

Ask, Seek, Knock
by R.'W.'. Gary L. Heinmiller
January 2013

Dedicated to Bro. George, who asked.

While researching the Masonic membership of Seth Warner on the internet, on 21 Jan 2013, I found a link to the Newsletter of the Masonic Education Committee, Grand Lodge of Canada, Province of Ontario, with an index of over 95 issues of interesting articles and papers. In Vol. 3, No. 2 I noticed an entry for "Ask! Seek! Knock," which turned out to be very short, and appeared as follows:

<http://home.golden.net/~djcameron/3.2.pdf>

ASK! SEEK! KNOCK!

The individual who seeks membership in a Masonic Lodge becomes thereby the heir to a rich tradition; that to which initiation gives him access is not something put together in a day, and it will profit him little if he makes no attempt to enter his patrimony.

There is no authorized interpretation of Freemasonry. The newly initiated brother does not find waiting for him a ready-made Masonic creed, or a ready-made explanation of the ritual; he must think Masonry out for himself. He must learn something of the history of Masonry; of its achievement in the great nations; of its outstanding teachers, and what they have taught; of its ideas, principles and spirit. Initiation alone does not confer this knowledge (and could not); the member must himself strive to make the inexhaustible riches of the Order his own. He must discover the larger purposes of the fraternity to which he belongs.

The ceremony of initiation is two-fold. To the Freemason the 7th verse of the 7th Chapter of Matthew is deeply significant: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Prepared by W. Bro. Alan R. P. Golding of Royal Arthur Lodge No.523

In another paper, "There is No Royal Road to Geometry," by Bro. Garth Cochran, Calgary Lodge No. 23, Oct 1988, he wrote that Sir Josiah Stamp called the process of learning by rote

"The inculcation of the incomprehensible into the ignorant by the incompetent."

He further noted that "There is no royal road to Geometry." If we are taught anything as Masons, it is that our labor on our edifice is honorable. But it must be our labor, chosen of our own free will. The building and even its direction cannot be done for us. There is no "royal road," but at the end we become 'kings'!"

In reviewing the offerings for the Masonic Education Committee at this website, I was struck by the utter simplicity of having such a viable working tool for the Craft. In today's digital age the opportunity to create and upload a newsletter of this nature is clearly within the realm of possibility for every Grand Lodge, yet such appears to not be the case. Perhaps in the near future more offerings of this nature will appear.

But, for now, to the subject at hand . . . Ask, Seek, Knock.

While in Boston this past week to attend two Third Degrees I discussed this very subject with a Brother there, as I have also discussed this with other Brothers over the past 25 years. Aside from the important and quiet promise of this passage from Matthew 7:7, to anyone who should Ask, Seek, Knock, the Fraternity makes special reference to it at beginning of very first Degree.

In what is called in the New York Standard Work and Lectures [ritual] the Entered Apprentice "Lecture of Forms and Ceremonies [aka the Q's and A's] the Candidate is "cndcd t a dr of the L & csd t gv t ds ks . . ."

In the Lecture of Reasons [aka the "Whys and Wherefores"] on the same Degree is relates:

Q. Wy wr u csd t gv thr ds ks?

A. to alm th L, & inf the W.M. tt a pr b c crvd admtrnc.

Q. To wt dd th t ks al?

A. A crtn psg of Scp, wh rds: "Ask, and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

In the above 'ritual' is basically all that Freemasonry has to say on this matter.

As W. Bro. Golding wrote above, "There is no authorized interpretation of Freemasonry" . . . the Brother . . . "must think out Masonry for himself."

In the Third Degree, following the Obligation the Brother is imparted with the end-all for his search for further light on this subject, when he is told: "bh t pts of th css r ab th s, wh l t tch u tt u hv rcd, & r ntld t rcv, al th lt cn b cnfd upn or cmcd t u l a MML.

That's it: end of story. Or is it . . . ?

One might suspect that the Great Architect did not design the Universe to be totally understood by those in Creation who live in 3D duality. Where do Freemasons come by Unity and Brotherly Love among its hallmarks? One of the ancient aphorisms is "Things are not always at they seem," and such may be the case with our search for further Light. Perhaps the Three Degrees are not really Three Degrees after all, but in a Unity they are all One Degree, when viewed as a whole.

So, when does one begin to see this whole as a Unity?

But one interesting question arises in this entry. Did the Candidate knock of his own free will and accord, or was he "caused to knock?" Would he have stood before the Door for a very long time without knocking if someone had not caused him to knock, or in the case of multiple Candidates, were each "caused to knock?" The answer is pretty obvious and is equally obviously . . . symbolic.

How many Brothers of Freemasonry have actually knocked of their own free will and accord, without being 'caused to'? How many Freemasons are allowed to knock on the door of a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons?

Ceremonially knocks are given by the Tyler and Junior Deacon, but Brothers entering or leaving by the 'outer door' are not permitted to knock on the outer door, including the Grand Master, whose presence is announce as he is 'about to enter,' the assumption being that as Grand Master, all Masonic doors are open to him. The inner door is the door to which the Senior Deacon answers alarms, but again, no Brother may knock on the inner door to enter or leave except by being 'caused to knock,' or in certain ceremonial usages.

Does any of the above answer to Matthew 7:7's promise that if you Knock, it will be opened unto you? If so, how, and just what is the 'door' alluded to in this passage?

A search such as this would normally begin as a 'mere' curiosity by a seeker, such as many are when they seek enter to inner door.

If and when one 'asks' where does one begin? Does the door of Masonry open on the first Knock? For much of our life we are given thousands of answers in school and in our daily life, but there comes a time when it is appropriate to learn some questions, and not always accepting to outward answers we have received. When we Ask, again, are we merely curious, or is there a deep sincerity in the question we ask? Do we Ask to begin to understand a deeper reality of the outer form of concepts, things and circumstances?

For example, taking three or four simple things we see everyday:

We see trees and hundreds of other 'things' every day, but never stop to Ask what a tree calls 'itself.' Instead we may one day come to ask of 'things,' free of popular beliefs . . . "What is it? What does it do?

What is a car? Is yours better or not so better than someone else's? Or is a car simply a 'vehicle' that allows us to travel on a 'path' through 'time' and 'space.'

What is a chair? How many millions of different chairs could be designed, each one appearing different from any other? Or is a chair something than simply allows us to neither have to stand [vertically] or repose horizontally? If everyone was standing in a room and you were laying on the floor, how would you feel and how would the others in the room feel about you?

What is a cup or a glass? How many millions of different cups or glasses could be designed, each one appearing different from any other? What size would the warehouse be to house one of each design? Or is a cup or glass simply a receptacle that allows us to transfer / communicate a liquid from one 'place' to another?

When we learn to Ask, we begin to come a little closer to understanding the symbolic nature of 'things' and approach a Unity of this understanding.

Well then, of whom do we Ask, and who answers?

In our Lodges there is an officer we know as the Senior Deacon. What is his duty?

According to our ritual his place is at the right of the W. M. in the N. E. and his duty is "to cr ords fm th W. M., in the E t the S. W. in th W, & lsw abt th L as h ma drct; wlcm & clo vsg brn; atd to alms at th dr; als to tc & cn cs."

His present jewel and staff symbol is a sq & css with a sun in its center, but in days of yore the jewel shown at the right belonged to his office.

Well, yes. It is the figure of Mercury or Hermes, the messenger of the gods.

Another of our 'jewels' we learn of in the Working Tools of the Fellowcraft Degree, when we hear, "I als prs u t prs jls: the atn er; th ins tg, & the fh l brs. Thy tch us ths imp lsn: The attentive ear receives the sound from the instructive tongue, and the mysteries of Freemasonry are safely lodged in the repository of the faithful breast."

When we Ask aright, within, there is indeed a 'messenger' awaiting, and if we are 'worthy and well qualified' and listened with the 'attentive' [inner] ear, we will indeed hear our 'answer' from the 'instructive' [inner] tongue.

Please note that there is considerably more to this most interesting subject, more and further of which is discussed in my book, "Freemasonry and a View of the Perennial World Philosophy." Again, as noted above, "There is no authorized interpretation of Freemasonry" . . . the Brother . . . "must 'think' out Masonry for himself." The views expressed in this present work are those of its writer, based upon direct experience and 'other supporting 'speculations.'

If the Door of Freemasonry does not open on the first Knock, does it open on the second Knock? Traditionally this, too, is not the case. The questions we tend to Ask tend to come from the 'head.' It has often been said that the longest journey is from the head to the heart. This 'heart' is not the physical 'heart' as we know it, but is more akin to the 'sacred heart' Bette Midler sings of in her song, 'The Rose.' Masonically we may know of it as the 'sacred repository,' and it does exist. In speaking of this we come closer to the Unity and Brotherly Love, where the Seeking begins in earnest. No more idle curiously, but earnest seeking.

In the Fellowcraft Degree a Freemason is "Passed" . . . but how often does one ask, "From what unto what?"

We know there is a door upon which we were enjoined to Knock. In our journey from the head to the 'heart' this 'door' may be encountered by a seeker, each in their own way.



In 1981, while drifting off to sleep I 'heard' within:

"Who buildeth the door upon which you must knock?
What is it seek as though it were lost?"

The next morning, while in the shower more lines came:

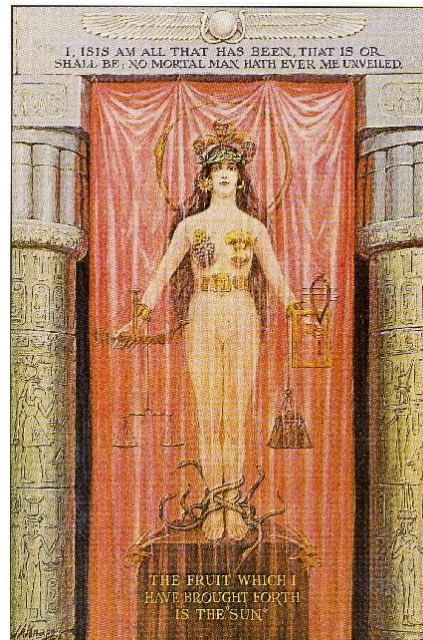
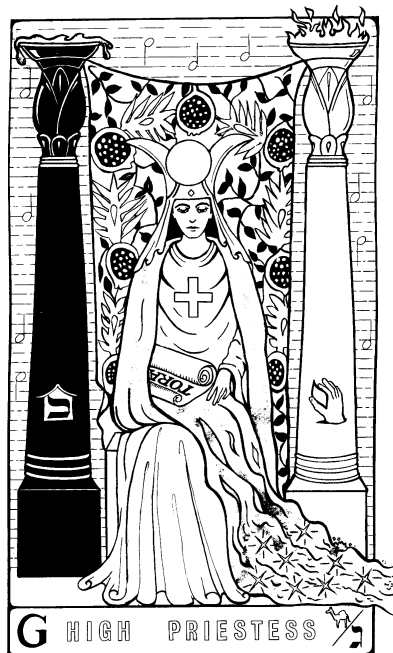
"Who keepeth the key to the Gordian lock?
What is it you find when all seas have been crossed?"

When I finished my shower, I sat on the couch and a total of twelve stanzas had been written out, with the injunction:

"The answer to each is the answer to all;
Why ask you such questions of Arrow and Bow?
Just ask of your Heart and respond to its call.
The answer's within you; Be still and Know."

In the Middle Chamber Lecture there is a point at which the new Brother stands before two Pillars. Upon the completion of some ritual the Brother is told, "Let us make an advance . . .," and is whisked through the Pillars to three steps. Little does the Brother or the ritualist realize symbolically this 'passing of the pillars' is not a new idea, nor is the import of it.

Oddly enough, this symbol is represented in the Fraternity by the Senior Warden, but in the symbolism of the Tarot this appears as the High Priestess, as shown below. Note the lunar aspect of the High Priestess, reminiscent of the S. W. and S. D. in the West.



The High Priestess is identified with the Shekhinah, the 'female' indwelling presence of the divine. She is seated between the white and black pillars—'J' and 'B' for Jachin and Boaz. The veil of the Temple is 'behind her': it is embroidered with palm leaves and pomegranates.

This also refers to the Isis of Sais, famous for the inscription concerning her which appeared on the front of her temple in that city: "*I, Isis, am all that has been, that is or shall be; no mortal Man hath ever me unveiled.*" Perhaps one may wish to consider the 'immortal Man,' in a greater sense.

When a Brother Passes in the Fellowcraft Degree he does not walk INTO either the 'right or left' pillar, but Passes the 'veil' between them, or, more correctly, if experienced within, Knows the third Knock, and the illusion of the Door, i.e. "knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

One does not pass 'linearly' through the 'Door,' but Passes into the experience of a higher knowledge of himself and the Unity, the beginning of an understanding of 'I am that I am,' alluded to in a 'higher degree' of the Craft.

As noted, each may experience this in their own way. How? Ask, Seek, Knock.

In pursuing the subject of this present work, remember the experience of the Candidate in the Preparation Room, when he is divested of the worldly, earthen form and dons a symbolic 'divine' aspect. It is not necessarily a journey of a day or a week, but with patience, their faith being well-founded, one may follow their (inner) conductor to that undiscovered country.

A parable concerning the Door is as follows:

Theo and the Door

*Who Buildeth this Door upon which you must Knock,
What is it you Seek, as though it was Lost;
Who keepeth the Key to the Gordian Lock,
What is it you Find when all Seas have be Crossed?*

From "The Old Poet's Rhyme," by Lee Miller, 1981.

Many years had passed since Theo had begun working in Old Man Johnson's Brass Mine, and for all intent this was a day like so many others that had gone before him. Upon returning to his room at Mrs. Wilke's Boarding House he flopped on his faithful old couch for a few moments of relaxation before preparing his evening meal. He thought a while about 'The Gate' and his strange experience of the other day. He felt the warmth of the Chamber of Old Souls and his being drifted into a soft peacefulness when all of a sudden he perceived a Door before him.

From deep within an instructive voice gently queried, "Well ? . . ."

"Well, what?" replied Theo to 'The Voice.'

"Aren't you going to Knock?"

"Uh, well" At this, Theo mustered the sense to extend his right hand and knock three times upon the old Door before him."

No sooner having thus knocked, he heard from 'The Voice,' "There! Got that out of your system?"

"Uh, yeah"

Before he could gather his senses further 'The Voice' continued, "Now, put your hand on the Door and push."

Theo, feeling a little sheepish for not thinking that it was *he* who was suppose to open the Door, placed his hand on the center of the Door at about heart level and slowly pushed and was immediately met with a new and startling experience: his hand had passed right *through* the Door.

Again 'The Voice', counseled in his attentive ear, "Whose Door is it?"

"Mine ? ? ?" replied Theo with a sense of inspired Realization.

"Very Good", the Voice responded, and at this, the Door disappeared, leaving only the Doorway.

Theo contemplated the Doorway, thinking at first that he would step through and see what would happen next, but a feeling within gave him cause for further contemplation.

"If I step through, I will be at a place and time of which I have but the most meager of any knowledge, let alone any Wisdom. If I remain where I am I will likewise be at a place and time of which I have but the meagerest of any True Knowledge, let alone any Wisdom. If I stand at any Distance, Place or Time, other than in the Doorway itself, I will be standing in the Illusion of Time and Space." This being the *essence* of what he thought, Theo, with an unknown and unseen confidence stepped *into* the Doorway and stood fast.

The Doorway disappeared, and Theo stood bodiless, timeless, in the 'here' and 'now' of the Cosmos of Eternity.



n.b.

I'm sure every one caught that Theo worked in Old Man Johnson's Brass Mine. I hope they also questioned that brass is not mined.

This has an allusion to the passage in the Middle Chamber relating to Pillars of Boaz and Jachin which reads:

"Their compstn ws of mltn or cst brass, th btr to wthstd inuntdn or cnflgtn, tt thy mt nt b rmvd by fld nor cnsmd by fr. . . . , &c."

My usage of the 'brass mine' above is merely a 'tongue cheek' reference to a Brother who liked to split hairs as to whether the Pillars were of cast Brass or Bronze. For my money it doesn't much matter, as both brass and bronze are of a 'golden' color . . . Oh well . . .

Please also note the Middle Chamber reference to the Pillars being “. . . the better to withstand inundation or conflagration, that they might neither be removed by flood nor consumed by fire.”

It would appear our current ritual borrowed the two Pillars from Solomon's Temple and overlaid the older [ca 1450] version to found in the Cooke Manuscript, which reads as follows:

And these four brethren knew that God would take vengeance for sin, **either by fire or water**. And they were much concerned how to save the sciences they had discovered, and they took counsel together and exercised all their wits. And they said there were **two kinds of stone of such virtue that the one would not burn, called marble, and the other named "Lacerus" would not sink in water**. And so they devised to write all the sciences they had found on these two stones, so that if God took vengeance **by fire the marble would not burn, and if by water the other would not drown**, and they besought their elder brother Jabal to make two pillars of these two stones, that is of marble and of "Lacerus," and to write on the two pillars all the sciences and crafts which they had found and he did so. And therefore we may say that he was the wisest in science, for he first began and carried out their purpose before Noah's flood, Fortunately knowing of the vengeance that God would send, the **brethren knew not whether it would be by fire or water**. They knew by a sort of prophecy that God would send one or the other, and therefore they wrote their sciences on the two pillars of stone. And some men say that they wrote on the stones all the seven sciences, but [this I affirm not]. As they had it in mind that a vengeance would come, so it befell that God did send vengeance, and there came such a flood that all the world was drowned and all men died save only eight persons. These were Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives, of which sons all the world is descended, and they were named in this wise, Shem, Ham and Japhet. And this flood is called Noah's Flood, for he and his children were saved therein. And many years after the flood, according to the chronicle, these two pillars were found, and the chronicle says that a great clerk, Pythagoras, found the one, and Hermes the philosopher found the other, and they taught the sciences that they found written thereon.

The reference to Hiram and the Pillars of Boaz and Jachin may found at I Kings, 13-22, where there is no mention of “. . . the better to withstand inundation or conflagration, that they might neither be removed by flood nor consumed by fire.”

In verse 15 it reads: “For he cast two chapters of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece, and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.”

Verse 21 reads: “And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple; and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin; and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

The pillars which were referred to as “. . . the better to withstand inundation or conflagration, that they might neither be removed by flood nor consumed by fire” were not made of either brass or bronze, but were **“two kinds of stone of such virtue that the one would not burn, called marble, and the other named "Lacerus" would not sink in water.”**

The name Tubal-cain occurs only once in the Bible. He is one of three sons of Lamech the First (Genesis 4:22). His mother's name is Zillah and his sister's name is Naamah. His two half brothers are Jabal and Jubal. Their mother is called Adah.