

District Deputy Grand Master's Official Visit

Valley Lodge No. 100

Accompanying Lodge – Ionic Lodge No. 549

Valley Temple

Monday February 9, 2009

Brethren, during some of my research and readings I came across a topic that I thought you may find interesting. The topic is referred to as the '**Twelve Original Points of Masonry**'. The old English lectures that were abolished by the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813 contained the following passage:

“There are in Freemasonry twelve original points, which form the basis of the system, and comprehend the whole ceremony of initiation. Without the existence of these points, no man ever was, or can be legally and essentially received into the Order. Every person who is made a Mason must go through these twelve forms and ceremonies, not only in the first degree, but in every subsequent one.”

Our ancient brethren held these points with the highest importance to the ceremony of initiation and even though by the decree of the Grand Lodge, they no longer constitute a part of the English ritual and were never introduced here, I thought there is no impropriety in presenting a brief explanation of them.

The ceremony of initiation, when these points were part of the ritual, was divided into twelve parts, in allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel.

1. The opening of the Lodge

- symbolized by the tribe of Reuben

- Reuben was the first-born of Jacob who called him “the beginning of his strength”; therefore adopted as the emblem of the ceremony, essentially the beginning of every initiation

2. The preparation of the candidate

- symbolized by the tribe of Simeon

- Simeon prepared the instruments for the slaughter of the Shechemites and that part the ceremony that relates to offensive weapons, was used as a token of our dislike for the cruelty exercised on that occasion

3. The Report of the Senior Deacon

- referred to the tribe of Levi

- in the slaughter mentioned above, Levi was supposed to have made a signal or report to his brother Simeon, with whom he was engaged in attacking these unhappy people while unprepared for defense

4. The entrance of the candidate into the Lodge

- symbolized by the tribe of Judah

- they were the first to cross the Jordan and enter the promised land, coming from darkness and servitude of the wilderness into the light and liberty of Canaan

5. The prayer

- symbolized by the tribe of Zebulun

- the blessing and prayer of Jacob were given to Zebulun, in preference to his brother Issachar

6. The circumambulation

- referred to the tribe of Issachar

- as reckless and lazy tribe, they required a leader to advance them to an equal elevation with the other tribes

7. Advancing to the altar

- symbolized by the tribe of Dan

- to teach us, by contrast, that we should advance to truth and holiness as rapidly as that tribe advanced to the worship of their idols, e.g., the golden serpent

8. The obligation

- referred to the tribe of Gad

- in allusion to the solemn vow which was made by Jephthah, a Judge of Israel, who was of that tribe

9. The entrusting of the candidate with the mysteries

- symbolized by the tribe of Asher

- because he was then presented with the rich fruits of Masonic knowledge and Asher was said to be the inheritor of fatness and royal dainties

10. The investiture of the lambskin, by which the candidate is declared free

- referred to the tribe of Naphtali

- the tribe was invested by Moses with a peculiar freedom when hw said, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full width the blessing of the Lord, possess thou the West and the South"

11. The ceremony of the northeast corner of the Lodge

- referred to Joseph

- this ceremony reminds us of the most superficial part of Masonry, the two half tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, of which the tribe of Joseph was composed, were accounted to be more superficial than the rest, as they were descendants of the grandsons only of Jacob

12. The closing of the Lodge

- symbolized by the tribe of Benjamin

- he was the youngest of the sons of Jacob, and thus closed his father's strength

Brethren, while some of the allusions are perhaps abstruse, many of them are ingenious and appropriate and it can't be denied that they add something to the symbolism and to the religious reference of Freemasonry.

Thank you