



HENRY KNOX FIELD JOHN BLAIR LODGE

NO. 349 - A.F. & A.M. - VIRGINIA

TRESTLEBOARD

APRIL 2023

Tuesday, April 4
1830 Degree / Ritual School

Tuesday, April 11
Stated Communication
Past Master's Night
1830 Dinner
1930 Opening of Lodge

Tuesday, April 18
1830 Degree / Ritual School

Tuesday, April 25
Masters and Wardens Association, Concord Lodge

Saturday, April 29
One-Day Conferral, GWMNM



A MESSAGE FROM THE EAST

Brethren,

This past month has been a full spectrum of experiences and emotions. The passing of Worshipful Brother Wood was a shock to say the least. Attending the Grand Guardian Visitation with Bethels 1, 2, and 52 of Job Daughter's International; which also included an initiation, was enlightening. The passing of Worshipful Brother Harter's father and the sadness and feelings of helplessness to support a friend and Brother. Volunteering, well attempting to, with Masons across NoVA at the Willing Warrior Retreat to improve facilities that provide cost-free stays and programs which positively impact wounded, injured, and ill service members and disabled Veterans. The signs of spring, reminding us that the cycles of life and march of time continue, with or without our permissions. Exploring options that might lead us back to a place to have a lodge room to call our own.



I suppose it is those ebbs and flows and juxtapositions in life that make it what it is for all of us. The good and bad, happy and sad, sickness and health, prosperity and despair, and yin and yang. It is this spectrum of swings that help us to see what makes us, us; what helps us to recognize what we want, and where we want to go in life.

I hope to see many of you, my Brothers, at the events and activities coming in the near future. We'll have the memorial services for Wor. Bro. Wood, our stated, the wreath laying at the gravesite of Wor. Bro. Field, and hopefully our exploratory committees will gain some momentum in our efforts to reestablish some roots for HKF-JBL.

As we head into April, and the remembrances of our lodge namesakes, I'm excited to link our past, present, and future. April is traditionally our Past Masters stated, it's our charter night, and an opportunity to reflect on the Giants of our lodge with the men that will secure the future of our fraternity.

The concept of "standing on the shoulders of giants" is embraced by many organizations, including Freemasonry. As a fraternal organization tracing our roots back to the local fraternities of stonemasons in medieval Europe, Freemasonry in America today promotes moral and ethical values, personal growth, and social responsibility. Freemasonry emphasizes tradition, continuity, charity, and making a positive impact on the world while building on the wisdom of our predecessors. The message for this month highlights two Freemasons, Worshipful Brother Henry Knox Field and Most Worshipful Brother John Blair Jr., upon whose shoulders HKF-JBL stands. Brother Field was a businessman, philanthropist, and community leader who adapted to changing circumstances, believed in giving back to the community, and understood the power of leadership. Brother Blair was an influential lawyer, patriot, and judge who contributed significantly to the American Revolution, serving on the Virginia Committee of Safety and being a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1778. Brother Blair's commitment to American independence should be remembered and honored as we stand on his shoulders.



Sincerely & Fraternaly,

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 Worshipful Master (Elect)
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A Mason's Thought About Death

Brother Carlos Francisco Ortiz, a member of Equality Lodge No. 88 and Fraternal Action Lodge No. 42 (under the Regular Grand Lodge of Chile)

It is proper of a wise man, to show before death, neither contempt nor disgust, nor disdain, but expect it as one of the functions of the nature
 – Marcus Aurelius

Life is shadow, death is light. We live in darkness and we die in the light. Licht, mehr licht, were the last words the Q.:H.: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe uttered before dying in 1832. The brightest spirit of the Enlightenment thus said goodbye to this world of darkness and ignorance.

The profane, the profane world, lives in fear of the beauty of death because it has developed its existence under the conditions that have been imposed on it by obscurantism and ignorance of dogmatic thought.

The Mason, as a sincere seeker of light and truth, aware of his own nat-

ural ignorance, lives conscious of the certainty of his own death, knows the transitory meaning of his existence and lives without fear before his imminent biological death, in an attempt for answering the question, where are we going? The Mason seeks to know in order to understand the biological phenomenon of death, acknowledging it as a terminal effect that results from the extinction of the homeostatic process in a living being, thereby resulting in the end of life. He knows that homeostasis is a form of dynamic balance that consists of the ability of an organism to maintain a stable internal condition, compensating for changes in its environment through metabolism; and that metabolism is a vital process for all forms of life, because when metabolism stops in a living being, death occurs, by the cessation of chemical reactions that convert food into energy.

Everyone initiated in the Masonic order, when understanding the processes of homeostasis and metabolism, understands the hermetic meaning of the words of the doctor, astrologer, and alchemist Theophrastus Philippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim, better known as Paracelsus, who said that 'fire and life they were the same in that to survive, both had to feed on another life'.

Unlike the rational thought of the Mason, religion, and spiritual traditions such as Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism, among others, understand the idea of death from their different dogmas and beliefs. Judaism, as the oldest monotheistic religion, understands death as the end and separation of a temporary unit of body and soul, which came into the world to fulfil a purpose, and which in a future resurrection will be reunited in a new reality. Islamism, a monotheistic religion practiced by Muslims, conceives death as a cessation of the tasks of life, separating the soul from the body, being a change of existence towards an immortal life, keeping the belief in the day of resurrection. Buddhism, which is understood as a science of the mind and not as a religion, since it does not accept a creator God but a vision of self-creation, understands death as a transition between one way of life and experience and another, in which its mind is separated from the body, going through various incarnations. There is a continuous cycle of birth and death for every living being. Christianity teaches that death is the separation of the soul and the body. It is the end of physical life, but not of existence. The Bible teaches that at the moment of death, those who have put their faith in the work of Christ, go immediately into the presence of God. The rest will await the resurrection to be judged for their works while they were on earth.

Well, the idea of death in religions and spiritual traditions is founded on their dogmas; hence all dogma, by presenting its idea about death as an unquestionable truth, leads to obscurantism and ignorance about an inevitable process and natural as death is. Although it is true that one of the fundamental principles of Freemasonry is tolerance, it should not be conditioned to the complacency of any dogmatic thought about death, since any attempt to understand the mystery of death finds light in the reason and not dogma. Every Mason is the owner of his truths and not of the truth, however, there is a universal truth, and this is the certainty that man has –

the Mason – that he is going to die and feels death as a faithful companion and teacher, in such a way so that each Mason through the development of his symbolic mind begins to become aware of the meaning of his death.

Reason by observing nature teaches us that the universal order – hitherto known – is cyclical; everything in life is cyclical from birth to death. Things and phenomena have always existed and only the way of looking at them, interpreting and understanding them is changing, according to the endless succession of the evolution of human thought. The human being biologically destroys himself when he dies and his death is part of an evolutionary cycle, of multiple and varied vital transformations, with loss of form and transformation of energy.

Human life understood as conscious energy, can never disappear, it only transforms and, transforming is not dying, or, as Antoine Lavoisier, father of modern chemistry, said in the 18th century: ‘Matter is neither created nor destroyed, it only transforms.’ Erwin Schrödinger was right: ‘human beings are like thermodynamic gods.’

In this endless cycle of universal transformation of matter, we are made of stardust, or as Carl Sagan would point out that ‘We are made of stellar matter’, a phrase known from his essay ‘The cosmic connection: an extra-terrestrial perspective’ (1973), specifically the astrophysicist said: ‘Our Sun is a second or third generation star. All the rocky and metallic material that we step on, the iron in our blood, the calcium in our teeth, the carbon in our genes were produced a billion years ago inside a red giant star. We are made of stellar matter.’

We are made of the same matter as the stars, as the astronomer Harlow Shapley pointed out in 1929, in his article called ‘The stellar matter that man is’, published in the New York Times: ‘We are made of the same matter as the stars. So, when we study astronomy, we are somehow investigating our remote ancestry and our place in the Universe of stellar matter. Our own bodies are made up of the same chemical elements found in the most distant nebulae, and our activities are guided by the same universal rules.’ Like stardust, the organization of matter evolves from the atom to the biosphere, with life emerging at some point in its evolution, life that later, at some indeterminate moment of its existence, takes on and awakens consciousness, that is, being from matter acquires the ability to recognize the surrounding reality and to relate to it, taking in turn immediate knowledge of himself, of his actions and reflections, of his here and now, of the knowledge of his past and his projection into the future .

Life is born from the atom, and then, when death ensues, the atom is born from death, in the endless cycle of universal evolution. That is why when a Mason dies it is said that he has gone on to decorate the Eternal East, that he has travelled to regions that ‘are unknown to us’, since the Eternal East is the limit of the critical possibilities of reason. Everything else is imagination.

The Eternal East is the symbolic place of light in which it lives in memory of each deceased Mason; it is the collective thought and at the same time individual reminiscence dissolving until it becomes oblivion, just as the light

progressively dissolves in the darkness of the night, because everything returns to its place of departure.

Behold, Cicero’s words acquire great wisdom: ‘To philosophize is to learn to die.’ Symbolic Death The Mason also experiences symbolic death both at the time of initiation and at the time of being exalted to Master Mason. The initiate in the Freemasonic Order must die in the chamber of reflections – his mystery journey in the earth element. Masonic initiation is an initiatory death in which a layman must die for a Mason to be born; it is a second birth, a passage from the profane order to the initiatory order. The symbolic death of the initiate seeks to achieve a psychic regeneration in the order where the subtle modalities of the human state are situated. The neophyte dies to profane life to be reborn to a new existence, dies to dogmatic thought to be born in the light of reason that will allow him to achieve knowledge, consciousness, and wisdom.

The liturgy of the Master Mason gives us light in the following terms:

‘I KNOW HOW IMMORTALITY IS REACHED’

Are you a Master Mason? Acacia is familiar to me.

What does that phrase mean? I know how immortality is achieved.

What is immortality? Thought elevating its ideality and taking possession of its own divinity.

Why do you surround yourself with pictures of death to symbolize it? Because that of the initiator was the necessary complement of initiation, according to the Palingnese law of the ancient philosophers: ‘Life is sustained by death’, and we represent in the dramas Hiram’s astronomical metempsychosis in the sense in which those sages took it. What is the secret of mastery? Reveal the secret of creation to the initiate, showing him that matter and the highest intelligence, of which our thought is an effluvium, are immortal.

And if the former constantly changes its forms, what makes creation, the natural state of the universe, the thought, or the idea, instead of transforming like the former, it becomes more and more fruitful and perfected.

The Q.:H.: Goethe, in his work Faust, restless and tortured by the doubt of the beyond, questions the empty sockets, the gaunt lips of the skull that trembles in his hands:

Who are you? The impassive skull does not answer the restlessness of the questioning man.

All that you were, riches and glories, are now in my hands, a nothing, a negation:

Sic transit gloria mundi – ‘Thus passes the glory of the world.’

