

A probable derivation of the origin & a revelatory explanation of the Word[s] currently given during the Raising in Freemasonry

In this paper I wish to address & attempt to explain the true background of the Master Mason's two words; their meaning and how & why the second word was adopted and from where, I think, it was derived.

To the best of my knowledge, in the 20 years I have been a brother in Freemasonry, I have never read in any Masonic literature, nor heard or read an explanation by any (research) lodge, as to the unifying quintessence of these two words. In other words there should be a way to show that these two words do bear a relationship one to the other.

In general, all that is expounded is the period from when the words came into being; originally one & then two with no explicit unity of thought linking them. I would expect that these words should bear an understandable relationship one to the other; but this is not so because no one, as far I know, has been able to demonstrate the relevance of the second word to the first. Most comments have been conjecture without any background proof. Serious papers have found their way into respectable Masonic research journals & the reader is still left with nothing tangible.

In order to do this it is essential to review some 18th & 19th century European history, especially of England, the beginnings of Speculative Masonry, the Hiram legend & to appreciate the nuances of Hebrew.

Today the Master Masons word [The Royal secret] in British [UGLE] workings is generally given as 'Mahabone Makbenak'.

In Israel in Hebrew we say, transliterated to an English pronunciation, Mahaboneh MetHaboneh.

The translation for both renditions is normally given as "What! The Builder!" "The Builder is dead!"

My premise is that the accepted translation into English of the second word is incorrect because the original Hebrew was corrupted, thus causing today's Israeli Masons to use the correct Hebrew for an incorrect meaning. This will be demonstrated later in the lecture having clarified the historical, philosophical and linguistic nuances.

But does this fit in with historical Freemasonry and the conflicts that existed at a very volatile time in its development in England? The period we shall be reviewing is 1700- 1813.

A quick word about this time period is required. We shall be discussing a very transient era in British history – tempered by the Hanoverian succession and the defeat of the Jacobite rebellions. Indeed Revd. Andersen linked the creation of the Grand Lodge to the Hanoverian succession [1716]

On the continent, Freemasonry provided a useful cover for Jacobite conspiracy, and Papal criticisms of Freemasonry in the eighteenth century were instigated by the need to rein in Jacobite trouble-makers.

This chart indicates some historical events for the period 1700-1730.

Chart prepared January 17, 1999 by Bro. Paul M. Bessel with my additions

1730	Hiram Abif legend firm – second Master's word
1729	English peace treaty with Spain
1728	
1727	King George II began reign
1726	
1725	Desaguliers : 'Addition' of 3 rd Degree
1724	
1723	Anderson's Constitutions published
1722	English peace treaty with France & Prussia
1721	
1720	South Sea Bubble - disastrous financial panic
1719	Spain tried to help the Stuart Pretender in Scotland
1718	
1717	1st Grand Lodge - modern Masonry – 2 degrees only / England & Spain war
1716	Jewish Masonic brethren Execution of Jacobite traitors
1715	Jacobite (Stuart) invasion of Britain - riots
1714	King George I began reign
1713	Treaty of Utrecht ended war between England & France
1712	England and France in bitter war
1711	Landowners attempt to bar middle classes from Parliament
1710	Marlborough dismissed - 1st peaceful transfer of power
1709	England and France in bitter war
1708	James III invaded in Scotland, soon returned to France
1707	England and Scotland union into Great Britain
1706	England and France in bitter war
1705	England and France in bitter war
1704	Marlborough won Battle of Bleinheim
1703	England and France in bitter war
1702	Queen Anne began reign
1701	James II died - France supported his son as James III
1700	First Mason's word : M...n recorded /death of Princess Anne's son, heir to throne

Freemasonry in its original speculative and subsequent modern conception was initially forbidden to Jews but we know that those brethren involved with the Craft were Latin & Hebrew scholars who held the Old Testament Bible & it's prophets in very high regard.

This led to Hebrew being used on potential landmark symbols for Freemasonry e.g. 3rd Degree Tracing board; indeed Lawrence Dermott [of Ahiman Rezon fame (1756)] maintained his notes in Hebrew as well as signing his name in lodge registers in Hebrew.

Even though these brethren were scholars of high distinction, nevertheless, we cannot overlook the fact that, in those bygone days, **errors of type or poor comprehension or mistranslation may have crept in, if carelessly written, to become a 'fact' of Freemasonry ritual**. ['Some RA Terms Examined' by R. Wells.]

This is especially so at the turn of the 18th century as there were hardly any Jews in England available to assist Freemasons in their endeavors, let alone Jewish Freemasons. One should also bear in mind that, in a sense, Jews were still persona non grata. Please remember this statement for it is crucial to my premise.

Now the philosophical approach to religious thought known as Deism flourished in England between 1690 and 1740. [and in the USA well into the start of the next century]

The word Deism is generally used to refer to the movement toward natural theology or freethinking that occurred in 17th-century Europe, and specifically in Britain. The 17th century saw a remarkable advance in scientific knowledge: the scientific revolution. The work of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo destroyed the old notion that the earth was the center of the universe, and showed that the universe was incredibly larger than ever imagined. These discoveries posed a serious challenge to Biblical authority and to the religious authorities, the case of Galileo's condemnation for heresy being an especially visible example.

This led to a situation in which the Bible came to be seen as authoritative on matters of faith and morals, but no longer authoritative (nor meant to be) on matters of science. It must be remembered that speculative freemasonry developed at a time when rationalist and enlightenment thinking argued that all men share a "natural" religion which derived from human reason, and believed in general moral principles, not specific to any religious denomination.

Constructive elements of Deist thought included:

- 1] God exists and created the universe.
- 2] God wants human beings to behave morally.
- 3] Human beings have souls that survive death, i.e. there is an afterlife.
- 4] In the afterlife, God will reward moral behavior and punish immoral behavior

"Reason" was the ultimate court of appeal for deists.

Deist authors — and 17th- and 18th-century theologians in general — loved to refer to God using a variety of vivid circumlocutions such as:

Supreme Being

Divine Author of the Universe

Divine Providence — later used in the United States Declaration of Independence

Nature's God — later used in the United States Declaration of Independence

Father of Lights — Benjamin Franklin [1787] proposed that meetings of the Constitutional Convention should begin with prayers.

John Locke, philosopher, [1632-1704] made a famous attack on innate ideas in the first book of the 'Essay concerning Human Understanding' & effectively destroyed that foundation and replaced it with a theory of knowledge based on experience. Innatist deism was replaced by empiricist deism.

Locke himself was not a deist. He accepted both miracles and revelation, and regarded miracles as the main proof of revelation. Lockean definitions of reason, self-evident truth, and the light of nature, are especially lucid.

Today it is quite clear that the above mentioned constructive elements of Deism find a ready home in Freemasonry as, like all things influenced by the European Enlightenment, they share many common values.

Deism may have been the inspiration for the creation of Masonry (or Freemasonry) in England in the early eighteenth century. Contrary to many popular myths and slanders about Masonry, mainstream English and American Masonry are essentially a form of Deism in its relationship to God and its rationalistic, moralistic, fraternal and philanthropic character.

Masonry can certainly be regarded as a quaint vestige of the now extinct eighteenth century quasi-religion/philosophy of Deism - a probable fraternal/religious expression of the deistic philosophy.

Having laid a philosophical basis let us return to the nature of Freemasonry existence at the start of the 18th century.

The year 1717 marks the birthday of modern Freemasonry. In that year four speculative London Lodges met and formed the first Grand Lodge. The movement was organized, radically altered, and adopted new Constitutions. What was the degree status at this point in time? We only had two degrees in England, one for the entered apprentice and the second was for the 'master or fellow craft'. Dr Anderson actually described the English second degree as 'Masters and Fellow-

Craft'. Also, the early Masonic catechisms describe significant portions of the ritual as we know it today. Thus it is logical to assume that in 1717, speculative masons worked a two-degree system, along the lines of the Masonic catechisms described by Knoop, Jones and Hamer. [The Early Masonic Catechisms (1975, edited by Harry Carr)]

Other Lodges joined the movement, new lodges were organized, and Freemasonry spread and prospered. Modern Freemasonry remained on a Christian basis until at least 1723, when in the first edition of Revd Dr James Anderson's Constitutions, almost all traces of Christianity were removed from a previously Christian fraternity as a result of pressure exerted by the prevailing Deism and natural (as opposed to revealed) religion of that age of reason. In the 1723 rewording of the constitution it "was thought more expedient only to oblige them to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves".

Why? We know that in 1725, Desaguliers and others within the premier Grand Lodge, formally decided that the ceremony needed to be dechristianised - possibly to make it attractive **to a wider membership** - and they added a third degree.

Murray Lyon, a Scottish Masonic historian, described Desaguliers as the "co-fabricator and pioneer of the system of symbolical masonry." Desaguliers was probably the most influential mason of the period, being Grand Master in 1719, and Deputy Grand Master in 1722 and 1726. This was the period in which the third degree was introduced into the ceremony of the premier Grand Lodge - and logic tells us that Desaguliers, and his Masonic friends in the Royal Society, just had to be responsible. Certainly, nothing could have been introduced without their approval.

But what did they mean by a 'wider membership'?

What do we know about the early Freemasons, bearing in mind that non Christians, especially the Jews, were not yet welcome in the emancipated 'free' world?

The early Freemasons accepted the early Christian teachings (Essenes, Gnostic), based on the Great Oriental, Chaldean Kabbala (not Hebrew) and Magic....This was occult wisdom, transmitted from the beginning of the world and matured by Christ....St.Paul uses the "building" and "laying the foundations" imagery, describes his community as "God's building", and he as the "architect" and Jesus Christ as the "cornerstone". These are the terms used by Jesus and all of the Nazarenes that have been passed down to the early Christians, the Knights Templars, Rosicrucians and Freemasons. God's building of early Freemasonry was represented under the form of the Temple of the Knights Templars...not King Solomon's Temple, but this mystical Temple which to be built of men, or living stones.

Christ was the Grand Master, the 'Light from the East'. It recognized man as the living Temple of God, that Temple which was built without "sound and hammer, or noise whatever". St.Augustine (founder of the Christian Theology) made this statement: "What is now called the Christian religion, existed among the ancient". Eusebius of Caesarea -the church historian- had this to say: "That the religion by Jesus Christ of all nations is neither new nor strange. The ancient Essenes (Therapeutae) were Christians and their writings are our Gospel and Epistles."

This object of Freemasonry was represented under the form of a true Church - as mentioned in the first Charge- whose cornerstone is Christ, as mentioned above. Those early Freemasons acknowledged that Christ is the Grand Master and was put to death while laying the foundation of the mystical Temple of human nature. At that time Masonry was not that which it became later: it was neither a political institution nor a social club, but a true secret organization.

Please remember the above as I shall be returning to this Christian approach later.

The Jews, of course, were excluded from the original lodges of Freemasons as being great enemies of the Grand Master, Jesus.

So dechristianization meant that Jews would now be admitted. An alteration of text would be required to satisfy their entry; meaning that the Deists wanted the Jews in their fraternity. But existing Christian Masons obviously would not want to alter the text – antipathy towards Jews is not overcome overnight! There had to be a compromise, of which more will be said later.

Where did these Jews come from? What was their special contribution that the fraternity needed so much?

We know that subsequent to the inquisition in Portugal in 1603 Jews were moving round Europe looking for safe havens. England had long been devoid of Jews since their expulsion in 1290 by King Edward 1st although it is now known that Marranos [Jews of Sephardi, Spanish & Portuguese origin] were living in England in the late 16th century [e.g. Rodrigo Lopez]. By 1656 Jews were actually living openly in London.

In 1655 Rabbi Manasseh ben Israel, of Sephardi [Spanish] origin, living in the Netherlands at the time, petitioned the liberal Oliver Cromwell to allow Jews once again to reside in England. His request was not granted in his lifetime although he himself was granted residence [he died in 1657] but his effort paved the way for the subsequent entry of the Jews into England. In 1685 there were 400 registered Jews in Great Britain, which rose to 1000 by 1717, including practicing Ashkenazim. It would be appropriate to assume that from the paucity of Jewish presence we can assume that there was no Jewish lobby pressing to enter Freemasonry.

Manasseh brought with him a wealth of Jewish knowledge including an understanding of Kabbala. [which I shall touch upon later] Remember that things Jewish were in vogue, even if Jews themselves were not approved of.

Another Jew who may have had some influence was Jacob Judah Leon, nicknamed ‘Templo’ who toured Europe and eventually came to England in 1675 to present his famous model of King Solomon’s Temple. This naturally attracted Masonic interest. He too was a Kabbalist and a colleague of ben Israel. Templo, also an expert on heraldry, was requisitioned to design the Grand Lodge coat of arms, which he based on Ezekiel’s vision of the ‘Merkava’ [chariot].

To the best of our knowledge, there were no Jewish masons in operative Masonry. The medieval craft guilds had a religious dimension and Christian spirit, **and thus required a Christian commitment which was impossible for a professing Jew.** [The Old Charges – Invocation] As a consequence, it was only when the movement developed its modern, speculative form, together

with the dechristianization approach, that membership became open to Jews. Jews could now enter Freemasonry because of the advent of a doctrine of tolerance. One thing that we do know for certain is that Jews were brethren in lodges from 1716.

Now some lodges maintained Christian elements in the ritual (though not limiting them to any one denomination), but modified them to allow Jewish membership. Such lodges sometimes justified the tolerance they accorded to Jews on the basis that Judaism was the faith from which Christianity sprang. I maintain that this tolerance is a crucial & relevant point.

Nevertheless there were some who thought differently - even as late as 1796, Mount Moriah Lodge No. 31 recorded in its minutes, "The W.M. made a Motion that No Israelite Should become a Member of this Lodge, Which was carried."

To Jews everywhere, the right to be Freemasons was a touchstone of religious liberty and social tolerance, an agent of emancipation and social integration. Hence, in the free atmosphere of British countries, the Craft had a great attraction for Jews, who were increasingly represented in lodge memberships, and the leaders of their community, including ministers and rabbis, were prominent freemasons.

[I am grateful to **Bro. Rabbi Raymond Apple, for formulating the above comments**]

The formal dechristianization process began **openly** from 1723, the name of Jesus being omitted from prayers and the supposed long lost name of God being included along with bloodcurdling oaths to maintain secrecy added to the initiation rites. In the "Encyclopedia of Freemasonry" by Dr Albert G Mackay, p. 618 "The religion of Freemasonry is not Christianity" & on p. 439 it claims that it represents the God of the Jew, the Moslem, the Hindu and the Buddhist, so all may come to its alter.

In 1738 the Constitutions were further revised to provide that "Masonry being found in all nations even of diverse religions, they are now generally charged to adhere to that religion in which all men agree (leaving each brother to his own particular opinion)."

From 1751 up to 1813, we had two rival Grand Lodges in England (the original, founded in 1717, and the rival Grand Lodge, known as the 'Antients', founded in 1751) and they disliked each other with truly Masonic zeal. Their differences were mainly in minor matters of ritual and in their views on Installation and the Royal Arch. The bitterness continued until 1809 when the first steps were taken towards reconciliation and a much-desired union of the rivals.

The final apostasy from Christianity, at least in English Masonry, became complete in 1813. On that date under the influence of the Grand Master, the Duke of Sussex, also a Hebrew scholar, non-Christian universalism and natural religion were established. The two rival English Grand Lodges came together, and achieved the somewhat 'bizarre' compromise of "fusing" the Antients' Royal Arch onto the Craft third degree - then proceeded to ignore the rest of the Antient degrees.

Only such prayers as omitted Christ's name could henceforth be offered to the Great Architect. In the first Charge of the new Constitutions only atheists and irreligious libertines were excluded from the Lodge, which the Rev. J. Fort Newton in *The Builders*, p. 180, describes as "more than a Church... not a religion but is Religion, a worship in which all good men may unite that each may share the faith of all." That remains its position today.

I repeat – 'openly' from 1723 because by this time most basic hurdles had been overcome, understood & appreciated. Lodges were now functioning with Jewish brethren & the Master's word(s) being accepted by both sides of the religious spectrum; one thinking the words meant 'x' and the other 'y'!

Having set the scene we shall investigate and hopefully clarify today's two Master's words.

As we are aware Hebrew is read from right to left and today can be found in a multitude of fonts. What I hope I am about to demonstrate may reveal the words' original meaning based on the actual symbolic drama enacted in the 3rd Degree as well as the subsequent approach to what is known as the dechristianization of FM.

The first word had been known in Freemasonry certainly from 1700 and maybe had been extant a little earlier. It is accepted as being of Hebraic origin [see below] & personally, I cannot possibly accept that the second word could come from a different source.

Thus it is my premise that **both words are derived from Hebrew** [think about it; it makes sense!] and, despite unfortunate typos & possible mistranslations, both were adopted during the early dechristianization period of Freemasonry, possibly as a compromise. As a result an alternative story, namely that of Hiram Abif, had to come into being to permit the continuance of these words. Why?

In so doing one section of Brethren felt they were still honouring their religious element, that of Christianity, and the other, an acceptance of modernity & liberality welcoming all faiths and denominations to Freemasonry culminating in 'enlightenment' [French Revolution 1789] i.e. it became acceptable to members of the Jewish faith and other non-Christians.

Returning to the Master's words a short discussion on its tentative origin is in order.

There is no question that the Master's word had been round for along time prior to full amalgamation of Ancients & Moderns in 1813 by the Duke of Sussex. The first word is 'known' from at least 1700. Both are recognised from at least 1760 e.g. Jachin & Boaz, Three Distinct Knocks. Whilst both words were known their conjoint use became widespread only after the 1813 Union of the two Grand Lodges & one needed them to progress into Royal Arch. The word even preceded the House of Stuart so Albert Mackey's attempt to find an ingenious source from Gaelic is unacceptable. [See historical point later]

The following are examples:

1700 MAHABYN from Sloane Ms; [to syllabicate]

1711 MATCHPIN

1723 MAUGHBIN

1730 MACHBENAH [Pritchard’s Masonry Dissected]

1737 MAKBENAK

1760 MACKBENACK

2006 MAHABONE MAKBENAK

It is quite obvious that there is no great skill in perceiving that the first three are corruptions of MAHABONE because indeed there is a very strong visual similarity [MAHHABONE 1760, *Three Distinct Knocks*]

The latter three, which we accept today as the second word, are also of similarity but bear, apparently, no resemblance to the Hebrew equivalent, either in spelling or explanation. But is this the case?

Let us analyse the Hebrew and see how it pans out into understandable English and begin to understand what I surmise was the true meaning.

מה-הבונה is read as MA,HA,BO,NE[H] as mentioned earlier. It is actually two words in Hebrew.

It means simply : “What! The Builder” The use here of a capital B is important and relevant.

I also think it’s only fair to say that the exclamation ‘what’ is probably today’s equivalent of “Oh, my God!” - and this accentuates my interpretation of the second word.

Interestingly, an esoteric Kabbalistic approach using Gematria, [the application of numbers to Hebrew letters] occurs where the name of God is fully spelt >

YUD HA VAV HA	Zeir Anpin	45 or “MH”	יוד הא ואו הא
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The third expansion consists exclusively of Aleph’s, and has a numerical value of 45, thus: Yod-Vav-Dalet (20), Heh-Aleph (6), Vav-Aleph-Vav (13), Heh-Aleph (6) = 45. This is the Name that we refer to in our blessing when we say: “And hasten to redeem us with a complete redemption for Your Name’s sake.” Why is this important? Because we can now see that the Hebrew **מה** also has a numeric equivalence of 45.

Thus the simple **מה** now can refer to God. Could ben Israel or Templo have imparted this information?

Now let's examine the possible Hebrew for **MAKBENAK**, the second word, and bear in mind a possible misreading of Hebrew.

At this point I wish to exclude any meaningful reference to Biblical references noted from the Barker Bible 1580, namely 1st Chronicles vs12, 13 & 2, 49. This is purely coincidental and such personages should have no reference in Freemasonry.

מתבנק : I have seen several Hebrew typos in Masonic literature[mainly in the 3rd Degree] and I believe this is another. There is very little difference between a **ת** and a **ח** if not written with a consistent hand. The same could also apply to **ק** and **ך**; **ה** and **ה**; **ב** and **כ**.

Another interesting point is that the Hebrew letters **ח כ ה** all sound the same; the first two being the same but may change format depending where they are in a particular word.

Let's assume there was an error & rewrite the Hebrew interposing a **ת** for a **ח**; lo and behold we now have **מתבנק**. Let's go one step further and change the final letter interposing a **ך** for a **ק**.

We now have an obvious reading of **מת בנק** which translates easily to "Your Son is dead" or "Your Son has died" or even "Your Builder is dead" depending how one reads the Hebrew.

Again I have made a deliberate choice of a capital S.

There could also be a possibility of double error transference. In 1730 we know the word ended softly M...AH; the inference here being **מתבנה**, which originally could have been **מתבנה** [surprisingly almost a copycat of the first word!] Owing to a scribal error this became **מתבנה** & because no one could say the correct sound of CH it came out as **מתבנק**.

מתבנה is, by the way, an interesting concept because this combination of Hebrew letters can actually form THREE Hebrew words, namely: **מת בנה** or in other words "the Son of God is dead". In the Hebrew language **ה** is an accepted shortened Hebrew typescript for God; the other letters have already been explained.

We therefore have another possibility, which does not really detract from the first, in that the essence of the message is now: "What! The Builder! The Son of God is dead."

I have already explained a possible misreading of the first syllable [seen in yellow] but what of the second coloured grey? You may ask how does a K sound reflect itself in Hebrew as a CH as in the Scottish word **loch**? The answer is simple – most Europeans are totally incapable of saying the correct CH sound and so choose a simpler K version.

We now have the following, obviously said in apparent shock by the Brother who found the body, **“Oh, my God! The Builder! Your Builder [Son] is dead” [or “The Son of God is dead.”]**

What is going on here? Where is Hiram [Hiram] in all this? Let's expand on the matter.

The New Testament is essentially associated with one person –Jesus, subsequently nominated as the founder of Christianity, & who according to Christian belief died and was resurrected.

The 3rd Masonic Degree revolves about a drama of death and resurrection. To the Ancients this could only refer to Jesus. Any reference to things Jacobite is eliminated because in 1715, Masonry was in the same condition that it had been in 1701 and also, for the simple reason, that ,at that period, there was no system of Speculative Masonry existing .

This raising of the candidate is to symbolize the resurrection, which is the object of the degree.

This ritual has, of course, a Masonic/Christian interpretation, which according to Albert Pike goes as follows:

"The murder of Hiram, his burial, and his being raised again by the Master, are symbols, both of the Redeemer; and of the death and burial in sins of the natural man, and his being raised again to a new life, or born again, by the direct action of the Redeemer;" (Morals & Dogma pg. 640)

But there is a problem. There is another manuscript, dated 1726, known as the Graham MS, This is the earliest story of a raising in a Masonic context, similar to the Hiram legend, but the old gentleman in the grave was Father Noah, not Hiram Abif but, as we know, by 1730 the Hiram Legend was fixed in the 3rd Degree Ritual in England.

How can we reconcile this apparent oddity?

In the Constitutions of 1723 (Andersen again) we read the following:

“.. at length NOAH, the ninth from Seth, was commanded and directed of God to build the great Ark, which though of wood, was certainly fabricated by Geometry, and according to the Rules of Masonry.”

"NOAH, and his three Sons, JAPHET, SHEM AND HAM, all masons true, brought with them over the Flood the Traditions and Arts of the Antediluvians (sic)..."

In the Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (Mackey-McClenachan) under the heading "Christianization of Freemasonry" we read about the first traces of Masonic reverence, as follows:

"The principles of Freemasonry preceded the advent of Christianity. Its symbols and its legends are derived from the Solomonic Temple and from the people anterior to that. Its religion comes from the ancient priesthood; its faith was that primitive one of Noah and his immediate descendants."

So my next question is, can it be possible to find any connection between Noah and Jesus relating to resurrection? The answer, surprisingly, is positive.

What is certainly relevant is the fact that we have here the story of Noah, the keeper of the secrets of the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, declaring that the disclosure of those secrets can only take place when three are present (a treble voice) but dying before he has made those secrets known.. An attempt is made by the three sons to raise their father, and with F.P.O.F., so that the secrets in his grave might be discovered, but without success, and the search for the desired goal is indicated as being by yet other means.

Why did Noah, his sons and their offspring, have a place in Masonic legend and ritual? Let us here consider what Bro. Harvey, the author of the AQC article of 1967, has to say:

... in the early years of Grand Lodge, roughly 1722 to 1725, Desaguliers and his friends thought it convenient to reshape what they considered arresting in the ritual — apparently Graham's legends or something like them. For practical reasons they kept the Pillars then fashioned the remaining salient features into a dramatic fidelity legend. To gain coherence, all the action was brought to Jerusalem, home of the Pillars degree. Hiram the widow's son and Bezalel merged easily into a single character. The main problem lay with the quest for substituted secrets and in the transformation of dead Noah into living Hiram. But this invention should not have given well-read men much trouble. (Pp.85-86)

Why not make the central theme one based on Noah? I think it was because the brethren of the day being theologically and culturally well-read realized that the Noah tradition was **NOT** a stonemasons' tradition.

Remember that the Noah tradition also had strong links with Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, and the 'occult' associations of Ham. To shift the story to a less well-known, half-son of Israel must have solved a lot of difficulties at one stroke. But it shows how very valuable and helpful the Graham form of legend was.

Mackey shows that it was Dr Anderson who decisively introduced the character of Noah into Freemasonry as a Fraternal Patriarch. Dr Anderson, in his Constitutions, refers to Noah and his sons as "all Masons true" [above] and claimed that the "offspring of Noah...dwelt together as Noachide." Since he, Noah, was considered righteous amidst a world of evil doers, he must have followed some moral code.

The Chevalier Ramsay (1686-1743) declared: "Freemasonry is indeed the resurrection of the Noachide religion, that of the Patriarch Noah, that religion prior to any dogma, which allows us to go beyond the differences and oppositions of the various faiths.

There is a consideration, some say, that the resurrection of Noah [even though we know he survived] is symbolical of the reemergence of human life after the flood. Just as there was the rainbow and the promise of God after the sacrifice, so after the sacrifice of the Saviour, the resurrection became the pledge by God of our salvation.

Of course this all comes with a number of great ironies. Even before the rainbow, God's plan to preserve life was in effect with the ark. But in order for that life to rise, death needed to ensue. The waters of the flood were both the instrument of death and life. The death of the majority of creation became necessary for all of creation to be saved.

Another interesting connection is in the New Testament (Matt.24:37) occurs where Jesus compared "**his Church**" to the "**Ark of Noah**" in the same Sermon of the End of Times.

As the reader is now aware I have associated the Master's words with the death and resurrection of Jesus as recounted in the New Testament.

I have shown that the word can refer to a Builder and that altered Hebrew text can give rise to the phrases: "Your Son is dead" or "Your Son has died" or even "Your Builder is dead."

The obvious connections with Jesus are plainly in view.

But was Jesus ever referred to as a 'builder'? And would the intellectuals of the 18th Century think of Jesus in this way?

The answer is a more than a probable YES.

Once again we have to remember that the languages of that day included Greek. The NT had been translated into Greek many centuries earlier.

The obvious question is what was the Jesus connection, which could in no way insult the Ancients' concept of being pro-Jesus, that permitted them to go along with Pike's ideas? **Why did Pike choose the Hiram legend for the substitute story?**

I suspect that the answer lies in the following explicit explanation.

It is worth noting that the Hiram Legend appears for the first time in Samuel Pritchard's 'Masonry Dissected' in 1730. Certainly in 1723 there was no mention of the Legend in Dr. James Anderson's 'The Constitutions of the Freemasons', although his name is mentioned in a biblical context. There are references to Hiram to be found in manuscripts from 1675 onwards, without any legend.

The 2nd edition in 1938 does, however, make mention, for the first time, of the death of Hiram Abif.

All Freemasons are called "Sons of the Widow". This title comes from Hiram Abif, the Grand Master Mason and architect of Solomon's Temple, who was murdered by three of his workmen. But what has this to do with Jesus?

In Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3, Jesus is referred to as tektwn (tekton) which is usually translated as "carpenter". This is the usual problem of trying to squeeze Greek into English. **The problem is that this word also means "mason" and "builder".**

Hence archtektwn (archetekton) is correctly translated into English as "architect" with the meaning that this person is the designer and builder of a building. At the time of Jesus and Hiram Abif, an architect designed and built in stone. So Hiram was a "builder" in this sense and Jesus was also a "builder" in the same sense. Interestingly there is a specific Greek word for "carpenter" but that is not the word used to describe Jesus.

The Masonic myth of the building of Solomon's Temple in stone is echoed by Jesus who says in John 2:19 that if the temple is destroyed, he will raise it up in three days. That is a clear allusion to his body and that compares with the Masonic myth that we are each builders of our own body as a temple. Perhaps the point is made clear when we realise that Masons call God the Great Architect. This phrase transliterated into Greek that would be Megas Archetekton, the "Great Builder". Since Jesus is described as "tekton", he is the lesser builder doing the work as directed by God as the greater builder.

So Hiram and Jesus have a subtle connection as builders of temples and they are both "Sons of the Widow".

Neat? I think so and it is not unreasonable to suspect that Pike, the scholar, spotted the connection.

There are other connotations which also bear examination relating Jesus to a Builder.

Examples:

In the narrative sense:

Confirmation of this comes from St John's description of the resurrection. This is couched in mysterious and symbolic language, and especially so in the exchange that takes place between the risen Christ and Mary Magdalene beside the empty tomb. (John 20, 16)

Quote: "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master."

The significance of this exchange is totally lost in modern esoteric Christianity and the very curious word Rabboni [which is not a true Hebrew word] is either conveniently ignored, or euphemistically glossed as a bastard Aramaic form of Rabbi' - 'Master' or 'Teacher'. Neither of these tactics shed any light on the word.

However, its true significance has long been known to the Freemasons, and this is why 'Rabboni' is a critical password in the Royal Arch degree - a degree whose central motif is the rebuilding of Solomon's temple.

In explaining the etymology of Rabboni, Albert Pike demonstrated that it is not Aramaic at all, but simply derives from the Hebrew, 'RB BNI' [רב בני]: these two words mean the **Master** of the Builders, or the **Master Builder**. Thus Mary's comment clearly refers back to the passage cited above predicting the rebuilding the temple in three days. What she is saying is, "Behold, the **Master Builder**".

Comment: Whilst the Hebrew for builder today is seen as בּוֹנֵי the usage of בְּנֵי in earlier times was not uncommon – which, in turn, could cause confusion between understanding בְּנֵי as referring to ‘son’ or ‘builder’!

In the allegorical sense:

Wise Master Builder:

The words of Jesus as quoted in Matt 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock."

In non-Masonic essays, posted on the internet, the following thoughts were expressed several times by different Christian religious leaders summing up how true Christians feel towards Jesus regarding their faith:

1] It is interesting that we are called living stones (1 Pet 2:5) because stones cannot make themselves into anything or move themselves anywhere; they must rely on the Builder to place them and use them in the same way as precious stones must rely upon the Jeweller to place them securely in a setting. This building cannot design itself; it must wait on the Architect. This building cannot build itself; it must wait for the Master Builder. This City is designed and built by God Himself.

2] One of the prime functions of both architects and builders is to create something from nothing. This City cannot be physically seen and yet is very real! Hebrews again compares the earthly with the heavenly and the Mosaic Law with the new covenant: "Jesus has been considered worthy of much greater honor and glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. For every house is built and furnished by someone, but the Builder of all things is God." (Heb 3:3,4). Until people see this Church that Jesus is building, they often unknowingly give the former house more honour than the Builder, not realizing that that house was something temporal and not eternal and pointed to something of far greater worth: Jesus as not only the Builder but also the Temple! A house or temple on this earth, whether it is called a "church" or not, is a dead structure because it is the BUILDER that is full of Life and He is now building His Church in the heaven lies with living stones/people who are full of His Life and Light!

3] May our eyes be opened to see Jesus Christ and the Church that He is building and may we learn to co-operate with Him as the Architect and Master Builder of all!

Finally another quote which I think confirms my premise that in the original sense the word builder is referring to Jesus:

"In Him the whole structure is joined (bound, welded) together harmoniously, and it continues to rise, grow and increase into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you yourselves also are being built up with the rest, to form a fixed abode (dwelling place) of God in (by, through) the Spirit." (Eph 2:19-22 Amplified)

I am sure that the essence of the above paragraph is VERY familiar to all Freemasons wherever they may be. Exclude the 'spirit' and the sentiment includes all brethren of all persuasions.

Thus, in my mind, the picture becomes very clear & complete.

I have shown that Noah, Jesus & Hiram can be safely referred to as Builders but in different contexts.

Also they have been related religiously and philosophically, one to the other, by commentators.

In the late Deist society of the 17th century Jews were not allowed to mix freely & join Christian societies.

Albert Pike & Rev. John T. Desaguliers [Grand Master 1719] were rebels with a cause , freethinkers – pro-Hanoverian, who also understood the contribution Jews could make to Freemasonry with their knowledge of the Old Testament, which forms the basis of Freemasonry tradition – so they had to have Jews IN! As I stated earlier there could not have been a Jewish pressure group demanding entry. But how could they admit Jews who were not prepared to accept Jesus and satisfy the brethren [Moderns?] who did not wish to 'lose' Jesus from their ritual?

De-Christianization involved the need to preserve the content of Resurrection and, at the same time, alter the fable to fit the scenario to permit Jews to enter the Brotherhood. I thus propose that the story of Hiram Abif was concocted accordingly by Pike. In this way he preserved the essence of Ancients approach to FM; probably saying to himself "let them think what they want" so long as non-Christians would not feel uncomfortable in the Lodge.

He appreciated the fact that once Ancients [Atholl] & Moderns [Premier] combined, his way would become the norm and old prejudices should eventually die out with the passing to the Eternal East of existing Brethren. The road was not smooth. The schism in the first Grand Lodge in England (1753) resulted in the two Grand Lodges; the "Ancients" (the younger, schismatic body) and the "Moderns" (the older, original Grand Lodge).

It took many years for all rifts to be healed. Even after the French Revolution (1789 - 1799) when Jews were emancipated to a large degree through Europe they were still regarded with contempt by many Christians.

In 1809, the original Grand Lodge, the 'Moderns', ordered the necessary revisions, and the Lodge of Promulgation was formed to vet the ritual and bring it to a form that would be satisfactory to both sides. But it took another four years before Pike's dream essentially came true under the aegis of the Duke of Sussex, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge which came into existence in 1813, when the two parts of the original Mother Grand Lodge ("Ancients" and "Moderns") again came together. The United Grand Lodge, or Grand Lodge of Reconciliation, formed its ritual from the best of the divergent rituals of the "Ancients" and the "Moderns", the "Ancients" getting the upper hand.

There can be no question that the first Mason's word referred specifically to Jesus as did, in my opinion, the second. But the Hebrew & Greek permitted the English understanding to refer to a builder in the general sense i.e. Hiram, causing no offence to either side.

The second word when used conjointly can, without any doubt, refer to Jesus by substituting 'Son' for 'Builder'.

In modern day parlance our Builder is Hiram, and, because we now use the theme of Solomon's Temple, the original import has been forgotten since we have no need to even bring Jesus into Masonic consideration. This may explain why some of the prime anti-Masonic diatribes come from so-called Christians who cannot bear to think of any organization, having a 'connection' to God, that refuses to openly mention Jesus.

The second word has been passed down incorrectly because the Hebrew was not written correctly and, as a result, gave rise to being misunderstood.

It is my summation that the correct Mason's words should have been in English:

'What! The Builder' "Your Builder is dead" [or 'has died']; but NOT **The** Builder....

My prime conclusion is that I accept is the realisation that the Hebrew for the second word should actually be **מת בנך** pronounced in English as **METBINCHAH** [To those with difficulty in pronouncing CH: **METBINKAH** or linguistic corruptions thereof: **METBINKEH, METBENKAH, MATBENKAH, MATBENKEH**]

But there is another choice, which gives rise to something very close to today's accepted second word, **if the ending of the Hebrew takes on a feminine status**. This means that the Hebrew looks the same and the spoken sound would be **METBENECH** becoming thus **METBENEK**. In this there is an implication that when the phrase "Your Builder is dead" is used, it is a reference by Christians then to the fact that the Son/Builder of Mary had died. I think I have shown that Mary could be a relevant factor in this consideration but the only associated personages towards Freemasonry who placed great reverence for her would be the Knights Templar. [St. Bernard of Clairvaux] This is a possibility, in that the timing is correct, as the Knights Templar reemerged in the early 18th century under the guidance of Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay, who did convert to Catholicism but promoted religious tolerance. However this would have to have occurred before his move to France & before 1730. It is known that Chevalier Ramsay was initiated into Freemasonry in 1729. We may only surmise.

Linguistic inflections & dialect alter according to different parts of the British countryside and it would not be difficult to surmise that **METBENEK** could become **MATBENAK**. Transcribing this last word into Hebrew utilizing an error between **ת** and a **כ** actually produces **MACHBENAK** and hence **MAKBENAK**, bringing us interestingly back to square one.

Finally, a third way, which gives the same solution as the feminine form above, could be that the Freemasons at the same did not express the Hebrew correctly in its 'male' form [**M....CHAH**] and used the 'feminine' [**M....ECH**], not understanding the import.

Personally I opt for my first conclusion because I do not feel that Chevalier Ramsay had time to influence English Masonry. The third solution needs a lot of wishful thinking.

There is no way I can prove whether any of the above occurred or not, but ,in conclusion, I hope I have stimulated a new thinking as to the derivation of the conjoint meaning behind the two Master's words which bear now, in my opinion, a more reasonable explanation & cognitive understanding.

I am quite happy to continue with the Hebrew words that we use in Israel today because, in a sense, they do not detract seriously from the moral message conveyed by the 3rd Degree. However it is satisfying to consider that, at least, we may now have some understanding as to their source.

In general I have felt no need to quote specific references, as most of the information is already well documented. Otherwise acknowledgements are noted accordingly.

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