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And GL 205 Fellow Craft Degree

What is a Blue Lodge Chartered to do?

I was recently listening to a card holding Brother give a talk about the use of the tools as described within the Fellow of the Craft degree. I was astonished at the litany of responses that came from the attendees of this talk. Most appeared to know what the word "Plumb" is, but not what its used for.

A symbol is not whatever you personally decide it means. Personal experience matters. Intuition matters. The way a symbol unfolds inside your consciousness matters. But serious symbolic work begins with discipline. Masonry gives symbols defined relationships. Those relationships form a shared language. If every Brother replaces those established relationships with whatever feels personally meaningful in the moment. The Masonic system stops being a system. It becomes free association. While there is a place for personal revelation, revelation becomes more precise when it emerges through the stable structure of symbols and their understanding found within Masonry.

We are told in our degree and lecture the proper terms and usages in symbolic Masonry, but I am finding there is a general lack of understanding amongst the Craft about its actual usage as a Mason or Carpenter. Today, we have too few Brothers that have been in the Trades, and it shows how far-removed today's Masonry is from its roots as a Craft.

A common construction term is known as Plumb & Square. But what does that mean? We use a not so dissimilar phrase in Masonry. But do we really understand what is being conveyed to us in that phrase?

From Brainvoyage.blog comes one of the easiest to understand for the layman.

"Plumb and square refers to the **two critical measurements of verticality and angularity in co nstruction**: plumb means perfectly vertical relative to gravity, while square means a perfect 90-degree intersection between two lines or surfaces."

A plumb is hung from a higher surface to make sure the wall is straight and not bowed, bent or crooked. If the line touches any portion of the wall or framing, your work is not square, or out of plumb. By its very nature, a plumb cannot hang at an angle. It simply hangs either in front of, next to, or beside something being checked.

"Thus, he showed me; and behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand."

"And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou?

And I said; A plumbline. Then said the Lord; Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel"

If the plumb is too low, it contacts the ground and is not accurate. If it's not supported properly, it bangs into the work being measured. For a plumb to do its work properly, it must be placed in the proper location. Otherwise it fails in its task to prove that the structure is upright, straight and true.

Can we as Masons not see those same workings in our own lives?

**Where does your Plumbline hang from? What supports it? Who is checking your work to make sure its Plumb and Square?**

Too often, that last questions answer is not the proper one. **Who is checking your work?**

Well, I am. But do you have the ability to view yourself from all the angles necessary? Is your plumbline hung at the right height for you? Just as the plumbline climbs as the wall is built, so to as you grow as a man and a Mason, must your plumbline be raised. If a Brother comes to you and is trying to correct you as we are told to do in the Closing Charge, are we willing to listen and look at ourselves as seeing a need to correct? Or do we not see where our Plumbline is hitting the wall?

" The Plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly before God and Man."

As Masons we are taught early on that we meet each other on the Level. So if my Brother is at the same level I am, how can he hold my plumbline? Is this not where we look to Deity to guide us in our actions? Not only with one another, but also within ourselves. Is this not also where we look to the rule and guide of the craft at large for instruction.

Likewise, are we not missing, or are we not more fully understanding the purpose of the square?

"Who comes here? A craftsman from the quarries with work for inspection. Present your work. This is good work, true work, square work; you have my permission to pass to the Senior Overseer."

The square is placed at the base or beginning of the work to be used as a guide when initially erecting a wall of wood or stone. One side of the Square sits flat against the foundation, and the other right angle of it is used to set the first in a series of stones or timbers that will create the wall itself. Long before the plumb line is ever brought in, every construction of any size begins with the square. The square creates the base that all other construction is then built upon. It takes no great stretch of the imagination then to understand why it is associated with the Worshipful Master of each lodge. If the WM is the one who is setting each Ashlar in its place at the start of each day's labor. He would use the square to seat it in its proper position, so that the

entire wall of ashlars lines up not only on the horizontal which would be measured by the Level. But also, for its vertical growth which would be measured by the plumb line.

If an ashlar is then not square as the wall is being erected, it is taken out of the wall and returned for work so that it then can be square and become part of the wall. Squared Ashlar, sitting next to and atop of, a squared ashlar. That is Plumb and Square.

The last two statements in my opinion are some of the most often used analogies in our Lodges, and the least fully understood. If a Worshipful Master places an Ashlar in the wall because it appears to be square work, then finds out it is not and removes it for further finishing. That does not mean that Stone is thrown away. It means it doesn't fit properly at this time. Maybe, that Ashlar needs some more work to truly be square. Maybe, the mortar cementing it in place was not applied properly. There can be countless reasons that a stone is put on the wall, and then taken back for further work. How are we as Men and Masons accepting of that? Are we willing to allow ourselves to accept that we made need further finishing to be able to support the wall? Are we willing to look at ourselves and accept that the mortar we used to bind ourselves together, was not holding as intended? And that maybe we used the sword, more than the trowel?

We have now discussed the proper place and time for each of these tools in their actual working environment. The Square, starts the works. It must start as square before it can be plumb. The Plumbline then tells us how we are proceeding.

We will again return to the question that I started this paper with. **What is a Blue Lodge Chartered to do? To Make Masons.**

If we have just Raised a Mason, have we really done our job as required by our Charter or Warrant empowering them to work? Or do we have a bunch of "Master Masons" who are still waiting to be shaped by the proper instructions from the Worshipful Master into the Ashlar that will support the wall and the Lodge itself?

Credits not previously acknowledged

Mage Space-Youtube First paraphrased quote