

EMERALD TABLET



May Brotherly Love Prevail

Freemasonry's Dilemma with Religious Extremism

by Brother Robert G Davis, PM, Guildhall Lodge 553, Oklahoma City, OK

One of my favorite wisdom quotes is written on the tomb of an Anglican Bishop in Westminster Abbey c.1100 AD:

"When I was young and free and my imagination had no limits, I dreamed of changing the world. As I grew older and wise, I discovered the world would not change, so I shortened my sights somewhat and decided to change only my country.

But, it too, seemed immovable.

As I grew into my twilight years, in one last desperate attempt, I settled for only changing my family, those closest to me. But alas, they would have none of it.

And now as I lie on my deathbed, I suddenly realize if I had only changed myself first, then by example, I would have changed my family. From their inspiration and encouragement, I would then have been able to better change my country, and who knows, I may have changed the world."

Of course, this is a big part of the message of Masonry. Every lesson of Freemasonry urges us to work on changing ourselves from the beginning of our journey to mature manhood so that we do not have to suffer such an insight at the end of our days. We work with the one "stone" in the quarry that we actually do have control of and the rest will take care of itself. The hope is that we will build a better world by improving ourselves. Albert Pike said it very succinctly: "It is to single men...that all the great works of man are owing." Individuals, one at a time, improve the world.

There is also a message here about "toleration." As Masons, our chief aim is to be happy and communicate happiness. Brother George Washington admonished us that "the grand object of Masonry is to promote the happiness of the human race." But it

is quite a challenge to remain happy when there is so much strife and intolerance in the world.

Frederico Mayor, in an address dedicating the Beit-Hashoah Museum for Tolerance in Los Angeles in 1993 said; "our ability to value each and every person is the ethical basis for peace, security and intercultural dialogue." Albert Pike stated it even more poignantly in the tenth degree of the Scottish Rite by declaring that without toleration "we are mere hollow images of true Masons, mere sounding brass and tinkling cymbals." The fact is that a peaceful future depends on everyday acts of kindness and respect. It is a lesson every Freemason knows well.

Among all the teachings Masonry imparts to its members, none is more important than championing the ideal of toleration in all things. In the book of lectures for the Symbolic Lodge, we read; "By the exercise of Brotherly Love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family; the high and low, the rich and poor, who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support and protect each other. On this principle, Masonry unites men of every country, sect and opinion, and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance."

Ironically, it seems that religion represents the largest stumbling block to the concept of brotherly love! A friend of mine recently made the point that as long as there is religion and we have freedom to think and speak our mind, there could never be peace in the world. I believe what he really meant was that as long as there are religious zealots that there could not be peace.

Unfortunately, religion has not provided the world a good record in the area of toleration. History is replete with examples of wars that have begun over religion--over one man's "vision" that his religion was right and all others were wrong. Masonry asserts that no man has dominion over the truth about Deity. One man can study his religion at length and arrive at the

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emerald tablet

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conclusion that its teachings are accurate. Another man, with an equal amount of sincerity, can study yet another and arrive at the conclusion that *his* religion has the right answers. Moreover, most of us believe what we were taught as youngsters to believe. We have inherited the faith of our parents. It is the same for children born into other faiths—Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism. Further, regardless of our religious bringing, most of us don't ever bother to try to learn much about the others. We irrationally assume they're wrong because the only right religion is the one established by the authority taught us by the faith system of our father's; and that faith system was, after all, divinely inspired by the Deity Himself.

The reality is that errors are built into ALL faith systems. We must never forget that interpretations of faith are always man-made. So, if we can accept and understand that we have "errors" in our own faith (we just don't know where they are), and equally accept the same of other faiths, why would we want to "fight" over a mistake? If we are going to fight over something, fight over something that we can prove—something that has certainty.

Masonry reminds us time and again that we only interpret the nature of the Divine with a human mind. For this reason, we are encouraged to search for the truth from the perspective of a quest or journey to a more enlightened and peaceful state of mind. And if we may temporarily feel satisfied that we have discovered what is true to us for the moment; then it is equally important that we not demand that others agree with us.

What would ever give us the right to oppress the people of another faith simply because they do not believe as we do? They earnestly and sincerely believe what they believe, just as we believe what we believe. Wouldn't they have the same right to oppress us because we don't believe as they do? Claiming that such a right exists, and then asserting that right over another is what causes wars and the deaths of a lot of innocent people.

The common thread of all religions boils down to what we commonly understand as the Golden Rule—"do unto others as we would have them do unto us." If we can agree on that simple principle of loving others as we love ourselves, then we could not wish that another religion oppress us simply because we do not believe as they do. This simple message which is common to all faiths should then suggest to us the direction we should go in how we treat others who don't believe exactly as we do.

But there are some fundamental problems when we try to apply such common sense as a response to ethnic divisions, regional conflicts, economic hostilities, religious zealotry and acts of terrorism in our contemporary time, regardless of how Masonic it may seem. First, while we have heard the Golden Rule stated in every culture and religion in the world, the rule is, in reality, an

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insipid truism that has no force of law and certainly no force of meaning to a zealot or terrorist. The terrorist always calls on the religious authority of his faith as his rule of law. God becomes his sanction to kill or maim. In fact, most terrorists would never kill except in the name of God.

And since most monotheistic religions of the world were born before the New Testament era, an era which at least suggested that God was a God of Love, the more prevalent historic ideal of sacred authority is based on the premise of God's role as a warrior. The Thirty Years War (a war fueled by religious hatred between protestants and Catholics--1618-1648), left more killing and devastation behind it than any event since the Black Death. It created the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 which was the first legal instrument calling for the separation of church and state. It didn't matter that much that the wrecking of Germany, for instance, was brought on by cynical leaders. In their hearts, most of the combatants believed they were carrying out acts of piety. When the war ended, many cities had less than half the population they had before; many towns had only one-fifth. The conflict left a mark on the West that cemented our attitude for church-state separation. The fundamental reason the West has worked so hard to keep religion out of dealings between states and nations is precisely to banish religion from the repertoire of acceptable reasons to wage war.

In our own time, as people turn more intolerant in their expression of religious freedom, more adherents of the newer extremist ideologies are increasingly placing violence back in at the heart of their beliefs. An extremist is not only one who uses or advocates violence against the will of a society at large, but also one who advocates or uses violence to enforce the will of that social body to conform with its own will. The common characteristics of all forms of extremism are that they are opposed to any form of compromise, they are entirely sure of their position, they are willing to advocate or use violence to achieve their end, they are intolerant of dissent within their group, and they will always demonize their targeted victim.

To complicate matters even further, as the economic and political state of countries get poorer and more unstable, a platform exists to spread extreme ideologies in both politics and sectarianism. This is the seed that brings extremists to the forefront of those

who will kill in the name of God or a national cause. Indeed, the history of much of the world is a saga of deep ethnic divisions, regional conflicts, religious zealotry, and economic hostilities among peoples. Intolerance, jealousy and greed have fragmented almost every country in the world.

And it is important to understand that we are not dealing here with the traditional ethical rules of war when the war is being waged by a perceived sacred mandate. Religious violence is typically different than any other kind of warfare for the simple reason that for a true believer, there is no compromise about the sacred. There is one God; one Truth. Tolerance is not an intrinsic part of any monotheistic religion because the outcome of a conflict cannot be ambiguous. When the issues are sacred demands, there can be no bargaining. The believer cannot compromise on the will of God. Killing becomes an end in itself. The extreme believer wants a lot of people dead and may not care whether a lot of people are watching, as long as God sees that what has been done is in His name.

Looking back over history, it is not too difficult to see why it seems as though monotheism and violence go hand in hand. Part of the answer lies in the enduring influence of the Hebrew Bible on Christianity and Islam. The great preoccupation of the biblical warriors was to take a newly formed people and give them a distinctive identity. The books of the Bible were meant to tell the Israelites who they were and how they came to be. Like most all societies, this community carved out its identity by differentiating itself from everyone else. One of the central biblical messages to the children of Israel was that "you are who you are because you are not the other."

The lesson is reinforced in many ways. The Israelites have a covenant with the one God and a territory belonging to them alone. They believe that God confers this true nationhood on them and them alone. Nations whose claims conflict with those of God's people are placed under a total ban that requires their complete destruction.

The Bible's division between those who belong and those who don't belong makes it natural to see life as war. We all know the imagery of battle occurs throughout the Old Testament. And this same violent imagery is also a part of the earliest Islamic writings. Raiding is common, people are killed, and blood feuds are pursued. God's angels intervene on behalf of the

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Muslim combatants. We could go on and on. The point to be made is that scriptural emphasis on warfare has armed successive generations with powerful mental images of an embattled world. The community of the faithful is perpetually in crisis, or at least on the edge of one. When a religious group believes that its identity is fundamentally threatened, it turns to stories of the apocalypse, or the end of time. In such times, Jesus is not the pacifist messiah of the gospels, but a man of war. Even the role of angels and demons intervening in the physical world is especially important because it shows that evil is destroyed not just metaphorically, or symbolically in some cosmic sphere, but, in fact, right here on earth.

The Christian and Jewish and Muslim apocalyptic literature is exactly the same. There is a righteous advance from suffering under the murderous rule of a terrible beast to a restored community of believers who enjoy eternal life in the presence of God. The transforming event is the destruction of the beast, followed by the annihilation of Satan and death at the hands of a heavenly figure sent by God.

Now, placing all this in the context of time, another dimension surfaces which we need to pay attention to. In times of severe social dislocation, political change, and economic upheaval, individuals overwhelmed with radical pessimism may turn to apocalyptic millenarianism. They see the signs of their tradition as portending the end of time. The tribulation they experience is interpreted as the era of cataclysms that precedes the eruption of a new order. When these individuals merge into groups and find a charismatic leader, or he finds them, they can be stirred to dramatic action intended to force the end of time and the kingdom of God. What we are seeing in the extremist groups of Zionist Jews, Caliph Muslims, Militant Christians, and Aum Shinrikyo Buddhists, are nothing less than attempts to spark the apocalypse. In the view of all these sects, a new age is upon them and catastrophe must precede redemption. And the believers have a direct role to play in setting this cosmic process in motion. In almost every case of extremist thought, salvation through death is the agenda.

Unfortunately, there is a growing sect of American Christians who also embrace the notion of a cosmic war. There is a growing fascination with Christian apocalyptic speculation and with signs that the events

depicted in Revelation are at hand. A book series by Tim LaHay and Jerry Jenkins based on prophecies in Revelation has sold 32 million copies, not counting an additional 18 million copies of the children's version. In a recent Time/CNN poll, fifty-nine percent of Americans believe that the future will unfold in accordance with Revelation. The Christian Identity movement, which is the primary apocalyptic group that believes the Jews and Freemasons have joined with the Federal Reserve and the United Nations for world domination are stockpiling firearms at an alarming rate. The fact is that whether we see it in our church pews or not, we are a more religious country today than we were when we were founded. The new approach to Christian fundamentalism is that the coming war is a war to create God's government on earth. Just recently there was a story covered by an Oklahoma City news station that Jesus Christ will reappear soon as a child and will trigger the tribulations predicted in Books of Revelations and Daniel.

Finally, there is a fundamental ethical difference in how the East and the West looks at the use of violence in war from a policy perspective. Over a number of centuries a tradition of thinking about the ethics of war has developed which attempts to define a defensible middle ground between pacifism and realism. It is known as the theory of the just war. One of its components sets the limits of permissible conduct in war. Essentially, the rights of a state or country during war are set by the limits to what individual citizens may permissibly do to defend themselves. The amount of violence used on any occasion must not exceed what is necessary to achieve one's aim. Further, any act of war cannot outweigh its expected good consequences. Finally, force must be directed only against persons who are legitimate targets of attack. Herein lays the ethical rub.

What determines whether or not a person is a legitimate target of violence in war? Is it limited to a choice between the combatants and non-combatants? The morally innocent and the morally guilty? Under the rules of war, no one has a right to use violence as a means to achieve immoral aims. Given these criteria which have generally been adopted by all European countries and North America, most people, then, can make a distinction between a random (or planned) act of terrorism, which is wrong, and a legitimate

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act of war. The problem is that terrorism is defined differently from more general forms of aggression which provide a justification for the basis of a just cause. To the western mind, terrorism generally refers to any intentional use of violence, for political purposes, against persons who are innocent as a means of influencing the behavior of some other person or group of persons. What we find particularly repugnant about terrorism is not that it simply involves harming the innocent. Many legitimate acts of war also foreseeably harm the innocent. What distinguishes terrorism from legitimate acts of war is rather that terrorism aims to harm or kill the innocent. It is a fundamental difference in the inherent natures of the two types of acts.

The attack against America on 9/11, 2001 was an act of consummate religious devotion. Those who committed it were deeply pious. They expressed their motives in indisputably religious terms, and they saw themselves as carrying out the will of God. To them, the hijackings were the performance of a sacrament, one intended to restore to the universe a moral order that had been corrupted by the enemies of Islam and their Muslim collaborators.

The realities of 9/11 were that the motivations for the attack were neither political calculation, strategic advantage, nor wanton bloodlust. It was to humiliate and slaughter those who defied the leadership of God. It was to please Him by reasserting His primacy. It was an act of cosmic war. What appears to be senseless violence that violates all our known treaties about war, actually made a great deal of sense to the terrorists and all those who sympathize with them, for whom this act of killing was an act of redemption. Our modern notion of separate realms of the religious and the secular is simply inconceivable to a religious zealot.

There was a time when people came to America seeking asylum from such human suffering and strife. The altruistic nature of democracy has made the United States a multi-cultural society. Now the same divisions that have caused so much suffering and loss in the rest of the world are becoming manifest in the freest country on earth. We are becoming a nation filled with mistrust and animosity.

How then can a simple and dignified ideal that we follow the Golden Rule find application in eastern religious systems and Western fundamentalist systems that almost universally agree in some form that God is

the objective; the Bible or Quran is the constitution; the Savior or Prophet is the leader; Struggle is the way; and death for the sake of God is the highest of aspirations.

In a world of such secular extremism, how can Masonry mean anything if it cannot find application for its ideals? Can it improve mankind if it cannot find a venue where the duality between toleration and fanaticism cannot be reconciled?

From a Masonic perspective, it is necessary that we know the principle enemies of human freedom and dignity in order to combat them. We know that tyranny and intolerance are the principle vices which facilitate oppression. It is not difficult to spot religious and political tyranny. We can read about it almost every day. But what is not so easy to identify is that not all, or even most, tyranny is political. Tyranny is not limited to the dictator who taxes his people unmercifully. Tyranny takes place whenever any person or group says, "What I want is more important than what you want. My desires are more important than your desires. I matter more than you matter. Do it my way, or else." When that attitude is backed by force or power, oppression is added to tyranny.

Perhaps it seems no longer possible for us to effect change in countries where we are not even permitted to have lodges. Even in America, we are much less influential than we once were. We are smaller in strength when strength is in numbers. We are smaller in influence when influence is power.

But here is what we need to know. A minority can tyrannize a majority; a majority can tyrannize a minority; a single man can tyrannize a nation; a man or woman can tyrannize a family; a teacher can tyrannize a classroom; an employer can tyrannize an employee; a nation can tyrannize another state. You see, tyranny does not equate with authority, but with attitude. We do not call the skilled and caring teacher who maintains order in his classroom a tyrant, nor a king who governs for the best interest and welfare of his people, nor the husband who discharges the affairs of the household with love and concern.

The essence of tyranny is selfishness. The tyrant, regardless if he is a person, class, religion, or nation, is willing to deny to others their own dignity; to reduce people to the status of things in order to gratify his own desires. As Masons, we can fight against the tyranny of selfishness wherever and whenever it exists. In fact, it is our obligation to stop the bullying in the world.

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We must also be opposed to intolerance. As tyranny is selfishness in the world of material things and power, intolerance is selfishness in the world of ideas and beliefs.

The question then becomes, as peace loving men, what is our weapon against intolerance, fanaticism, and tyranny? How do we effect a change in attitude when there is so much disharmony in the world?

Masonry teaches that it is not through might, but through education, instruction, contemplation, and enlightenment that we can make such fanaticism and intolerance powerless.

It really does seem to boil down to the Golden Rule! No true Mason would want to be laughed at for what he believes, and therefore he will not laugh at or condemn another who has equally honest convictions and zeal for his beliefs. However, a Mason does absolutely deny the right of any man to assume that he, or his faith, knows with certainty what Deity has in mind and therein has some inalienable right to condemn the faith of others (and their opinions), marking them as heretical. Likewise, a Mason doesn't approve of any actions that endanger the peace and quiet of great nations, or their people, by indulging in a fancifully imaginary philanthropy, imagining one's self to be "different" enough to be separated and self-proclaiming in one's holiness.

Such activity can be more harmful than the ambition of kings. Such intolerance and bigotry have been more repeatedly harmful to mankind than ignorance and error. It is better that we know that our "truths" are not perfect and accept these errors than to live under persecution! A Mason knows how absurd it is to think that when we cannot even understand our fellow man, we cannot begin to expect to understand Deity in any "uniform" manner. Torturing and killing other people simply because they do not think and believe the way we do is indeed an absurd thought to a Mason—and should be to all men.

But Masonry is not a religion. Making Masonry a religion would falsify and denaturalize it. Whatever religion a man comes to Masonry with, he must keep it—he cannot have two religions. Societies, laws, the time in history, the culture; the social and sacred mores' adapted to the usages, manners, and prejudices of particular countries, are always the work of men.

Pike reminds us that Masonry teaches and preserves the cardinal tenets of the old primitive faith

and it underlies all religions. He was referring to the universal, eternal religion that God planted in the heart of humanity. Everything that ever existed has had a basis of truth, and all these truths have been overlaid with errors. How quickly men and women take a truth and "polish" it, leaving a waxy residue of error all over it! This is not the way the primitive truths were first taught to man. Masonry adopted the old universal morality which is suitable to the inhabitants of every clime, to the man of every creed. It has no doctrines, except those truths that tend directly to the well-being of man. Those who try to use it wrongly towards vengeance, some political end, or even to promote a certain religion, are merely perverting it to purposes that are foreign to its pure spirit and real nature. Masonry accepts the only definition of religion given in the Bible (James 1:27); to do good and remain pure.

Masonry simply offers moral progress as its aim. While we individually cannot unlearn what we once learned, we can grow beyond it. Just as, when we "see the light," we can never forget it; mankind also is capable of growing beyond its old ideas. Indeed, the progress of life is the advancement of knowledge and insight.

The best and indeed the only good Mason is the one who, with the power of his business, does the work of life. Regardless of his profession, his whole life is one great act of performing his Masonic duty--to use the gifts and talents he has been given to improve mankind.

Pike says it brilliantly. The good Mason does the good when he gets the chance, often because he has the chance. He does it because he wants to - he loves the duty- and not merely because some law (by God or by man) commands him to do it. He is true to his own mind, his conscience, heart, and soul, and feels very little temptation to do unto others in a way he would not like to be done unto. He keeps coming back to the "Golden Rule." He will deny himself for the sake of his brother near at hand.

The good news is that such men are found in all religions all over the world. The "Golden Rule" is universal in them. They are kind fathers, generous citizens, unimpeachable in their business, beautiful in their daily lives. We see their Masonry in their work as well as in their play. It is in everything they do. True Masonry within shows as morality without. It rises above common morality and takes it to a new level. And it is noticed by those who crave good example. It

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is the philanthropy that a good soul freely gives to the world. When each of us shares the right example that others may see, then it becomes possible to make these same actions spread over the world. Our daily life is a profession of our Masonry, published in our perpetual good will to men.

This is how Masonry does the work it is meant to do. When we live the teachings we learn in lodge, in our councils and chapters and consistories, we are simply unable to be persecutors. Old theologies and philosophies of religion of ancient times no longer suffice. We are not confined to any set forms of thought, of action, or of feeling. We accept what our own mind regards as true, what our own conscience decides is right, what our own heart deems generous and noble. We grow strong in the knowledge of the strength of a benevolent and loving God.

We must advance. The duties of life are to be done. There are errors that ought to be replaced with new truths. There are great wrongs and evils that ought to be righted and outgrown. Our task is to make our Masonry evident in the public sphere and teach men by our deeds; as these deeds are the most eloquent testimony of a good heart.

Toleration is the first requisite of an enlightened citizenry. Again, we must ever be mindful that it is no fault of our own that we are born one way or another - and it is no fault of another that he is born and taught something different than us. No man is entitled to positively assert that he is right where other men who are equally well-informed hold a directly opposite opinion. Never forget that what once was believed, we now find incomprehensible. These startling insights give us a fresh glimpse of the human soul. If we cannot understand our own soul, much less the souls of all mankind, how can we expect to be able to have a full and error free understanding of the even more complex Deity which encompasses all souls? How can any one man possess such knowledge? None do.

Herein is Freemasonry's dilemma with religious extremism. We simply cannot be certain that any man-made doctrine is right over all other doctrines. It is enough for us to feel good about the faith of our choice and relish in the knowledge that God is the only magistrate that can rightfully decide the truth in religion and spirituality. We must refer to Him to be Judge in such matters. It is this moral imperative alone that opens Masonry up for all to participate and live in peace and harmony.

This is why Toleration is so important to all of what Masonry speaks. It is our chief duty, without which we stand for little. One does not have to look far in any teaching to find good teachings. The common thread, again, seems to be the Golden Rule; the goal is goodness and getting along with our fellow man.

To spread this useful information to the world is indeed a high calling and to further refine it intellectually would be a good start toward the moral improvement of mankind. From the Masonic ranks ought to go forth those whose gentle genius and not their ancestry ennoble them to open such thoughts to all people, and live an example that makes the most humble men want to emulate them and learn more about morality.

Leaving such a mark on humanity can expand and grow with every generation. It is the true character of every man and Mason who cares about his reputation. There is not much one can be more proud of accomplishing than to live a life of integrity. People gain power through knowledge. A man of virtue carries the best influence over others. Wisdom always leaves a seed that eventually bears the best fruit. Superstition is dethroned and tyranny is exited by men of wisdom (power), strength and beauty (harmony.)

It is like this that Masonry can best contribute to the world—where each Mason is consciously aware of his role, and content to do his share for the common good of mankind.

If Masonry will but be true to her mission, and Masons to their promises and obligations, remembering that our contributions to the cause of charity and education deserve the greatest credit when it costs us something to make them, and that we do so regularly and incessantly, then we may be sure that great results will be attained and a great work done. Because, in so doing, we attract the attention of those who want to be like us. Only as we grow in deed and thought and fair judgment, will good people everywhere come to see that Masonry is a vigorous and powerful force, not degenerated or drooping to a fatal decay.

To live happy and communicate happiness is to live in the image of God. Masonry is a treasure and when our human labor is applied to its teachings and ideals, the world cannot help but be a better place for all mankind.



Coming in the February issue of Emerald Tablet

Feature Article:

A Straightforward Approach to Masonic Esotericism

—by Brother Chuck Dunning, Director of Education - Guthrie Scottish Rite

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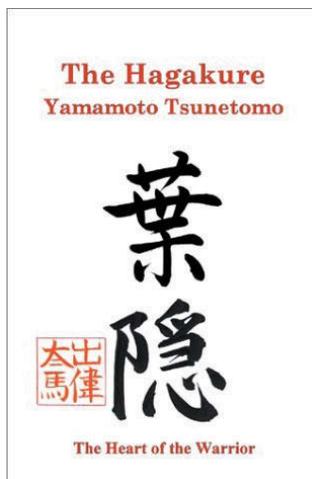
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Books



The Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai

Living and dying with bravery and honor is at the heart of Hagakure, a series of texts written by an eighteenth-century samurai, Yamamoto Tsunetomo. It is a window into the samurai mind, illuminating the concept of bushido—the Way of the Warrior— which dictated how samurai were expected to behave, conduct themselves, live, and die. While Hagakure was for many years a secret text known only to the warrior vassals of the Nabeshima clan to which the author belonged, it later came to be recognized as a classic exposition of samurai thought.

The original Hagakure consists of over 1,300 short texts that Tsunetomo dictated to a younger samurai over a seven-year period. William Scott Wilson has selected and translated here three hundred of the most representative of those texts to

create an accessible distillation of this guide for samurai. No other translator has so thoroughly and eruditely rendered this text into English.

For this edition, Wilson has added a new introduction that casts Hagakure in a different light than ever before. Tsunetomo refers to bushido as “the Way of death,” a description that has held a morbid fascination for readers over the years. But in Tsunetomo’s time, bushido was a nuanced concept that related heavily to the Zen concept of muga, the “death” of the ego. Wilson’s revised introduction gives the historical and philosophical background for that more metaphorical reading of Hagakure, and through this lens, the classic takes on a fresh and nuanced appeal.

Quotes from the Hagakure...

“There is surely nothing other than the single purpose of the present moment. A man’s whole life is a succession of moment after moment. There will be nothing else to do, and nothing else to pursue. Live being true to the single purpose of the moment.”

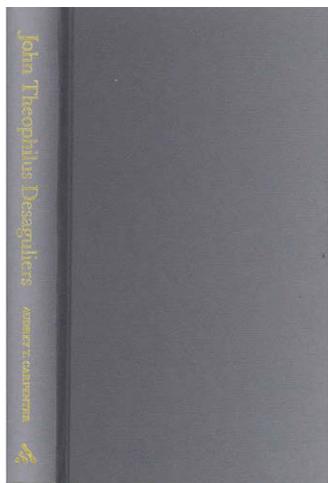
— Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*

“There is something to be learned from a rainstorm. When meeting with a sudden shower, you try not to get wet and run quickly along the road. But doing such things as passing under the eaves of houses, you still get wet. When you are resolved from the beginning, you will not be perplexed, though you will still get the same soaking. This understanding extends to everything.”

— Yamamoto Tsunetomo, *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*

—*Amazon.com*

Books



John Theophilus Desaguliers

John Theophilus Desaguliers made his mark on the eighteenth century in several diverse ways. He was an assistant to Sir Isaac Newton and later elucidated the difficult concepts of Newtonian physics in private lectures. He was a member of the Royal Society, and was presented with the Society's highest honour, the Copley Medal, no less than three times. He was a pioneering engineer: the water supply of Edinburgh, the ventilation of the Houses of Parliament and the first Westminster Bridge all owed him a debt. In a different sphere, Desaguliers became the third Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the Freemasons which was founded in 1717. He is remembered worldwide for his seminal influence during those early days of Freemasonry. He also wrote poetry and had an influential circle of patrons, including George I and Frederick, Prince of Wales (whom he initiated as a Mason at a specially convened lodge at Kew). This biography, based on original research, describes a charismatic character who was a major figure of his age.

Review

Carpenter's study of Desaguliers is a carefully researched and thoughtfully written antidote to the persistent neglect Desaguliers has suffered at the hands of historians. Desaguliers's personal history could have relegated him to a liminal status but instead he became a key interlocutor of the early Enlightenment and many of its most important English manifestations: Newtonian science, the Royal Society, Freemasonry, Whiggish politics, practical engineering and the most ethereal of mechanical apparatus (Susan Mitchell Sommers, Professor of History, Saint Vincent College, US)

If one man sums up the vibrancy and intellectual ferment of Newtonian London, it is the Huguenot exile and pioneering scientist, John Theophilus Desaguliers. Audrey Carpenter's compelling book assiduously reconstructs the many facets of this fascinating man's life, from his demonstrations of Newton's discoveries and his experiments with steam power and electricity to his pivotal role in the creation of new social activities such as Freemasonry. Carpenter vividly evokes through the figure of Desaguliers the coffee houses, taverns, masonic lodges and noble residences of Georgian London. (Professor Andrew Prescott, King's College London)

About the Author

Audrey T. Carpenter was awarded a PhD in Chemistry from the University of London in 1959. After post-doctoral research she worked as a technical abstractor and librarian before returning to academia as a mature student. She was awarded a PhD in English from Loughborough University in 2010.

—*Amazon.com*

parting shot



Pamela Lyndon Travers, appearing in the role of Titania in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

P.L. Travers

Pamela Lyndon Travers, born Helen Lyndon Goff on August 9 1899, was an Australian novelist, actress and journalist. In 1924, she emigrated to England where she wrote under the pen name P.L. Travers. In 1933, she began writing her series of children's novels about the mystical and magical English nanny Mary Poppins. Her popular books have been adapted many times, including the 1964 film starring Julie Andrews and the Broadway musical originally produced in London's West End.

Helen Lyndon Goff—she was known within her family as Lyndon—was born in Maryborough, Queensland, Australia, the daughter of an unsuccessful bank manager named Travers Robert Goff, who was of Irish background but born in England. Her mother was Margaret Agnes Morehead, the niece of Boyd Dunlop Morehead, who was Premier of Queensland 1888-1890. Travers Goff's job took the family to Allora in 1905, where he died of influenza two years later, at the age of 43. Following this, Lyndon Goff, her mother and sisters moved to Bowral, New South Wales in 1907, and lived there until 1917. She boarded at Normanhurst Girls School in Ashfield, Sydney during World War I.

Lyndon Goff began publishing her poems while still a teenager and wrote for *The Bulletin* and *Triad* while also gaining a reputation as an actress; she soon adopted the stage name "Pamela Lyndon Travers". She toured Australia and New Zealand with a Shakespearean company before leaving for England in 1924.

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P.L. Travers

There she dedicated herself to writing under the pen name P.L. Travers. It was in London, during the winter of 1933, that she began to write *Mary Poppins*.

While in Ireland in 1925, Travers met the poet George William Russell. Through Russell, Travers met W.B. Yeats, Oliver St. John Gogarty, and other Irish poets who fostered her interest in and knowledge of world mythology. She had studied the Gurdjieff System under Jane Heap and in March 1936, with the help of Jessie Orage—widow of Alfred Richard Orage—she met the mystic George Gurdjieff, who would have a great effect on her, as well as on several other literary figures.

At the invitation of her friend, Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier, Travers spent two summers living among the Navajo, Hopi and Pueblo peoples studying their mythology and folklore. After the war, she became Writer-in-Residence at Radcliffe College and Smith College. She returned to England, making only one brief visit to Sydney in 1960 while on her way to Japan to study Zen mysticism.

Mary Poppins Published in London in 1934, *Mary Poppins* was Travers' first literary success. During World War II, Travers lived in Manhattan where she worked for the British Ministry of Information; and where Roy Disney first contacted her about selling the *Mary Poppins* character to the Disney studio for film use.

While appearing as a guest on BBC Radio 4's radio program *Desert Island Discs* in May 1977, Travers revealed that the name 'M Poppins' originates from childhood stories that she contrived for her sisters, and that she was still in possession of a book from that age with this name inscribed within.

Disney version The Disney musical adaptation was released in 1964. Primarily based on the first novel in what was then a sequence of four books, it also lifted elements from the sequel *Mary Poppins Comes Back*. Although Travers was an adviser to the production, she disapproved of the dilution of the harsher aspects of *Mary Poppins'* character, felt ambivalent about the music, and so hated the use of animation that she ruled out any further adaptations of the later *Mary Poppins* novels. At the film's star-studded premiere—to which she was not invited, but had to ask Walt Disney for permission to attend—she reportedly approached Disney and told him that the animated sequence had to go. Disney responded by walking away, saying as he did, "Pamela, the ship has sailed." Enraged at what she considered shabby treatment at Disney's hands, Travers would never again agree to another *Poppins/Disney* adaptation, though Disney made several attempts to persuade her to change her mind.

Honors and death Travers was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1977. She lived into advanced old age, but her health was declining toward the end of her life. She died in London on April 23, 1996 at the age of 96.

