

Unity Lodge #58, A.F. & A.M.

Thorndike, Maine



<<First Name>> <<Last Name>>

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<<Town>> <<State>> <<Zip>>

January 14, 2021

Our next Stated Communication is January 20th, 2021. 7:30 pm No meal.

There will be a Non Ritual School Of Instruction February 11 2021 at Seabasticook Lodge #146 Clinton 7:30pm no meal.

<<Raised this month wording>>

Thank you to those who have paid their dues.

Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1998256393798057/>

Grand Lodge has started "Our Lodge Page™": <https://58-me.ourlodgepage.com/>

Please notify the secretary if your address changes.

Why So many Symbols?

Leon Zeldis, Masonic Service Association of North America

The author is a retired textile engineer and translator. Also Honorary Assistant Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Israel.

The famous definition of Freemasonry is "A system of morality veiled in allegory and illuminated by symbols" brings to mind an immediate follow-up question: why so many symbols?

Ours is an age of materialism and high-tech. Science explores every little corner of the universe, from the level of elementary particles to that of galaxies and the boundless universe, overwhelming us with an endless flood of facts, while imagination is banished to the sidelines of fiction.

If this is our current situation, why so Freemasons insist in conveying our message through the medium of symbolism? Why do we continue performing long and complicated ceremonies? Continued

Stated meeting are on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:30 with a 6:30 supper

Bruce Hutchins, Secretary, 1053 Halldale Rd, Montville ME 04941. tel/fax 382-6226, email bruce@hutchinsbrothers.com

District Calendar <http://east.our.calendars.net/glme/glmedist12>

<http://unitylodge.hutchinsbrothers.com/>

The physicist, the modern demiurge, manages his invisible particles in a world of infinitely precise measurements, elaborate instruments, powerful computers and mathematical analysis.

However, the human mind does not appear to work following the rules of computer logic: rather it works on the basis of symbolic structures. Apprehension and abstraction are symbolic in nature, The language we use to reason with and to convey information is a generally accepted system of symbols. Words do not correspond to measurable physical entities. The word "fire" does not burn, but it immediately evokes in the mind images of a campfire or a burning building, and in some cases, it may bring to mind shooting.

Suppose that I hold in my hand the score for Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. You see a book, yet in your mind you hear the four starting notes of the music, destiny knocking at the door, or V for Victory, if you remember the Second World War. I say this is a symphony, but a scientist might claim that it is only an object weighing 400 grams, composed of wood pulp beaten into sheets, partly covered with a mixture of carbon black and glue. Who is closer to the truth? Which truth is closer to us?

I now pick up a plastic disk and say this too is Beethoven's Fifth. In my mind, they are closely related; the book and the disk are almost twins. More surprising still, both are representations of another, totally different experience, the actual concert performance of the symphony. The human mind has this extraordinary ability of abstracting these various experiences: attending a concert, listening to a recording, reading a score, and comprising them into a single symbol: Beethoven's Fifth.

"The Greek word *symbolein* means "to throw together" or "to unite". The symbol unites an outer and visible thing with an inner or spiritual meaning. The antonym means "to separate" and is the origin of *Diabolos* or *devil!*" (Deepal Chopra, *Panta Rhea*).

Symbols, then, are tools for thought, ways to grasp reality and to relate it to ourselves. We sometimes forget that all measurements started as proportions of the human body. An inch is a thumb's length, a palm is the width of a hand, a foot is the length of a foot, a fathom is the breadth of outstretched arms. The scientist has dehumanized his measurements, because his work is not done with tools adapted to the human body, but with instruments adapted to the machine.

In Masonry we look back to our human dimensions. The symbolic tools we use are intended to reveal direct insights about man, the microcosm, and the world about, the macrocosm. Masonry does not teach like in a classroom. We have no professors, because we are all apprentices, learning through work, through practice, through personal experience.

Masonic teachings are acquired and developed only by personal effort and involvement, by experiencing the ritual ceremonies. Masonic degrees cannot be received by mail or through the internet, like diplomas after concluding a course of study. Ritual and symbols are dead letters when on the printed page. Only when the words and actions come to life, only by personally experiencing the ceremonies they become reality.

Masons assemble in lodges in order to work. Opening the lodge is calling it to labor. We hold work in such high esteem, because work is essentially a personal experience. Working we use our hands, our minds and our hearts.

Seeing the external aspects of ritual, one may be inclined to call it a theatrical game. Indeed, when ritual is performed without proper preparation, as a charade, a series of actions, words and gestures carried out without thought, ritual becomes a parody.

But ritual can also become the key to unlock a deeper, more immediate understanding of human nature than what is imparted by logical discourse. Ritual incorporates the accumulated experience of wise men who lives in ages before science and the scientific method were dominant, an experience expressed in legends and symbols. When Freemasonry itself is considered as a philosophical institution, that is, an association of free men, lovers of knowledge, then, and only then, we can begin to appreciate the value of ritual and symbol in our work.

Yes, we do play a game in Masonry. It is a very old game, ever full of surprises. It is called the game of life. The tools that Masonry puts in our hands allow us to play the game better, with personal enjoyment and for the benefit of society.

Masonic Song: Ye Sons of Old Killie, Robert Burns

Ye sons of Auld Killie, assembled by Willie,
To follow the noble vocation;
Your thrifty old mother has scarce such another
To sit in that honoured station.
I've little to say, but only to pray,
As praying's the ton of your fashion;
A prayer from the muse you well may excuse,
'Tis seldom her favorite passion.

Ye powers who preside o'er the wind and the tide,
Who marked each element's border,
Who formed this frame with beneficent aim
Whose sovereign statute is order,
Within this dear mansion may wayward contention,
Or withered Envy ne'er enter,
May secrecy round be the mystical bound
And brotherly love be the center.