



## Lodge of Living Stones No. 4957

CASTLE GROVE MASONIC HALL, MOOR ROAD, HEADINGLEY, LEEDS, LS6 4BP, UNITED KINGDOM

March 2017

### THE DUTIES OF THE DEACONS

Dear Brethren,

As most of you know, I took over from Robert Lomas as the Lodge's Secretary for Associate Members at the Installation meeting in December. I have been in touch with most of you but, in a couple of cases, my attempts have not been successful. If you have not heard from me, it may be that your email address is no longer current, in which case you are unlikely to get this message either. If, however, you have not heard from me and you *do* get this email, please get in touch. I am keen to ensure that you have all received the bound books of Lodge Papers we have produced recently – there will be another to send out shortly.

In the meantime let me share with you a Masonic “thought for the day.” It concerns the ‘Duties of the Deacons.’

The main duty of the Deacons, of course, is to conduct the Candidate through his three Craft Degrees, prompting him and answering questions for him. However, in the Opening of the Lodge, both Deacons describe their duties to the Master of the Lodge but neither of them even mentions accompanying Candidates.

The Junior Deacon says that his duty is:

‘To carry all messages and communications of the Worshipful Master from the Senior to the Junior Warden and to see that the same are punctually obeyed,<sup>1</sup>

While the Senior Deacon says his duty is:

‘To carry all messages and commands from the Worshipful Master to the Senior Warden and to await the return of the Junior Deacon.’

Does any of this actually happen in our ceremonies, or indeed at any other time in our Lodge meetings? Have you ever seen a Junior Deacon ensuring that the Master's commands are punctually obeyed; or a Senior Deacon waiting at the Senior Warden's pedestal for a returning Junior Deacon? And anyway why doesn't the Senior Deacon take the Master's messages directly to the Junior Warden himself? – after all, he has to pass the Junior Warden's pedestal on his way round the Lodge to get to the Senior Warden. Evidently there's more to this than meets the eye.

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<sup>1</sup> Words taken from the Opening Ceremony worked in the Lodge of Living Stones.

It is, of course, just this sort of paradox in Masonic ritual that should alert the thoughtful Mason to the possibility of some symbolic interpretation and lead him to search for it. As W.L. Wilmshurst said:

‘Brethren, it is just this elusiveness, these intentional enigmas, this purposed puzzle language, that are intended to put us on the scent of something deeper than the words themselves convey.’<sup>2</sup>

He elaborated for us the meanings of this and many other aspects of the Craft Lodge officers’ functions. The Worshipful Master, in his interpretation, represents the Divine Spark in a man, in you and me; the Senior Warden, his Soul or Psyche; and the Junior Warden, his Mind or Intellect. Now, it all begins to make sense – the Deacons act as messengers between these aspects of our selves – of the “Self” of each one of us.

As Brethren of Wilmshurst’s Lodge of Living Stones it is our duty to convey his teachings to the Brethren of our Lodges and the Companions of our Chapters. Many of them are hungry for some explanation of these enigmas in our ritual.

Keep in touch, Brethren.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,

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<sup>2</sup> *The Meaning of Masonry*, p. 67.



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June 2017

### THE TWO PILLARS – DUALITY AND BALANCE

Dear Brethren,

I have been in touch with you about what we did at our April informal meeting to keep you all up to date and I hope to have told you about the May one as well before you receive this, which is the traditional Associates Letter that our Secretary sends out with the Summons for the regular Lodge meeting in June.

As in March, I'm keen to share with you a short Masonic "Thought for the Day." This time it concerns the two pillars and the concepts of Duality and Balance.

One of the most striking features in a Bristol Craft Lodge room is the two great pillars in the West. Every Candidate in Bristol, as he enters the Lodge on his quest for Light, is placed between these two Pillars in the West. These're not present in all English Lodge rooms but are prominent in many. They represent the twin pillars at the entrance to King Solomon's Temple; one of them is associated with the left hand and the other with the right. Each of them has a separate meaning and they also have a conjoint signification. They are, however, not actually conjoined as such – we don't place a lintel across them. They don't hold up a wall.

These twin pillars carry forward and develop an idea from the First Degree. The First Degree makes us aware of opposites, and of the contrasts between these opposites – of Duality. Duality exists throughout the Creation – opposites in contrast, such as: Light and Dark, Positive and Negative, Male and Female. The Second Degree, however, is about bringing these opposites together in balance and harmony. It's telling us that, although the world is seen by us as split up into a Duality of opposites, ultimately the Universe is about Unity. Masonry is trying to teach us about ourselves and it's part of our task to unify the opposites within ourselves – to bring them into harmony and balance.

Everything in Nature, including ourselves, has two sides, two aspects: active and passive; good and bad; physical and spiritual. Everything, again including ourselves, is subject to opposing forces; the trick is to balance them in equilibrium. This is what holds things together, gives them "Stability" and makes them "Stand Fast" – perhaps for ever. The two Pillars are meant to tell every new Candidate that he must learn about these two opposite poles of himself and understand that they must be brought into harmony and balance. Like the Pillars, we are beings with two opposite sides to us. We are a mixture of good and evil; both the beast and the angel are in us. We have an objective outward nature, but also a subjective inner one. Through and through we are stamped with the evidence of being a synthesis of two opposite forces, and experience of both of them is necessary for our welfare and growth.

Unfortunately, in most of us, these forces are not in balance. If they were, we would be perfect beings; we would have found our “Centre” – the point where they meet and are established in equilibrium. But our material nature tends to predominate over our spiritual nature; our darkness exceeds our light. We do not “stand fast;” we are very unstable, erratic, and imperfect creatures; the house of our personality is far from being “established in strength.” And so the whole purpose of our two symbolic Pillars is to disclose the duality of our constitution and to emphasise the necessity of bringing the two opposite sides of ourselves into equilibrium.

A real Master Mason is one who has unified and acquired complete control over both the spiritual and material, the objective and subjective elements in himself, in whom the Pillars have become balanced, who has found the “Centre,” or point of balance, who has acquired stability of character and peace of mind in all conditions, and who has mastery over himself.

Yours sincerely and fraternally,

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