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The Salty Mason



By Jason D. Rees 32° KCCH

What kind of Mason are you or, better yet, what kind of Mason should you be?

From as far back as history records, salt has been a fundamental part of our world. Records as far back as 6050 BC have shown that salt has been tied to the human race almost from the very beginning. Wars have been fought over this substance, the Salt Wars of 1304 and 1540, even as recent as the San Elizario Salt War of 1877. Even Gandhi participated in a “Salt March” which was a nonviolent protest against the British monopoly and high tax on salt in 1930.

Our religious texts also use salt as a symbol, calling upon all people to emulate the ancient and universal substance. In the Bible (one of thirty references), in Numbers 18:19, “whatever is set aside from the holy offerings the Israelites present to the Lord I give you and your sons and daughters as your perpetual share. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the Lord for both you and your offspring.” In the New Testament in Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.” In Buddhism/Shinto salt is used to purify spaces and ward off evil spirits.

Salt has always been used as a preservative for food. Before the invention of refrigeration, the use of salt allowed transportation and extended longevity of meats for consumption. Salt is also used to season our food, for with the right amount it can make your food taste perfect, while too much salt which can also make your food taste awful. We can apply these teachings and lessons learned from salt in our very lives and are reminded that we should emulate this substance in our everyday actions.

As such, we as Masons have a responsibility to be the salt of the earth. Through our individual faiths, practices, and Masonic teachings of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, we as Masons should show tolerance through our actions in everyday interactions with whomever we encounter, be it in our

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Masonic Education



By A. Olivier 32°

Freemasonry is a thinking-man’s organization. The fraternity came to be sometime in the 1400s or 1500s and really came to prominence during the illuminating times of The Enlightenment. The Craft had significant influence on both the American and French Revolutions and contributed to the spread of ideas that we take for granted today: democracy, equality under the law, freedom of religion, and freedom of speech.

These ideas spread amongst Masons, and throughout the Western world, because any man who calls himself a Freemason should share certain ideals with his brethren. More especially, though, the ideas spread during The Enlightenment because Masonic lodges met for the purpose of bettering their membership. Men traveled on horseback, sometimes for an entire day, to go to a Masonic lodge. Their meetings were a special event, so special that they were worth taking off work, getting away from family, and even dressing up for. These meetings always had some kind of education or information that was presented. One can imagine that, at a time when newspapers were the primary form of news and books provided the most detailed form of education, it was a significant event to go to a private meeting where a special speaker had been procured to present on some specific Masonic topic.

Today in Texas, a general sense of uneasiness can be felt at a lodge when there is a presenter who is going to speak on some educational for more than five minutes. Sometimes groans can even be heard as he comes up to the podium and flicks on a slide show to assist him with his presentation. Speakers should do their best to make their presentations captivating, especially in an age of digital media and art, but one really does have to question the sincerity of a Mason who can’t sit through a presentation on Masonic symbolism or history. If a Mason doesn’t care to hear or learn about a special Masonic topic that he has no knowledge of, what is he really there to do?

While many other organizations have detailed histories going back generations and are centrally organized, Freemasonry has historically been focused on the local level. Even today, with grand lodges throughout the world, most Masons pay little attention to the pomp and circumstance of their grand lodge and instead focus only on their lodge and, maybe, the other lodges in their district.

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places of employment or worship, and everywhere in-between. In today's world it seems tolerance and the law of love has fallen into darkness. The world as a whole has grown less understanding of others' opinions, no matter what they are, and assign motives to those opinions that do not align with their own without any evidence. The Scottish rite degrees teach that we should not assume the worst motives from someone but attempt to see the good and hear them out. We should in all ways attempt to raise the bar with our actions thereby raising those around us up, which in turn will cause the butterfly effect of love to grow.

Salt preserves food just as we should be preserving ourselves and the world through our faiths and masonic teachings. The word "salary" is derived from the word salt, as in ancient times salt was used as payment for labor or goods received. Each of us should be earning our salt by exercising our duty as good Scottish rite Masons. We should be adding good flavor, love, and leadership throughout the world. Let each of our lives resemble that good salt and each of us be preserved to further light throughout the world.

**"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty;
In all things, charity"**

"Journey Passport" Program

The Houston Valley is participating in the "Journey Passport" program which includes 33 challenges that allow participants to earn six unique Scottish Rite challenge coins. The passport program is designed to take brothers throughout the Valley of Houston and the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite. To learn more and get a passport, contact Brother Jason Rees 32° KCCH at: acompass@yahoo.com

The Houston Valley Herald Email List

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The Houston Valley Educational Program Master Craftsman Zoom study group. If you are interested in taking classes please email acompass@yahoo.com. Open to any Master Mason in good standing.

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Check out our latest episode of the Houston Valley Podcast, the interview of the Michael R. Poll, a New York Times Bestselling writer and publisher. He is a 50-year Mason and a member of several lodges, including Perfect Union Lodge #1, Etoile Polaire Lodge #1, Cervantes Lodge #5, Germania Lodge #46 (New Orleans, Louisiana), and Hiram-Takoma Lodge #10 (Washington, D.C.). Michael is a noted Masonic author and historian. He has served as a Past President and Founding Fellow of The Masonic Society; a Fellow of the Philaethes Society and the Maine Lodge of Research; a member of the Society of Blue Friars; and a full member of the Texas Lodge of Research. He has contributed papers to Heredom. (cornerstonepublisher.com)



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Masonic history is full of legends and myths, many of which are out of whole cloth. It is exciting that, even today in the modern world, there are new pieces being put together about Freemasonry that we didn't have before.

This fraternity, based in oral tradition and secrecy, is slowly having its interlaced legacy woven together by Masonic historians who thread the needles of history. When it comes to Masonic education at a lodge that is weary of it, start with the basics: the symbols. Next, move on to interesting examples of their use throughout history. Then, once that topic has been exhausted, move on to the history of the fraternity in an area. Look into books like Mackey's *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* for inspiration.

Read the works of Pike and other Masons. Take risks, be bold, and don't be intimidated by your own lack of knowledge. If a Mason with a Class-A certificate were to forget all of the ritual and floor work that he memorized, but he at least knew general meaning of the symbols of the Craft, then he could still live his life as a just and upright Mason. At the same time, if a Mason has memorized every word of the ritual but can't explain, in his own words, what the purpose of the square is, then one has to ask himself: what is he really doing here?

BANQUET NIGHT

AUTHOR: RUDYARD KIPLING

'ONCE IN SO OFTEN,' KING SOLOMON SAID,
WATCHING HIS QUARRYMEN DRILL THE STONE,
'WE WILL CLUB OUR GARLIC AND WINE AND BREAD
AND BANQUET TOGETHER BENEATH MY THRONE
AND ALL THE BRETHREN SHALL COME TO THAT MESS
AS FELLOW-CRAFTSMEN—NO MORE AND NO LESS.
'SEND A SWIFT SHALLOP TO HIRAM OF TYRE,
FELLING AND FLOATING OUR BEAUTIFUL TREES,
SAY THAT THE BRETHREN AND I DESIRE
TALK WITH OUR BRETHREN WHO USE THE SEAS.
AND WE SHALL BE HAPPY TO MEET THEM AT MESS
AS FELLOW-CRAFTSMEN—NO MORE AND NO LESS.
'CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO HIRAM ABIF—
EXCELLENT MASTER OF FORGE AND MINE:—
I AND THE BRETHREN WOULD LIKE IT IF
HE AND THE BRETHREN WILL COME TO DINE
(GARMENTS FROM BOZRAH OR MORNING-DRESS)
AS FELLOW-CRAFTSMEN—NO MORE AND NO LESS.
'GOD GAVE THE HYSSOP AND CEDAR THEIR PLACE—
ALSO THE BRAMBLE, THE FIG AND THE THORN—
BUT THAT IS NO REASON TO BLACK A MAN'S FACE
BECAUSE HE IS NOT WHAT HE HASN'T BEEN BORN.
AND, AS TOUCHING THE TEMPLE, I HOLD AND PROFESS
WE ARE FELLOW-CRAFTSMEN—NO MORE AND NO LESS.'

SO IT WAS ORDERED AND SO IT WAS DONE,
AND THE HEWERS OF WOOD AND THE MASONS OF MARK,
WITH FOC'SLE HANDS OF THE SIDON RUN
AND NAVY LORDS FROM THE ROYAL ARK,
CAME AND SAT DOWN AND WERE MERRY AT MESS
AS FELLOW-CRAFTSMEN—NO MORE AND NO LESS.

THE QUARRIES ARE HOTTER THAN HIRAM'S FORGE,
NO ONE IS SAFE FROM THE DOG-WHIPS' REACH.
IT'S MOSTLY SNOWING UP LEBANON GORGE,
AND IT'S ALWAYS BLOWING OFF JOPPA BEACH;
BUT ONCE IN SO OFTEN, THE MESSENGER BRINGS
SOLOMON'S MANDATE: 'FORGET THESE THINGS!
BROTHER TO BEGGARS AND FELLOW TO KINGS,
COMPANION OF PRINCES—FORGET THESE THINGS!
FELLOW-CRAFTSMAN, FORGET THESE THINGS!'



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