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Jacob's Ladder

by Bro. Terry Hook

In the Worshipful Master's lecture to the newly initiated Entered Apprentice, oblique reference is made to the story of Jacob's vision of a Ladder from Genesis 28. Similar to our explicitly labeled working tools, a ladder only begins to gain value and meaning when it is used to effect an end that would otherwise have been difficult or impossible to achieve without the use of the tool. What can be said about Jacob's vision? How should one use this tool? Just what is it that each of us is attempting to surmount? Large questions with multivalent answers, none of which sufficiently embrace the sublimity of the metaphor. Totalizing interpretations miss the entire point of symbolic meaning-making, and thousands of years of great minds have grappled with the same image; nevertheless, in my investigations I've been fortunate enough to find some observations which have helped

me begin to unpack the metaphor. Will you walk with me awhile?

The history of the image extends far into the misty depths of time beyond the Levant-specific traditions of the Book. An editorial published in the *Craftsman* in 1897 notes that the ladder, "as a symbol of moral and intellectual progress existed almost universally in antiquity, presenting itself either as a succession of steps (as we have in the Biblical image), of gates (as we have in certain forms of Mithraism or Brahmanism), of degrees (as we explicitly have today in Speculative Freemasonry), or in some other modified form." It is worth noting that Jacob seems to recognize the ladder as *the* ladder as opposed to merely a ladder amongst others.

The vision comes upon the man after a day of toiling travel while he's bedded down on some comfy sod and pulled up



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a stone for a pillow. A strictly masonic reading might recognize this immediately as the state of the candidate prior to receiving the Entered Apprentice degree: encased in the cold world looking for a way beyond.

A related spiritualist reading might push a little further and recognize Jacob's station here as representative of all beings who find their first inkling of a greater spiritual reality necessarily taking place within the bounds of materiality and time. From darkness to light, from corruption to perfection, from ignorance to knowledge, the image holds all dualistic

possibilities in tension.

In his vision, Jacob sees various heavenly personages ascending towards or descending from the heavenly firmament—the Great Architect of the Universe—the top rung of the hierarchical ladder. Were they called to the side of God, or banished from his presence? Are they determinedly toiling *via* free-will towards the glory, or incrementally depleting themselves with the same will away from awareness of true divinity? The mover, the agent, to do-er of the action is never strictly outlined; what seems most important in the vision is

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the image of an indeterminate up and an imprecise down with a staged path leading between the two.

Insofar as the treatment ignores the figures of Hope, Faith and Charity, which the Entered Apprentice lecture uses as structuring elements, the above is wholly insufficient. Further consideration of the number of steps the ladder has, or what each of those steps may signify, would likely lead to a deeper and more representative understanding of the vision. Nevertheless, the general thrust of the image – of a movement from this to that, where 'this' is not-so-good and 'that' is definitely-better, which finds its root in the ground and its flower in the heavens, is arguably useful without any other symbolic trappings. As freemasons, we are being systematically taught about a workable approach to uncovering, mounting, and then ascending the ladder from Jacob's vision. I suspect that in the grand scheme, we all stand on different rungs of the ladder — if we can fancy ourselves to be on it in the first place, never an easy supposition. A few steps ahead or a few behind, do you care to continue to climb with me awhile, my brothers?

Brother Terry Huck, raised in 2010, is co-editor of the Haida Lodge No. 166 newsletter, The Lion's Paw now in its twenty-first year of publication.

Lodge notes

W Bro. Malcolm Campbell of **Mount St. Paul Lodge No. 109**, Kamloops has been busy making Bible cushions which he has presented to several lodges within this jurisdiction, as well as sending one to Canada Lodge in Kandahar.

Pythagoras Lodge No.

194 recently celebrated the hundredth birthday of W Bro. Lorne Whitmore. He looks forward to receiving his Sixty Year Service Award in two years.

On the square

by Bro. J. Gordon Jones

In the long run good character is made by two small words — "yes" and "no". The secret of pure, fine character is the ability to say "yes" to all that life offers which is good and right, and the strength to say "no" to all that weakens and defiles.

The mind of a man is like a legislative assembly, where the representatives of our human faculties sit in session. Each faculty has a vote on every great question which may come up for discussion. Here sits Reason, the philosopher of your soul; Conscience, the judge of your soul; Imagination, the artist of your soul; Will, the executive of your soul; Hope, the poet of your soul; Faith, the prophet of your soul; and Love, the queen of your soul.

On every great issue, let every voice be heard. The Spirit, which is the speaker of the house, will call for a decision. You register your vote; the answer is "yes" or "no". So your life is governed, so the choices of your life are expressed; so the character of your personality is revealed.

Character by itself, however, is not enough; in addition, a man needs conviction. If character is what a man is, then conviction is what a man believes. Convictions are the stuff out of which history is made. If you would master any period of history you must discover the masterminds, the master convictions, of that period. The conviction of Galileo gave us a new astronomy. The conviction of Gutenberg gave us a new enlightenment. Shakespeare's

beliefs meant new forms of drama; Michelangelo's — new theories of art; Faraday's — new principles of science.

There was only one John Wesley, but his convictions are believed by multitudes. There was only one Martin Luther, but his beliefs are accepted by millions.

Remember the words of Victor Hugo: "What is grander than the everlasting hills? — a storm at sea! And what is grander than a storm at sea? — the starry night! And what is grander than the starry night? — a conviction in the mind of a man!"

To me, a freemason is not a wishy-washy sort of person; he is a man of conviction. Besides character and conviction, a man needs concentration. This has to do with the things upon which a person focuses his energies. If freemasons are to serve their communities adequately, they must learn to specialize. They can't do everything; but they can do something. Concentration is the method which produces results in all walks of life, whether we are writing a book, or perfecting a formula, or serving a community.

By concentration the last battle is won, the last mountain peak is scaled, the last enemy is overcome. If you were to explore the unexplored atom, chart the unknown heavens, write the geological history of the universe, map the trail of life through its biological developments, then you must say, as Paul said, "This one thing I do!"

One further quality is needed in the making of a man; it is commitment. In every man's mind there should be some idea or ideal around which he organizes his purposes, and to which he dedicates his powers. It is the cause or conviction to which a man pledges his allegiance when he is on his knees. It was on your knees you became a Master Mason, pledging

yourself to Truth, Charity and Service — the Truth by which no man is ever injured, the Charity without which no dogma is worth holding, and the Doing of Good which is the finest art known upon earth and among men.

Excerpted from the theme speech for the 1966 Alberta Masonic Spring Workshop.

Quote

by RW Bro. Ossian Lang

"The happy person is the one who finds occasions for joy at every step. He does not have to look for them, he just finds them."

RW Bro. Ossian Lang, Grand Chaplain for New York in 1932 was the author of Was Anderson Right?, in which he defends the Rev Dr. James Anderson's version of the history of the early meetings of the Grand Lodge of England.

Resolved...

In 1990 this Grand Lodge adopted a resolution that, "There is no objection to a neutrally-worded approach being made to a man who is considered a suitable candidate for Freemasonry.

"There can be no objection to his being reminded, once, that the approach was made. The potential candidate should then be left to make his own decision, without further solicitation."

Constitutions

Section R158 tells us that members of a lodge who belong to the Order of the Holy Royal Arch may wear in lodge the honorary jewel of this Order, but not the clothing.

Like the Masonic Medal of Merit and the Dennis Marsh Medal, the Honorary Jewel of the Order of Royal Arch is to be worn on the right lapel.

This is also found under section 73 of the *Book of Constitutions*.

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Junior Grand Warden candidates



RW Bro. Doug Collins

Freemasonry, by its very nature, is an evolving institution. We need to find ways to encourage our newer Brethren to stay with us, and continue to streamline our business procedures to sustain future growth. The challenge, then, is to find the mechanisms to put these in place and fulfill the needs of the great diversity of our membership. Our Grand Lodge has been working hard to meet these goals, through the Five-Pillar Plan, and a thorough review of our organizational structure. It is my intention to help further those goals. We need to expand upon these initial steps and continue the process to reach out and connect with those in far-flung areas of our Jurisdiction. I have long been involved in consensus-building, team strategy and human relations. Education and transparency are keys in working through Regional Representatives and District Deputies to attain that connection. I also believe we have to uphold the Ancient Landmarks of the Order. Change is necessary to move forward, but only if the fundamental principles on which the Order was built remain intact. Our vision starts at the West Gate, so we need to be sure that those accepted into the Craft will be those who will lead it into the future. Since leadership is as

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RW Bro. Philip Durell

Service in Freemasonry is repaid many times over by the friendship of brethren and the feeling of belonging to an organization that emphasizes tolerance, charity and self-learning.

I have been privileged to serve the Craft in many capacities, including the last three years on the Grand Lodge Board of General Purposes. In my active association with our Grand Line officers I am inspired to seek election as Junior Grand Warden and continue the evolution of the Five Pillar Plan by incorporating the wishes of the brethren from the results of the Master Mason survey and workshops held throughout the jurisdiction. I believe the retention of members and growth of the Craft should be a primary goal that can be achieved only by meeting the needs and expectations of all freemasons from new Entered Apprentices to those wearing Fifty Year jewels. I would promote the extension of current lodge officer programmes to the local level under the guidance of District Deputy Grand Masters with the assistance of Regional Representatives and Grand Lodge.

When requested, I believe Grand Lodge should provide necessary resources to assist individual Lodges. If elected I promise to serve with dignity

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RW Bro. Bob MacKenzie

Reflecting on my career as an educator for thirty-five years, I see a close relationship between the goals I worked towards as an educator and administrator, and the goals we have set for our Craft under the Five Pillar Plan.

Leadership, education, communication, membership, community and strategic management goals were all prominent aspects of my career.

I am pleased with the way the Grand Line has cooperated and demonstrated commitment to the Five Pillar Plan, including the development of great community relations. I wish to be a part of this team, as I have seen how a plan such as this can be highly successful.

Having travelled extensively throughout the jurisdiction, I have witnessed the positive results gained by lodges that actively worked to develop great community relations

My personal goals for the Craft involve developing better community relations, retaining our newly-raised brethren, improving our use of technology, and cultivating our members' leadership skills. Our future lies in the hands of these young brethren. We must address their needs, while also meeting the needs of our older brethren. I hope to play a part in bringing these goals to fruition with the other members of the Grand Line.

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like driving
at night?

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Third Saturday
Meridian Lodge No. 108
Second Saturday



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freemasonry.bcy.ca/gl2011

Constitutions

from page two

The Royal Arch *Constitutions* defines the Honorary Jewel of a Royal Arch Mason as that jewel presented during the ceremony of his exaltation. This jewel, of gold or metal gilt, is a red double triangle encircled in white above a triple tau. It is suspended from a ribbon on which is placed a keystone. For First Principals and Past First Principals of chapters the colour of the ribbon may be crimson.

No other Royal Arch jewel is to be worn in a Craft lodge. ■

Enoch?

Enoch was the grandfather of Noah, and was a seventh generation descendant of Adam. We know very little about Enoch, but he did leave his mark on history. Besides being mentioned in the *Book of Genesis*, a reference is made to him in the *Book of Jude*. In this book we are told about a prophecy that came from the *Book of Enoch*. This book was almost lost for a thousand years, but three copies of it were brought back from Ethiopia in 1821. The book has been translated from one language to another since the second century BCE. Even that translation was probably translated from an old Semitic language.

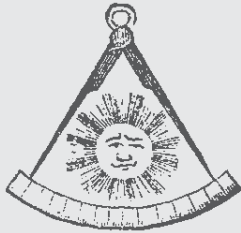
Very briefly, Enoch was believed to have hidden the wisdom of the pre-flood world that he had accumulated, and then he buried it on Mount Moriah. Why is Mount Moriah so significant? Because this is the spot where King Solomon's Temple was built. Legend has it that Enoch also buried a triangular shaped object that

contained the name of God on it. Masonic writer Albert G. Mackey tells us that Enoch constructed underground, in the bosom of Mount Moriah, an edifice consisting of nine brick vaults situated perpendicularly beneath each other and communicating by apertures left in the arch of each vault.

He then caused a triangular plate of gold to be made, each side of which was a cubit long; he enriched it with the most precious stones and engraved upon it the ineffable name of God. He then encrusted the plate upon a stone of agate of the same form, which he placed upon a cubical stone of marble, and deposited the whole within the ninth or innermost vault.

When this subterranean building was completed, Enoch made a slab or door of stone, and, attaching to it a ring of iron, by which it might, if necessary, be raised, he placed it over the aperture of the uppermost arch, and so covered it over with soil that the opening could not easily be discovered. Enoch himself was not permitted to enter it more than once a year, and on his death, or translation, all knowledge of this building and of the sacred treasure which it contained was lost until in succeeding ages it was accidentally discovered while Solomon was engaged in building a temple above the spot, on the same mountain.

The legend proceeds to inform us that after Enoch had finished the construction of the nine vaults, fearing that the principles of the arts and sciences which he had assiduously cultivated would be lost in that universal deluge of which he had received a



GRAND MASTER'S ITINERARY MAY 2011

6	F	District 12	Omineca Lodge No. 92	Smithers
7	S	Installation	Omeneca Lodge No. 92	Smithers
12	Th	Crab Night	Joppa Lodge No. 112	White Rock
12	Th	Grand Lodge	Board of General Purposes	Vancouver
14	S	District 11	Atlinto Lodge No. 42	Whitehorse
25	W	Empire Night	Alliance Lodge No. 193	Vancouver
28	S	District 19	Peace Lodge No. 126	Dawson Creek
30	M	Grand Chapter	Order of Eastern Star	Langley

prophetic vision, he erected above ground two pillars, one of marble, to withstand the destructive influences of fire, and one of brass, to resist the action of water. On the pillar of brass he engraved the history of the creation, the principles of the arts and sciences, and the doctrines of speculative Freemasonry as they were then practiced; and on the pillar of marble he inscribed in hieroglyphic characters the information that near the spot where they stood a precious treasure was deposited in a subterranean vault.

Such is the legend of Enoch. As a traditional narrative it has not the slightest support of authentic history, and the events that it relates do not recommend themselves by an air of probability. But, accepted as the expression of a symbolic idea, it undoubtedly possesses some value.

There is no allusion to this story in the legend of the Craft. None of the old manuscript

Constitutions contain the name of Enoch, nor does he appear to have been deemed by the mediaeval masons to be one of the worthies of the Craft. The Enoch spoken of in the *Cooke Manuscript* is the son of Cain, and not the seventh patriarch. We must conclude, therefore, that the legend was a fabrication of a later day, and in no way suggested by anything contained in the original Craft legend.

Enoch is first introduced to the Craft as one of the founders of geometry and masonry, by the Rev. Dr. James Anderson, in 1723.

The word Enoch signifies, in the Hebrew, *initiated* or *consecrated*, and would seem to have suggested the idea of his connection with a system of initiation into sacred rites.

We must view, therefore, the legend of Enoch as an allegory. It was intended to teach the doctrine of Divine Truth by the symbol of the Holy Name—the Tetragrammaton—the name most reverently consecrated in the Jewish system as well as in others, and which has always constituted one of the most important and prominent symbols of Speculative Masonry. ■

Junior Grand Warden candidates

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RW Bro. Doug Collins

much listening as doing, this is a project that involves all of us working together to realize our ambitions for the future. ■

RW Bro. Philip Durell

and work diligently to ensure that not only my goals but the collective will and vision of the Craft are fulfilled. ■

VW Bro. Bob MacKenzie

I bring a varied skill set that I hope can be put to good use assisting the team to meet the goals of the Five Pillar Plan. ■