today, Dr Balaram Biswakumar, who was the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of India from 2009 to 2012, refutes it.

“Initially, this might have been true, with some of the most prominent Supreme Court judges, politicians, police officers and lawyers counted among its ranks. But seeing Freemasonry’s goodness, others, too, were attracted to it. Today, Freemasonry is the only secular organization in the world, which includes a multiplicity of Hindus, Parsis, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs. The only condition is that each brother is strictly prohibited from imposing his faith on others.”



# The 150 History of Table Mountain Masonic Lodge # 124

Our late brother Charles B. Boydstun, PM spent many years preparing this 150 year history of Table Mountain Lodge. It covers the years 1857 thru 2008. To compile this historical record Brother Boydstun reviewed all of the many years of Table Mountain Lodge meeting minutes and other documentation, records of other lodges, records of Grand Lodge and many local historical information sources. This book contains many rare historical pictures, is enjoyable reading and is well indexed for research purposes.



The book was lost for some years, but now has been found. We had it professionally reproduced, spiral bound and they are now available at cost to you. Unfortunately, the price of paper has dramatically increased, these copies cost us about \$30 each. To obtain a copy of this important Masonic historical record, please contact **Table Mountain Lodge Secretary - Brian Grandfield PM, 530-864-6323**, email: [bgrandfield@gmail.com](mailto:bgrandfield@gmail.com)





# Masonic Youth Programs

*Last month we provided information about the wonderful Masonic youth organization The International Order of Rainbow for Girls. This month we are focusing on the Masonic youth organization of boys and young men.*

## DeMolay International or The Order of DeMolay

DeMolay International is an international Masonic fraternal organization for males ages 12 to 21. It was founded in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1919 and named for Jacques DeMolay, the last Grand Master of the Knights Templar. Those seeking membership must acknowledge a higher spiritual power. In addition to the United States, there are active chapters in 22 countries. A boy desiring to join DeMolay doesn't have to have any Masonic family connection. Although many of its members do have a Masonic family member.



We think that the Order of DeMolay is the premier international youth leadership organization at shaping young men into leaders with excellent character. By epitomizing timeless values, and accepting the challenge of leadership - both of character and of action - the young men of DeMolay transform themselves into citizens of the highest caliber. Each young man takes ownership of his DeMolay experience. From generating ideas, planning events, coordinating logistics, and executing their plans, each DeMolay Chapter is responsible for defining their success. All of this is accomplished under the mentorship of trained Advisors, selected from the local community, enabling each Chapter to be uniquely tailored to support the interests of its members.

The following **Seven Cardinal Virtues** are taught as its basic ideals:

- **Filial love (the love between a child and their parent):** which is the love and the kindness we should have with our parents, the ones that gave us birth and taught us the first lessons in our lives. Through them we had the first lessons of kindness, respect and the belief in God.
- **Reverence for sacred things:** it means to believe in God (independent of their religion) and to respect others' beliefs.
- **Courtesy:** kindness, respect and solidarity are principles that a DeMolay tries to practice in his life. Philanthropy is only valid when it is done with heartfelt sincerity.
- **Comradeship:** is to be a faithful friend, not only in good times, but also in hard times.
- **Fidelity:** is to believe and follow your own values and virtues; yet keeping in secret everything which is entrusted. Fidelity is to be faithful to God, your homeland and your friends, following the example of Jacques DeMolay who preferred to die instead of betraying his companions or break with his pledge.

- **Cleanness:** means to be an ideal citizen, pure in soul and heart; it is to always have a clear conscience. It means to keep your mind away from everything that is against the values of a good citizen.
- **Patriotism:** is to respect and defend our homeland, our democracy, our state and our city overall. It calls for maintenance for the respect of public heritage, such as schools, orphanages and hospitals that support people in need.

The Order of DeMolay calls for every member to live according to those Virtues considered by the Order as something that distinguish the life of a leader and a good man.

DeMolay also defends three fundamental freedoms:

- **Religious Freedom:** represented by the Holy Book (might be represented by any holy book, independent of the religion i.e., **Bible, Quran, Torah**, etc.)
- **Civil Freedom:** represented by the National Flag
- **Intellectual Freedom:** represented by the Scholar's Books

The Order of DeMolay also has an **Ethical Code**:

- A DeMolay serves God. (DeMolay does not emphasis any one Religion or church over another.
- A DeMolay honors all womanhood.
- A DeMolay loves and honors his parents.
- A DeMolay is honest.
- A DeMolay is loyal to ideals and friends.
- A DeMolay practices honest toil.
- A DeMolay's word is as good as his bond.
- A DeMolay is courteous.
- A DeMolay is at all times a gentleman.
- A DeMolay is a patriot in peace as well as in war.
- A DeMolay is clean in mind and body.
- A DeMolay stands unswervingly for the public schools.
- A DeMolay always bears the reputation of a good and law-abiding citizen.
- A DeMolay by precept and example must preserve the high standards to which he has pledged himself.

A local DeMolay body is known as a Chapter and is headed by the Master Councilor. The Master Councilor is elected by members of his Chapter and is usually among the older members of the group. The Master Councilor is assisted in his duties by a Senior Councilor and a Junior Councilor. The Senior Councilor is usually considered to be next in line as Master Councilor and Junior Councilor to follow. The remaining officers of a Chapter are appointed by the Master Councilor. Adult men mentor and supervise the Chapter and are referred to as

"Dad." These men are often Masons or Senior DeMolays (former active members who have reached the age of 21) but can also be other men, including the fathers of active members.

DeMolay has its own Ceremonies, in many ways similar to regular Masonic ceremonies. Parents, whether they are Masonic or not, are always invited to all ceremonies, meetings and activities. The boys also have many opportunities to plan and engage in other types of fun and social activities. Below are pictures of some of our local DeMolay at DEVO day at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom park.



The Chico/ Paradise DeMolay chapter is now very active. They meet at 6:30 pm, on the first and third Thursdays of each month, at Chico Masonic Center. The contact for the chapter is the Adult Advisor, Mike Meyer, 530-514-0252. You may also reach out to our Brother Richard Gingerly and Brother Cole Hamilton because they are assisting the DeMolay Chapter.





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