

# EMERALD TABLET

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## THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF SAM OLIVER

by Dr. Jerry Casebolt, Past Master, Liberty Hill 432 & Robert Burns 127

“Everything begins with a story.” Joseph Campbell

Between supper and Lodge meeting, many of the men went outside to chat. George Harborough just wanted a smoke. Some were simply there to exchange friendly words before going home. Brother George called these brothers, “Knife and Fork Masons.” Brother Menlow said to old man Garner, “How’s it going Lawrence?” “Anyway it wants to,” Garner replied.

A little exasperated, Menlow continued, “Does the wind always blow this way down here in Texas?” “Nope, sometimes it blows the other way.” Sam said, “Is there any chance that you could spare a serious moment, Brother Garner?” “I don’t know, Brother Sam. I’m ninety-two years old. I may not have a moment left. What’s your question?” “I’d like to know what to think when it’s all said and done and we have solved all the world’s problems.” Lawrence chuckled and replied, “When all is said and done; when the 47th problem is solved to a satisfactory degree, the last Masonic joke told, and the origin of Masonry is reasonably accepted, most of us are going to continue to struggle with the concept of Masonic Light.”

Brother Harborough retorted, “There is wisdom and there are wise-guys. I wonder which attribute we should award to Brother Garner?” Brother Garner countered, “I studied psychology! While I was studying, I discovered I must be psychotic.” “What, by autosuggestion, Lawrence? You’ve got to be joking,” laughed Sam. Garner responded, “This part is no joke. Psychologists and psychoanalysts have noticed that ascension experiences are linked to images of Light and accompanied by feelings of euphoria, while falling experiences are linked to images of darkness, accompanied by feelings of fear.” Sam commented, “Brother Lawrence is right. There’s more to this concept of ‘Light’ than meets the eye. George Harborough asked, “What do you mean, Sam?” Sam replied, “Doesn’t it seem to you that our knowledge of Masonic Light is kind of superficial?”

George winced. “OK, Sam, so why is Light so important to you? We are taught in Masonry that Light is simply knowledge and that particular definition is good enough for me.” Sam persisted, “There has to be more to the concept of Light than the photonic bundles of information impacting the retina of the eye. Surely, Light has to have some kind of hidden meaning. Albert Pike charged us with finding out what those hidden meanings are.” George pulled a face and thought, “Uh oh, Sam is at it again.” Out loud, he said, “I never gave it that much thought, Sam.”

“The term, Light,” Sam went on, “is bandied about as if it were not in the least complicated but it is the most mysterious of all the Symbols in Masonry. I look at it this way: all other symbols derive from that one subjective eternal symbol, Light. Except for the Word, the rest of the symbols are tangible. The Word is subjective and directly derives from the Light. But, one can hold the rest of the symbols in one’s hand. One can see them, touch them, and hear them. One can date them in history and can talk about them; all except this confounded stuff we call Light.” Unimpressed, George interjected, “You know, you can say less with more words than anyone I know! We are only taught that ‘Masonic Light is Knowledge.’ Where did you come up with all that stuff anyway?” Sam reddened, “you are making this personal and evading the question.”

“I know,” replied George. “The boundaries between Light as a symbol and Light as a metaphor are ill-defined and personal. I actually don’t know the answer and was just being a wise-guy.” “Humph,” said Sam, biting his tongue. “Light, according to ancient Persian and Hebrew Sages was the ‘First Dream of Deity. From Light,’ their sacred scripture says, ‘came the sound’ or ‘the Word’ and eventually ‘the first man.’ ” “That’s well and good,” George muttered, “but what’s it got to do with the price of tea in China?” Sam asked, “Can we realign our thinking with the symbol when we regard Light as a first aspect of the unformed universe?” Garner said, “That’s a tough question. I suppose by setting our course towards the sunset in the West, we set off along a path that seems to take us beyond Light—beyond all form and all physical sensation or intellectual emotion.”

George indignantly excused himself, “I believe I’ve had about enough of this conversation. Masonic Light is just knowledge!” He turned his attention to the twilight as the sun retired below the western horizon. Sam said, “If Light is just knowledge, why didn’t the early Masons use the term knowledge? Why would they specifically use the word Light?” Menlow mused, “Pike told us that all of Masonry is symbolic and to seek the hidden meanings behind every symbol.” Garner clapped his hands and said, “Let’s go inside where there is better light and it’s not so windy.” That was pretty funny, Lawrence,” said Sam. “It is definitely getting pretty windy right now.” Garner said, “George, you are forgetting the most important part of Pike’s definition of Light; the Light to which the rituals so often refer is the knowledge that ‘transfigures’ and which it is the duty of Masons to acquire.”

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"I get it," said Menlow. "Light is a transformational symbol and the Master's Degree is a transformational experience symbolized by the Light." Garner agreed, "You can say that. In the mystical sense, the glorification of Light is absolute. Since Light becomes in itself the first revelation of the godhead, in which the perceptible quality is so strong that God reveals himself without needing to take any shape, Light provides a manifestation in conflict with darkness in a dualistic world. The most important concept to remember is that Light is love. Light derives from fire, just as the desire of love derives from the will of God. In the primitive Church, baptism was called 'Enlightenment,' as the writings of the Pseudo Dionysius the Areopagite bear especial witness, where water symbolizes the Holy spirit—God's breath." Nodding, Menlow confided, "That was good. From my own studies, I know that Light has a direct relationship with Deity. The Great Architect of the Universe needs philosophical Light in order to build the philosophical temple of Solomon. The word 'Solomon' is an acronym for Sol, or the Sun, and Mon is an acronym for Man: literally 'Sun of Man'. The Mythical temple could be the home of the 'Sun of Man' or the symbolic container of the Light that animates Man." George interjected, "I thought King Solomon was just a historical figure." "That's what you get for thinking," Menlow said. "He probably was. He was also a prominent figure in Alchemy."

Sam asked, "Just who is this 'Sun of Man'? Is it Man, himself, or some other entity? Some say that the 'Sun of Man' is greater than Man and called the 'Son of Man'. Who knows? Maybe someone got that backwards. Maybe that's why we say Masonry is a part of 'The Great Mystery.'" Menlow said, "Maybe God somehow turned his attention to playing in the primal mud to manifest King Solomon's Temple. Maybe this is man's best effort at explaining the existence of the unknown and the invisible. Maybe it is plausible that he somehow, miraculously organized all that Light into our Universe. Maybe there wasn't some 'big bang' after all. Maybe it was a gradual building process instead of some remote commandment resulting in some instant 'cause.'"

Sam said, "Somehow I know in my heart that the very secret to life and to the creation of the Universe can be found in the secret teachings of our Mystery School, the Masonic Fraternity. I have listened time after time to the rituals and initiations for hints that reveal the secrets to these teachings. I know the answers are there and sometimes they reveal themselves. Am I alone in my thinking?" "No," said George. "I'm glad you admitted it. I thought I was alone. I think the problem is that we forget to include the context in which the symbol is used." Menlow said, "The ritual has to be the most important clue to context. Time after time, the old-timers told us that the ritual should never be changed. But, they would never tell why. Maybe this is a clue." Sam said, "I have learned that the Temple or Castle symbolizes the container for the Self or Soul which comprises the content. The struggle takes place in the wasteland we call life and the purpose of adversity is to break down the ego with its various weapons—the rule, square, and mallet—for the sole purpose of bringing the Soul or Self to consciousness; the animating Light of the Solomon within. George said, "Reverend Ketchum criticized Masonry straight to my face. He told me that it is nothing but a 'death cult.'" Sam suggested, "Sometimes our critics give us valid clues as they sarcastically criticize us.

Is it possible that our so-called 'death-cult' is an allegory of the death of the ego that eventually opens up the pathway that leads us to the Light? In the initiations I declared that I wanted Light." "We all did and it wasn't ever explained," declared Garner. "Why was this stuff called Light so important?" asked Sam. "I can't get this out of my mind. I continue to read everything I can. I struggle with the problem of Light in my dreams.

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I meditate upon the concept during the restful moments of my day.” Garner said, “Some say that the mystery of Light was not to be written for its secrets would fall upon ignorant ears.” Sam’s hair rose. “Harrumph,” he said. “That sounds like the words of an arrogant Mason who is hiding his own ignorance and inability to speak intelligently about the subject.” Lawrence continued, “In the language and rituals of Freemasonry, to receive the Light is to be accepted for initiation. Participating in the ritual, the Entered Apprentice takes an obligation, wearing a blindfold. When this is removed, he is ‘as if dazzled by the sudden brightness, and symbolically receives the Light.’” Menlow said, “I learned from the Kabbalah that, symbolically, there are ten different levels or frequencies of Light.”

George interjected, “I know about that. They are called ‘Rays.’ The Kabbalah represents these ‘Rays’ in a tree-like structure called the SEPHIROTH or the Tree of Life. The First Light is called AINSOPH. That Light became manifested into what we know as ‘Man’ and was, therein, called ADAM KADMON.” “Isn’t that what is called an archetypal man?” asked Garner. Nodding, Sam said, “The phrase, ‘human being,’ is interesting. The first thing I notice is that it is something in the state of being. The word ‘human’ is a compound word. Hu is one of the names of God in Sanskrit, the Light God. Man comes from Atman; meaning ray, wave or particle. Together it means ‘a ray of the Light god in the state of being,’ as opposed to ‘To Be’—prior to existence—which is the meaning of the Hebrew name of God—YHWH—also known as the Tetragrammaton. Lawrence added, “The Christian Gnostic writings describe soul as a sphere that is ‘radiant,’ ‘brilliant,’ ‘shining,’ ‘possessing splendor,’ ‘ray-like,’ or ‘lucid.’ In some writings, the spirit body was called a ‘radiant body,’ a ‘rainbow body,’ a ‘body of Light,’ or a ‘diamond body.’” Menlow said, “The search will never end.” “The ‘search’ is symbolic of the missing arch stone in the unfinished temple,” said George.

After Lodge meeting, Sam headed for home. Still wound up in his thoughts, he pondered the concept of Light, “Why did the ancient mysteries teach initiates to revere Light above all things and what does the journey mean to Masons in their eternal quest for more Masonic Light?” In his late thirties, Sam Oliver completed his Scottish Rite work and eventually his York Rite work. He studied Albert Pike’s *Morals and Dogma* and the writings took on newer meanings as he concluded that Brother Pike was merely seeking the Light for himself as he was writing and lecturing about his journey. In the chapter on the 28th degree of the Scottish Rite, Sam discovered the richest resource yet about the mystery of Light. Sam learned that the concept of Light is central to all Masonic teachings. Pike explained that the study of Light was the central teaching of Mystery schools far and wide. He explored the history of the teachings about Light from every known religious and historical angle.

Ironically, Pike simply ended his discussion and drew no real conclusions about it, except that in every religion Light was venerated as the most sacred of all concepts or symbols. He seemed to be waiting, like Sam, for some relished secret revelation in some remote unpublished ritual for the answers.

Shortly after his Scottish Rite initiation, Sam cornered Reverend Oscar Lundberg at a Lutheran Church picnic. “Let’s talk some more about Light, Oscar.” Oscar said, “Are you putting me on the spot?” “Yup. What do the Lutherans have to say about Light, Oscar?” Oscar contemplated, “Our religions, including the Lutherans, all teach very little about the Light, Sam. We didn’t discuss it much in Seminary.” Sam challenged, “Come on, Oscar, you can do better than that. Every other religion worships Light, then we all go wild about the idea, calling them Sun Worshipers! Or, worse yet, I’ve heard them called ‘Pagans.’ What’s the deal, Oscar?” Patiently, Oscar explained, “Sam, you know, ‘Pagan’ is Latin for country dweller. It also has reference to a man’s religious convictions and is often misused in context.”

Sam said, “So, tell me what the Bible teaches about Light.” “In the New Testament there are many well-known verses which refer to the Christ as the ‘Light of the World.’ Furthermore, the Christ taught that every man and woman has, and is, a being of Light within.” “Oscar, now you are beginning to sound like a preacher.” “I am that.” Oscar continued, “The good book says ‘Ye are Children of Light, and Children of the day—therefore let us not sleep, but let us watch and be sober.’” Oscar looked to the floor then looked back up. “The Light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of Light. Sam, probably the hardest part to accept about modern religious teachings is the claim that every human being has an inner Light or a Light body.” Sam nodded his head in amazement. “Do you mean that you believe that man has this ‘Light Body?’” Oscar said, “Okay, Sam, here is what little I know from history. Light, for the Fathers of the early church, was a symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven and of Eternity. According to St. Bernard, when the soul is separated from the body, it will be ‘plunged into a vast ocean of eternal Light and of bright eternity.’” “Oscar, is that all that happens when you die?”

Oscar said, “There could be a Masonic connection in this idea. The Fathers said that Noon, which Masons call ‘Meridian Heights’ is the pole of this Light which, in its symbolic sense, is ‘when time stands still.’ The Fathers taught that in meditation and prayer, when time stands perfectly still, there is an opportunity to experience a supreme moment of divine inspiration—a moment when one might witness the brightness and intensity of meeting God face-to-face. The phenomenon is also known to happen during physical or emotional crises or during a rare moment when one experiences an unoccupied thought stream.” Sam said, “This could be an important metaphor for the diagnosis and treatment of certain pathologies, Oscar. Certainly it is a metaphor encouraging thoughtful meditations.” Oscar replied, “Most people, especially in Medicine and Religion, feel that such concepts, metaphors, or descriptions really don’t apply to them.”

Sam interjected, “Why don’t you teach this in Church, Oscar?” Oscar replied, with a wry chuckle, “I can just imagine the looks—not to mention the comments! People would think I was some sort of Sun Worshiper too; or, worse yet, a blooming idiot!” Sarcasically, Sam said, “Well, you could join the misinformed!” Unruffled, Oscar calmly explained, “I don’t think it has anything to

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do with misinformation, Sam. It may be that many people just haven't had any direct experience with Light. It takes that special thing we call experience in order to have any correspondence to the ideas, and thoughts that are found in the old Mystery teachings. Have you had any kind of traumatic experience, Sam?" "Not really," Sam replied. He was embarrassed about his criticism of his friend. He paused, acknowledging Oscar's subtle reprimand then continued, "Where do you get all your ideas, Oscar? What are you reading now-a-days?"

Oscar countered, "Sometimes you forget, Sam. I'm a Mason too. I read almost as much as you do." "What are you trying to tell me, Oscar?" "I'm trying to tell you that we're all mystified by our teachings. We'll all have a chance to understand it someday, Sam." Reverend Lundburg quietly concluded. "It's late and I have much to do, Sam." "I know, Oscar...thanks." They shook hands warmly, reminding themselves of their friendship and the fraternity which they shared, and parted for the evening.

In 1964, at age 58, Sam noticed that his body was feeling the wear and tear of life. He was busy with his family, his law practice, and his involvement in local city matters and his various interests in the business community. Weaving through all of this was the feeling of an increasing, internal, nagging urgency. After all of his studies, all of his debates, a happy marriage and two raised kids, there was still a missing part to the puzzle of his life that seemed ironically to correspond with his missing understandings in Masonry. It was a quiet Sunday morning in 1966—just a month before his 60th birthday—when Sam arose to shave and shower. He and Sarah were getting ready for Church. In mid-razor stroke, Sam froze in pain. His chest contracted like a stone in a vise. His heart locked in mid-beat like a drop of crystal rain frozen and captured in the ozone layer. A soundless scream formed in his throat but never came out. He crumpled to the bathroom floor. The sound of his body hitting the floor alarmed Sarah, who was just touching up her makeup. She rushed into the bathroom to find him unconscious. "Oh my God!" Tears running down her face, her shaking fingers checked his carotid artery for critical life signs and found none. "Oh, no! No! No!" she cried over and over again. Sobbing uncontrollably, she called Round Rock EMS for assistance.

She wrapped her arms around her husband and laid her head on his chest. She felt the life force slipping from his body. As the spirit slipped from his body, he was observing all from above with a 360-degree view. All of the awareness that he had contained in life still remained. It became blatantly evident that something had changed as he observed his body on the floor with beloved Sarah crying uncontrollably. At first he was concerned that she couldn't hear a word he was saying.

Concern turned to amazement at the realization that he felt no pain or other bodily sensations. The walls of his house became transparent. He saw, not only through his wife's clothes, but through her body. She was a beautiful, transparent rainbow of Light but at the same time she seemed to have a filmy solidness. It reminded him of an under-exposed X-Ray film he had once seen

in court, but in color. He thought, "Is that the 'Light Body' I've read about in *Death and Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler Ross?"

He felt out of place floating up near the ceiling, gazing down upon his own body lying there in seeming death while Sarah sobbed. He drifted through the ceiling and into open space. The sky was more beautiful than he had ever remembered it. The air seemed oddly light, even cool. He sensed that he could feel the presence of many other beings in this dimension. He remembered how many times in his life that he had felt alone in his existence. Now, he was acutely aware that he was not alone. He thought, "This is not some paradisiacal place. It is a totally different dimension, a dimension of pure consciousness filled with beings of Light." He felt a personal connection to what he perceived as a kind of collective intelligence, or some piece of a Greater Universe of which he had only been vaguely aware in some primal way, or maybe available to him only in his dream world.

Sam became acutely aware of a powerful force near him. His 360-degree gaze observed the gentle approach of a powerful White Light. As the being came nearer, the most incredible sense of peace and unconditional love came over him. He thought, "Is this what Albert Pike meant when he wrote about 'Divine Love?'" Sam could see the Light-Being clearly, even though he knew that it was the brightest intensity imaginable. The transmission of the feelings of pure unadulterated Divine Love was so intense that it made him quiver. It was as if every non-existent super-sensitive cell begged to be near to the Light. He could see, feel, and hear the thought-pictures as they formed in the Light-Being and knew immediately of their content. He could see and feel other thought-pictures forming but was unable to solve the mystery of how only the communication that was meant for him actually came to him.

Sam intuitively understood that he was to accompany this Light-Being on a journey. Though, at the time, he did not know how he had sensed the urgency nor did he know his destination. Sam felt an unquestionable trust for this Being of Light that was impossible for him to explain. "So, this must be what a real angel is," Sam thought, then mused, "I wonder who this really is. Or is it an angel?" The Light-Being read his thought-picture. It projected a stream of happiness and a playful agreement to Sam. It neither confirmed nor denied any identity. It beckoned Sam to proceed with it. He proceeded without any thought of fear or anxiety. Falling into the same pace as the Light-Being, Sam moved faster and faster, hurtling through space. He thought, "The boys back at Edwin's gas station are never gonna believe this."

Sam and the accompanying Being of Light slowed momentarily at the entrance of what appeared to be a tunnel. Sam immediately recognized it as a "gate" and was reminded of "two pillars" guarding some sort of entrance. Sam thought, "Why this is just a plain hole! It goes through the place of darkness or death!" He mused, "How man complicates and glorifies that which is so simple, hiding the truth of its simplicity." The nebulous edges of the hole between the physical and spiritual worlds were quite visible with the special vision that one possesses in this state.

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On this side was the terrestrial and inside, beyond what he could see, was the celestial—another dimension in a spiritual sense. The opening seemed to enlarge as they drew closer. There appeared to be some sort of force field in the surrounding region of gray Light. Sam thought, “It reminds me of an opening to an inner ‘chamber.’” Before he could think about or pursue any further investigation, he perceived a loud whirring sound. The tunnel drew him into itself. During the movement, Sam observed himself again in amazement. He still looked just like the accompanying Light-Being. He no longer had any sense of the possession of a body or an ego. He was pure Light; a beautiful Ray of God.

The Light-Being encouraged him and they sped up, continuing their journey through the tunnel. At one point, Sam began to feel a little apprehensive. The Light-Being picked up on it and transmitted a quiet confidence that immediately calmed him. It felt like the tunnel was a living organism. Shades of dark and light alternated in broad swirling bands, rotating steadily and slowly clockwise. Sam sensed that, just ahead, he was beginning to see further Light. A thought-question passed through his awareness, “Hmmm, a second Light, in a second dimension.” Slowing in time, Sam paused at the other end of the tunnel as the second Being of the most brilliant Light that he could have ever imagined seemed to be waiting for him. Sam felt, again, the most incredible sense of joy, bliss, peace, and unconditional love. Sam was communicating at some inexplicable level with a being of Divine Wisdom. The Light-Being transmitted a thought-picture, the questions, “What have you done with your life?” and “What’s in your Heart?”

Sam’s life passed before him like a panoramic 360-degree perception of millions of concatenated movie clips. Sam saw, in minute detail, his own birth, every living act, every dream, every argument, every emotion, every perception, every belief, every thought, every adventure, every passionate love that he had ever experienced during the span of his life in what seemed but a few moments.

Watching the events of the story of his life pass before him, he witnessed his triumphs and his mistakes. He not only saw himself as his life had been, but what it could be. He was astounded to realize that the so called “Final Judgment” of his ‘due qualifications’ for entrance was simply the internal question transmitted to him by the Higher Self; the Master within, the eternal Presence of the Great White Light: “What have you done with your life?” Sam gazed at his surroundings. There was no throne, no Osiris, King of the Dead, no Judgment Hall. His experience was shedding a different ‘Light’ on the things that he had heard and read about this place. From the perspective of the higher Self he perceived that beliefs about a material ‘paradise’ occupied by a material body were psychological constructs of an earthly ego. He perceived that this story provided a sense of authenticity in the doctrines of religion—even the mystery schools—but, at this level, the need for authentication was trumped by direct experience with Divine Presence. His experience of ‘heaven’ seemed so much simpler than any liturgical explanation he’d ever heard or read. Sam knew automatically and without any doubt or necessity of

belief that his life’s work was incomplete. He perceived that Sarah was not ready to let go of him. Peculiarly, the decision was made without debate; it was simply a total understanding of what was to be. This was a dimension where you experienced everything at once, unhampered by time, space, and matter. There was no argument that could be presented in the court of King Solomon’s Temple built from the polished stones of infinite possibilities.

He felt the confusion of the ego-mind compared to the clarity of the higher Self. He had already made up his mind that he was not quite prepared to proceed to the next Degree of existence. After his past-life review, he experienced an expansion of awareness of the soul’s immortality. Every previous life he’d experienced and every potential future life resembled a continuous Mobius strip of existences. It was crystal clear that the sole purpose of life in a dualistic world was simply to become conscious—to receive more Light. Just as he was lazily musing about his paradisiacal experience, he was possessed with an insatiable desire to return to his earthly existence.

In less than the blink of an eye, because there is no time in this dimension, he was first drawn through the tunnel and then hovering over his own body in his bathroom. Sarah was still holding him when she felt his Spirit Body return and saw him slowly open his eyes. She tightened her grip on Sam and gasped with relief. The EMS trip was uneventful. Sarah arrived and proceeded to his room. “Hi, Sam,” she said, hugging him in the hospital bed. “How are you doing?” Sam said, “I’ve changed.” “How is that?” “In some way it feels like my experience with death has sped up my life but has slowed down my emotions.” Sarah agreed, “Yes. I can sense it. You have a real, but different, sense of urgency.”

“My urgency is about fulfilling the destiny of my life. I now know what is meant by the idea of seeking more light; it simply means to live life with gusto and passion—damn the torpedoes and full-speed ahead! Every moment of life is an act of becoming conscious. I’m no longer lost in the wasteland, out of touch with the divine nature of the Self. I feel like I have experienced the Ultimate of all experiences, a taste of the Great Mystery. It has occurred to me that the last Degree in Masonry is but a simple re-enactment of the transformational experience I just had.” “Sam, you seem very relaxed.” “I am. Now I can work because I love it, and because I love the presence of my friends and my family. I’m able to see hidden meanings behind other people’s verbal behavior that I’ve never seen before. Like Horus, I have seen the Light I have been seeking.”

Sam was treated and released with a prescription for heart medication and orders to slow down. He later revealed bits and pieces of his transformational experience in his community talks, his conversations with clients and friends, and his talks at the Lodge. One night, Reverend Lundberg cornered him, “I am fascinated that you seem opened up to the idea that death is a transformational experience with Light, and not some final act of destiny.” Sam said, “When I was initiated, I was encouraged to seek ‘Light.’ The mystery plagued me for years. It seems ironic and symbolic to say, God killed me so that I could find out the meaning of the mystery of Light.” Reverend Lundberg said, “Be careful what you

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pray for.” Sam encouraged others to tell their personal stories. When they found out that he would listen, they opened up and shared their own private experience with him, telling similar tales of their own version of the Light experience. On the other hand, some would guard their thinking because the experience was too private to share with others and they harbored an innate fear of criticism. Wily old Reverend Oscar Lundberg did his best to trick Sam into a word trap about the experience, quoting the Masonic Monitor, “Traveling upon the level of time to that undiscovered country from who’s borne no traveler returns.’”

“Do you know what frustrates me?” Oscar asked. “At moments Sam, you could almost convince me of the reality of your experience.” “Yeah, and I still haven’t told you the whole story. One of these days, you too will experience the Great White Light.” “Hummm.” replied Oscar. Sam said, “I often forget that I had once been young and ignorant of the ancient teachings as well as of those which had filtered down through the ages. Well, I wouldn’t exactly call it ignorance. I would rather deem it a “lack of experience.” Oscar grinned, “Sam, I see that you are mellowing. The change is obvious in the verbal expressions you are using.” Sam said, “I have, on occasion, been challenged about what happened by my friends.” “How do you reply?” said Oscar.

“You can’t know what you ain’t seen, and you can’t come from where you ain’t been, unless you have walked a thousand miles in another man’s boots.”

Sixteen years later Sam was contemplating his memories when he suffered his second, and final, heart incident. He didn’t have the energy to get out of bed that morning. He calmly called Sarah over to his side, “Sarah, we have to go to the hospital now.” “Why do you want to go to the hospital, Sam?” “So that when I die the Sheriff won’t be tempted to charge you with murder!” Sam replied, grinning. “Stop teasing me right now, Sam. You are in trouble, aren’t you?” “Maybe. My heart is missing on three of its four cylinders.”

“I can see the look on your face. Do you want me to call EMS?” “No, Sarah, just help me get out to the car. I’ll be fine.” “You always say everything will be fine. It isn’t this time, huh?” Sam simply repeated, “Huh,” and chuckled under his breath.

Without objection, Sarah quickly gathered a few things and then carefully helped him to the car. In silence, she drove him to the Round Rock hospital. They arrived without incident. He was very weak but in good spirits, joking with ER hospital attendants as he was settled in a room. “Hi, Doc,” Sam said. The Doctor examined him and explained, “Sam, I think this may be your last trip. You have only a few days. Your heart was just too weak to do much more.” “I know,” Sam said. “No life-saving measures, Doc!” “Okay, Sam,” said the Doc. “Have you got the paperwork?” “Yup.”

His old friends, Gary Caldwell and I, joined Sarah and Oscar in his hospital room. Sam told us that he was ready to go. As he grew weaker, his thin smile grew broader until it seemed never to leave his face. During our night-watch, Sam dreamed restlessly. He talked to unknown beings and his country grin grew even broader during those mumbling conversations.

On his third and final day, we all gathered close to him. He asked us to hold him as his spirit drew away. For the last hour he seemed to rally just a bit. He told us the full story of his life-experiences with the Light. As he talked, his face took on a spiritual glow and he closed his eyes, continuing the story with increasing effort.

His last words came almost in a whisper, “I want you to share this story with anyone who’ll listen, especially Masons. I’m just about to experience the Light of the third and the final degree.” He struggled, “I can almost see the Presence of the Great Light of the Deity, in whom I declared a belief when I was first initiated into the Mysteries.”

With that Sam breathed his last breath and, like Osiris, became the Light he always sought. Tears flowing, we all held each other for the final time and bade our old friend farewell. Somehow, we all knew that, for a few continuing moments, his spirit could hear our words and feel our sadness.

Some days later, I was down at Edwin’s gas station listening as Gary Caldwell was telling Sam’s story to some of the guys. When he finished, one of the Madsen boys asked him, “Was that story really true?”

Gary replied, “Well, like all truths, it depends on your perspective. One person’s truth is another person’s untruth. I guess you could honestly say it’s like life—everything ends with a story.” #



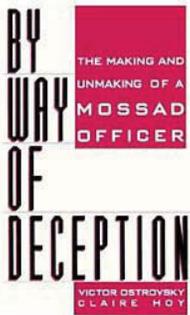
**Worshipful Brother Jerry Casebolt**, is a Past Master of Liberty Hill Lodge 432 at Liberty Hill, Texas and Robert Burns 127 at Round Rock, Texas. In 1987, Jerry Casebolt administered one of the first Scottish Rite Adult Dyslexia programs at Liberty Hill Lodge for Liberty Hill residents during the formation of the Austin Scottish Rite Learning Center. In 2005, Brother Casebolt created the Austin Scottish Rite Symbolism study group and has presented the program every month for the past nine years. It can be said that Brother Casebolt spearheaded the importance of Masonic education programs in the Valley of Austin and his class regularly commands an audience of 25 or more. Jerry is a graduate of Master Craftsman I and II and soon to be a graduate of Master Craftsman III. In 2010, Jerry was a presenter and panelist at the Orient of Texas Scottish Rite Convocation, sitting alongside Rex Hutchins and Brent Morris.

# COMING IN JUNE

## THE EFFICACY OF AN ANACHRONISTIC SOCIETY

—by Paul Bullock, Past Master, Parsons 222

### BOOKS

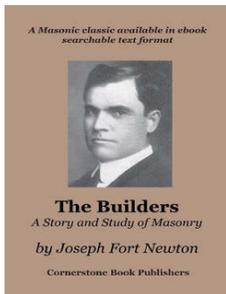


**By Way of Deception**—Victor Ostrovsky, Claire Hoy, 2002—claims to be written by a former katsa (case officer) in the Israeli Mossad, Victor Ostrovsky. The title of the book is supposedly a translation of part of Proverbs 24:6, which Ostrovsky alleges is the former motto of the Mossad: be-tahbülöt ta'aseh lekhâ milkhamâh. Ostrovsky claims this translates, “By Way Of Deception, Thou Shalt Do War.”

**Plot**—Starting with approach during his service in the Israeli Defense Forces, after tests, rejecting assassin’s squad, he supposedly accepts a training katsa position. He specifically addresses the suicide bombing of the U.S. Marine compound in Beirut that killed several hundred U.S. Marines in Lebanon. He says Mossad learned of the time and location of the attack in advance through its network of informants, but only told the Americans general information without the specifics. He attributes trafficking heroin as a source of raising funds for operations that were outside government regulation. He blames Mossad for assassinating Khadir, a PLO diplomat sent by Arafat to start peace negotiations with the Israeli government to prevent an invasion of Lebanon, that such action would promote an Israeli invasion of Lebanon to wipe out the PLO. Disillusionment grows, culminating in retirement after being alleged scapegoating for a failed attempt at capturing top PLO officials. The second half alleges other operations between 1971 and 1985, such as Operation Sphinx where Iraqi nuclear scientists were recruited while in France to gather information about Iraq’s nuclear reactor Osiraq, ultimately ending with the Israeli air strike in 1981.

**Disagreements**—Ostrovsky is supposedly not a pen name, that he said if he wanted to hide, he would not have written the book in the first place. Arguments continue over the credibility of his accounts. Critics such as Benny Morris argue the book is essentially a novel, a case officer would not have had access to so many operational secrets. Intelligence organizations practice strict compartmentalization of confidential information.

In 1990 Israel tried to stop the book sale with a preliminary injunction. This was a rare case of a sovereign state trying to stop a book publication in another sovereign state. Lawyers for Israel convinced Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Michael J. Dontzin to issue the injunction, preventing the publication and distribution of *By Way of Deception*. On Sept. 13, less than 48 hours after the injunction was issued, an appeals court threw it out. For the week of 7 October 1990, the New York Times best seller list rated the book #1 on non-fiction list.—*Wikipedia*



**The Builders, A Story and Study of Freemasonry**—Joseph Fort Newton, 1921—The Ante-Room; Prophecy; Foundations; Working Tools; Drama of Faith; Secret Doctrine; Collegia; History of EA, FC, and MM Degrees; Grand Lodge of England; Universal Masonry; What is Masonry; Masonic Philosophy; The Spirit of Masonry.

Joseph Fort Newton was born in Decatur, Texas, the son of a Baptist minister turned attorney. He attended Southern Baptist Seminary, and Harvard University. While at Harvard he studied under William James. Newton held the honorary degrees of Doctor of Hebrew Literature (Coe College, 1912), Doctor of Divinity (Tufts University, 1919), Doctor of Humane Letters (Hobart and William Smith Colleges, 1926), and Doctor of Laws (Temple University, 1929). Newton was ordained a Baptist minister in 1895. He held Baptist pastorates in Texas, and lead non-sectarian and Universalist congregations in Illinois and Iowa. While in Iowa, he taught English literature at the extension campus of the University of Iowa in Cedar Rapids. While in Cedar Rapids, many of Newton’s sermons were published and gained wide circulation. Their popularity in England lead him to be called to the pulpit of the City Temple (London) in 1916. During his four years at City Temple, he made trips throughout the British Isles and gained international fame[1] through sermons in which he urged understanding between England and the United States as a basis of world order and abiding peace.

In 1920, Newton returned to the United States and assumed the pulpit at the Universalist Church of the Divine Paternity, New York City, NY. While there Newton served as an editor of the *Christian Century*, edited the *Best Sermons of the Year* series, and preached at colleges and universities across the United States.

At the invitation of the Diocese of Pennsylvania Bishop Thomas J. Garland, Newton entered the ministry of the Episcopal Church in September 1925, and came to the Memorial Church of St. Paul, Overbrook, Philadelphia, PA, as special minister. He was ordained in 1926 at Christ Church, Philadelphia, PA. Newton remained at the Memorial Church of St. Paul until 1930. From 1930 to 1938, Newton shared the pulpit with Rev. Mockridge at St. James Church, Philadelphia, PA. In 1938 he assumed the rectorship of Church of St. Luke and The Epiphany, Philadelphia, PA, where he remained until his death in 1950.—*Wikipedia*

## BOOKS

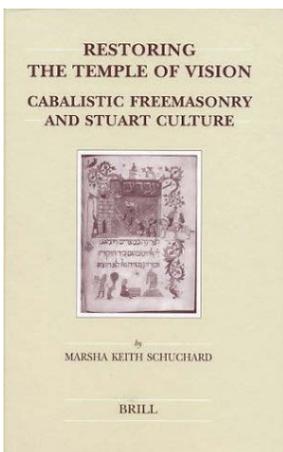


**Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair, John Bossy, 2002**—The files of the Elizabethan intelligence service are a rich and oddly neglected source: rich in historical detail, in the surprising appearance of famous names, in the whole tawdry but fascinating psychology of the spying game. There is in them a curious sense of déjà vu. Under the directorship of Sir Francis Walsingham, the security services featured much the same cast of moles, buggers, double agents and dirty tricksters that has entertained us in more recent spy ‘scandals’. The technology has improved – in Walsingham’s day, the fastest intelligence could travel the speed of a horse – and the targets have different names, but the methods and motives of the secret world have not really changed.

The material is rich but difficult. All the usual problems of interpreting historical evidence are multiplied by the elements of deceit, disinformation and provocation which are the stock-in-trade of espionage. Everything is ambivalent: everything, in the jargon, can be ‘turned’. The evidence remains maddeningly provisional, and so does any theory you construct from it.

In *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair*, John Bossy opens up a startling new angle on certain secret operations of the mid-1580s. If he is right, he has blown an extraordinarily effective cover, which had everyone fooled at the time and has survived intact for four centuries. Some of the links in his story are speculative, but this is a remarkable investigation. Bossy handles the evidence with all the microscopic ingenuity of a forensic scientist picking over the scene of a crime. The events he describes took place in London, with a brief postscript in Paris. The embassy of the title is the French Embassy, located at Salisbury Court between Fleet Street and the river. (A contemporary map places it on the north side of the court, but rather typically Bossy argues it was on the opposite side.) Various politicians, authors and malcontents play a part, but the story centres on two men. One is the controversial Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno, who arrived in England in the spring of 1583. The other is an altogether shadowy figure named Henry Fagot or Faggot.

Jordanus Brunus Nolanus—‘that Italian didapper with a name longer than his body’, as one Englishman described him—was a small, dark, intense man from Nola in the Kingdom of Naples. He had abandoned his calling as a Dominican friar, and had recently been living in Paris, where he published works on the art of memory and other occult subjects. In England he embarked on an intense course of self-publicity. He disputed at Oxford, held philosophical soirées with Sir Philip Sidney and Fulke Greville, and published a series of arcane Italian ‘dialogues’ with titles like *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast* and *The Heroical Furies*. What exactly he was evangelising is hard to define: it was certainly a religion that owed more to Renaissance magic than to Catholicism or Protestantism, and which therefore earned him suspicion as a heretic. Throughout his stay in England Bruno was lodged at the French Embassy. The finest of his dialogues, *La Cena de le Ceneri* (‘The Ash Wednesday Supper’), was dedicated to his host and protector, Michel de Castelnau, Sieur de la Mauvissière. He stayed just two years in England, and returned to France with Castelnau in the autumn of 1585. His presence reverberated on, not least in Marlowe’s *Dr Faustus* and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, both of which contain traces of Bruno’s occultist ‘mission’ in England.—*London Review of Books*, Nolanus Nullanus, Charles Nicholl



**Restoring the Temple of Vision, Cabalistic Freemasonry and Stuart Culture, Marsha Keith Schuchard, 2002**—This book uncovers the early Jewish, Scottish, and Stuart sources of “ancient” Cabalistic Freemasonry that flourished in Écossais lodges in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

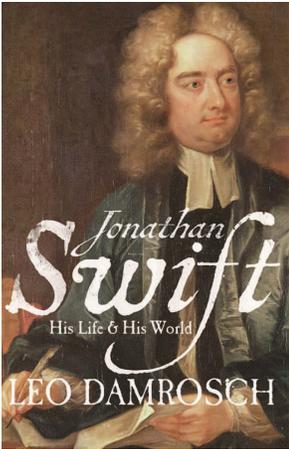
Drawing on architectural, technological, political, and religious documents, it provides real-world, historical grounding for the flights of visionary Temple building described in the rituals and symbolism of “high-degree” Masonry. The roots of mystical male bonding, accomplished through progressive initiation, are found in Stuart notions of intellectual and spiritual amicitia.

Despite the expulsion of the Stuart dynasty in 1688 and the establishment of a rival “modern” system of Hanoverian-Whig Masonry in 1717, the influence of “ancient” Scottish-Stuart Masonry on Solomonic architecture, Hermetic masques, and Rosicrucian science was preserved in lodges maintained by Jacobite partisans and exiles in Britain, Europe, and the New World.—*Brill Publishing*

Marsha Keith Schuchard received a PhD in British Literature from the University of Texas at Austin, where she began exploring the esoteric-erotic underground of seventeenth and eighteenth century secret societies.

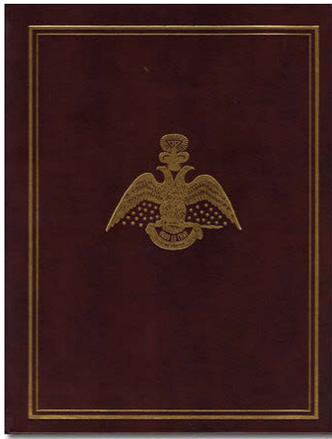
In *Restoring the Temple of Vision: Cabalistic Freemasonry and Stuart Culture* (2002), she revealed the early traditions of Jewish and Masonic mysticism that would later influence William Blake. Her archival discoveries about the Moravian and Swedenborgian background of Blake’s family reveal new sources for his revolutionary expressions of sexualized spirituality. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia.—*Amazon.com*

## BOOKS



**Jonathan Swift, His Life and World, Leo Damrosch, 2013**—Jonathan Swift is best remembered today as the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, the satiric fantasy that quickly became a classic and has remained in print for nearly three centuries. Yet Swift also wrote many other influential works, was a major political and religious figure in his time, and became a national hero, beloved for his fierce protest against English exploitation of his native Ireland. What is really known today about the enigmatic man behind these accomplishments? Can the facts of his life be separated from the fictions? In this deeply researched biography, Leo Damrosch draws on discoveries made over the past thirty years to tell the story of Swift's life anew. Probing holes in the existing evidence, he takes seriously some daring speculations about Swift's parentage, love life, and various personal relationships and shows how Swift's public version of his life—the one accepted until recently—was deliberately misleading. Swift concealed aspects of himself and his relationships, and other people in his life helped to keep his secrets.. Assembling suggestive clues, Damrosch re-narrates the events of Swift's life while making vivid the sights, sounds, and smells of his English and Irish surroundings. Through his own words and those of a wide circle of friends, a complex Swift emerges: a restless, combative, empathetic figure, a man of biting wit and powerful mind, and a major figure in the history of world letters.

Leo Damrosch is Ernest Bernbaum Research Professor of Literature at Harvard University. He is the author of nine books, including *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Restless Genius*, a National Book Award Finalist. He lives in Newton, MA.—*Yale University Press*



**Albert Pike's Morals & Dogma: Annotated Edition, Arturo De Hoyos, 2011**, —By Arturo de Hoyos, 33, G.C., Grand Archivist and Grand Historian; Contributions and Glossary by Rex R. Hutchens, 33° G.C., Past Grand Master; Foreword by Ronald A. Seale, 33, Sovereign Grand Commander.

A Masonic classic. The fundamental sourcebook of Scottish Rite philosophy--now available in a new, user-friendly, and scholarly edition.

First published from 1872 to 1969, *Morals and Dogma* is one of the most insightful works ever prepared for Freemasonry. It is a collection of thirty-two essays which provide a rationale for the Scottish Rite degrees. It encompasses a study of Freemasonry, wise philosophy, ancient mysteries, mythology, ritual, and religion. It serves the useful purpose of putting Masonic morality and ethics within the context of the general society, and bids man to think large--to cast aside the petty concerns of everyday life and to improve ourselves.

This new edition includes the complete original text, but has been fully updated and improved. Spelling errors have been corrected, and it is set in clear, easy-to-read type; it retains the original pagination with-

in the body of the text, while new subject headings and paragraph numbers make finding passages easy. Approximately 4,000 notes reveal the original sources used by Pike, clarify passages, suggest further reading, and include cross-references. New "ready references" reveal scriptural sources. Profusely illustrated with many images from the original sources Pike had before him when he prepared the original edition. New glossary, with primary and secondary bibliographies, and a new index. A detailed introduction on the history of *Morals and Dogma*. With decorative covers, printed in two colors; gilt pages, cloth markers, illustrated, indexed; 1116 pages.—*scottishrite.org*

### MASONIC SYMBOLS AND SIGNPOSTS



LEON ZELDIS

**Masonic Symbols and Signposts, Leon Zeldis, 2003**—Freemasonry is often said to be "a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." For a student to properly understand the meanings of the symbols, a Master is needed to guide the student through the allegory.

León Zeldis is a Masonic Master and his work *Masonic Symbols and Signposts* is an indispensable tool for all Masons who seek more Light in Masonry. His explanations of various Masonic symbols are clear, well researched and presented in a manner that is thoroughly enjoyable to read.

In addition, Brother Zeldis explores such topics as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Labyrinth, offering fascinating research of Masonic interest. His study of color symbolism in the Masonic degrees and bodies is, alone, of enormous value to all Masons.

*Masonic Symbols and Signposts* is a wonderful guide for all students of Masonry.

Brother Zeldis says : " I have given this book the title *Masonic Symbols and Signposts* to stress the fact that Masonic symbolism must be taken as our true landmarks. That is, signs to mark the boundaries of our actions. They point the way, but are not to be taken as impassable barriers. Masonic tradition should act as a compass, not an anchor."

—Bruno Virgilio Gazzo, Editor of *Pietre-Stones Review of Freemasonry*



## BAPTISMAL FONT

Parish Church of St. John the Baptist, Corn Hall, Cirencester, England (Cotswolds)—*photo, Paul Bullock*

# THE VOICE OF GOD

*Spirit Enlightened—Author Unknown*

origins of “it” seen, in zone beyond the known,  
the story of spirit—  
in evolution, in enlightenment, in experience,  
continues.  
our ancestors dwelled and dug to see “that”,  
that, transcending the “god” of religions present,  
that, leading us to the “light” in future—  
the “consciousness” round, above and below horizons.  
in time present, we, the contemporaries,  
of all mental hues, memetic cues, spiritual trues,  
are seeing, feeling “that” spirit in motion again,  
whispering in our soul ear “rise, for you must”.  
what is “it”, who am “i”—  
the veiled quest coded in you and me,  
before our presence in mother’s womb,  
is decoding dimension unseen,  
revealing the “self” anew, in life’s play—without, within.  
we see,  
life embarked on lane, chosen,  
not by him or her or them, but conscious unknown—  
the great web of life.  
experiencing myriad forms of spirit,  
hidden in matter animate, inanimate,  
we love, laugh, cry, create, fight, hope and seek more.  
sensitivity, simplicity, sincerity earthed within,  
expresses dimension of intensity and insight unique to self,  
vibrating you and me, to respond to life in own authentic way.

we feel,  
“the revelation”, “the truth”, “the divine”, in moments and spaces.  
with smile in our heart, we then allow, the unfolding,  
embarking the self on stage chosen, by conscious present—  
the great spiral of life.

seeking and unveiling answer, for and by us,  
to that coded quest beyond corporeal birth,  
the “spirit” narrates its story from within us.  
in locution, reflecting evolutionary home of now,  
“it” is expressed, through we and me.

we say,  
a dark event was dealt, the need to know became the will,  
something within ruffled and scuffled to find the way out,  
it grew within, unbeknownst to world slumbering at dawn,  
the body mutated from golden to olden to embolden bliss.

we witness,  
it shakes all within, bringing life at brink of end.  
with compelling, telling wish to be born again, in womb of this death,  
it cajoles us, to midwife rebirth of self.

this new being in union with “Divine”— the unfolding “creative” within,  
sets out afoot to illumine our world,  
submerges in sea of life,  
dividing and uniting the holy spirit in loving embrace,  
for him, for her, for you, for me and for all,  
in unseen expansion of grace.

perched on ground below, we marvel on  
those human lives— carriers of “our” culture,  
granting us the spectacle to see our moral, integral, eternal meme,  
guiding all to divine milieu— flowing, gliding into ether infinite.

for us,  
most and many,  
enigma continues,  
what is enlightenment?  
who is enlightened?  
what is spirit?



### DANTE ALIGHIERI 1265-1321

Dante's engagement with philosophy cannot be studied apart from his vocation as a writer, in which he sought to raise the level of public discourse by educating his countrymen and inspiring them to pursue happiness in the contemplative life. He was one of the most learned Italian laymen of his day, intimately familiar with Aristotelian logic and natural philosophy, theology (he had a special affinity for the thought of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas), and classical literature. His writings reflect this in their mingling of philosophical and theological language, invoking Aristotle and the neo-Platonists side by side with the poet of the psalms. Like Aquinas, Dante wished to summon his audience to the practice of philosophical wisdom, though by means of truths embedded in his own poetry, rather than mysteriously embodied in scripture.

For an in depth article about the life and work of Dante Alighieri, please visit the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

— <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/dante/>