

FREEMASONRY IN THE 21st CENTURY AND... BEYOND? (PART V)

ARE WE AS FREEMASONS STILL RELEVANT? This question is often brought up in Masonic forums and by non-Masons. This indicates that it is an issue of importance to many brethren. Furthermore, it is often raised when discussing the conditions in which our lodges presently are in or maybe from what seems to be the future of the Craft.

The Webster dictionary defines 'relevant' as follows:

“Etymology: Mediaeval latin *relevant-*, *relevans*, from Latin, present participle of *relavare* to raise up. **1.** Having significant and demonstrable bearing on the matter at hand. **2.** Affording evidence tending to prove or disprove the matter at issue or under discussion <*relevant* testimony> **3.** Having social relevance. **4.** The quality or state of being relevant; pertinency; applicability.”

Let's focus on the last two definitions. After all, we want to be sure that what we do is worth our efforts!

Let's also deal with this issue mainly from the moral aspect. And, let me say that this article is a very, very small presentation to a subject that could fill bookshelves. So, I will try and distill this subject to a more manageable size and hopefully what remains is an effort to point out several possible angles of 'relevancy' thus leaving you to further develop these issues by discussion, research or personal reflection.

I agree with an article written by R.W. Daniel Doron from the Grand Lodge of Israel. He states in his paper that when discussing the 'relevancy' of our being Freemasons some questions should be considered. They are:

- a. Is Freemasonry relevant to my daily life?
- b. Do other people regard my being a Mason as affecting my attitudes and actions, which proves it relevance to me?
- c. Has Freemasonry as an organization any relevance to present societies in which it exists?
- d. Does society regard our Masonic body as relevant to solving the present or the future problems of human society?

Freemasonry is a system of morality, which helps us to re-shape ourselves in accordance with moral principles. It seems that in every modern society, Freemasonry can contribute to a better social atmosphere and a greater sensitivity to the needs of all members of our society. Especially the weak and needy. As Freemasons, we should be proud of this.¹

¹ R.W. Daniel Doron, Reuven Lodge #1, The Grand Lodge of Israel, *Is Freemasonry Still Relevant?* Pietre-Stones, 2006, Internet

The strength and worth of a lodge does not depend upon numbers and popular attractions. It rests on the quality of the lodge membership and its educational programs. It depends on their united and consistent co-operation towards a common ideal. Lodges must do more than endlessly rehearse ceremonies. New Masons need a forum to discuss the working tools, the Tracing boards and other aspects of the Craft. In an open seminar you must be ready to argue your case. You may even have to change your view. If Freemasons fail to do this or fail to grow educationally our Order will lose the respect of the next generation.² New members may join but they will not stay, and Masonry will fade out of existence and go the way of the Dodo.

It seems to me that what other people think of us a Freemasons or our organization does not cause any doubts to our relevancy among brethren. Would you agree that it is ourselves that have to be convinced that our belonging to the Craft is of value to us as individuals?

This article really hasn't answered any questions for you. The intent was not to give you answers but to have you think about issues that affect you as a Mason and the future of the Craft.

Will our own lives become richer as a result of our being Freemasons in deeds and in thought? I leave this for each of you to consider.

This is the final part to "Freemasonry in the 21st Century." I hope that you found it helpful.

My brothers, until the next article.

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² Robert Lomas, *Turning the Hiram Key*, Mass, 2005, p. 361-372