

MASONIC GOALS

An Address Delivered Before the Grand Chapter of
Royal Arch Masons of Massachusetts, on
March 7th, 1950,

by

COMPANION JAMES LUTHER JORDAN,

*Most Excellent General Grand High Priest
of the General Grand Chapter of
Royal Arch Masons.*



THE CHAPTER OF RESEARCH OF THE GRAND CHAPTER
OF ROYAL ARCH MASONS OF THE STATE OF OHIO

MAY 15TH, 1958

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*Most Excellent General Grand High Priest
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The immortal Emerson, one of Massachusetts' own, declared in the long ago — "There is a sublime and friendly Destiny by which the human race is guided — the race never dying, the individual never spared — to results affecting masses and ages." It is to such a destiny, to such a goal, that I would guide if I could the sum total of Masonic endeavor.

You know, as I do, that Freemasonry is neither a religion, nor a substitute for religion, even though no man may be admitted to our fellowship unless he declares his belief in the existence of one Supreme Being in some manifestation of His will. You also know that it is not a secret society, nor can it be, since every lesson, every concept, every belief taught in this ancient Craft has been proclaimed from rostrum and printed page. Our only secrets are our modes of recognition and our methods of initiation. You know that Freemasonry is far removed from all that is trivial or ungodly. Nowhere in any degree or ceremony is there a debasing word or thought.

Bound together by a common belief and universal acceptance of such great basic fundamental truths, surely there can be no enduring barriers among men of such ideals. They can and must be joined together in fraternal brotherhood until their influence is felt in the councils of nations. When such influence is a reality there will be no compromise with godless men, nor sacrifice of right on the altar of expediency.

The symbols of our Craft reveal to each of us lessons that differ in degree. We see and understand only as God gives us to see the light. We must accept the responsibility to reflect the light as it is revealed to us.

We take the hands of those who knock at Freemasonry's doors. We confer upon them the Entered Apprentice Degree. How often do we teach them that they have come in symbol from the darkness of an unbelieving world to behold the light as revealed in the "Great Light" in Masonry in all its resplendent glory? If their transition from "darkness to light" is real, then they learn at our hands to walk in that light; to sustain that light; to reflect that light in a world yet cursed by darkness, prejudice, ignorance and superstition. Yes, to so reflect that light that others may recognize that they possess something of which the world is yet ignorant.

Did you as Entered Apprentices get the lessons of the degree? Are the Lodges of which you are members conferring the degree and instructing your initiates now in such manner that these candidates learn that their trust must be in God; that the "Great Light" is indeed the rule and guide to their faith and practice; that the twenty-four inch gauge is the measuring stick of their everyday lives whereby each has eight hours for his usual vocation, eight hours for the service of God and distressed worthy brethren and eight hours for refreshment and sleep; that the corners of the rough ashlar must be broken off by the unceasing blows of God's gavel if it is ever to be the perfect ashlar in the Temple Eternal; that charity is not circumscribed by the narrow limits of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and binding up the wounds of the afflicted, but that it has a much wider application; that the upright life before God and man is the duty of each all the way through life; that caution is ever to exercise a watch care over their actions and over the interests of their brethren? All this and more in the Entered Apprentice Degree alone!

With all this richness in a single degree, the first, must the candidate be hurried through all the degrees to be able to get the Shrine in the next class? How we need to recognize in these eventful days that we build for time and eternity or else we build for naught.

With all too brief instruction, and that most often in the catechism alone, we take the candidate and confer upon him the Fellow Craft Degree. Do we seek to beautify and adorn his mind as the liberal arts and sciences are portrayed? Do we make plain the avenues by which useful knowledge gains access to the human mind, namely, through the God-given senses for which we have the responsibility of a proper use? Do we make clear that the candidate is in symbol passing from ignorance unto

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wisdom or learning; that in stages he travels a mystic stairway that leads through life's toilsome journey to a Celestial Lodge whose Master is High Priest of Heaven and earth? Does the Fellow Craft learn that a well ordered life must have a column of strength to support it—strength of character, strength of will, strength of endurance? Does he on the other hand observe the column of beauty and grasp its symbolic meaning and glorify the graces that adorn human life? These and other lessons just in the first two degrees! But I hasten on.

The Fellow Craft is given casual instruction in the catechism of the degree and we bring him to a Master's lodge. There in our symbolic teaching he is the principal actor in a symbolic lesson so profound, yet so elemental; a lesson that the men of this troubled world need as they need nothing else—the passing in symbol from death unto life. The tragedy of tragedies is that so many men see only a meaningless rite; a ceremony; a play; and fail to see that we seek to teach in symbol that every sinning son of Adam's race must be "raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular" if he is ever to walk in newness of life; and that there is but one strong grip under Heaven or among men whereby that result may be obtained.

The enduring values, the eternal truths we would propagate among men are spiritual values. The things of earth are earthy and pass away with the passing days. Marble temples and all physical values moulder into dust and become but a memory. The things of the spirit are eternal and are the sheet anchor of our faith in these perilous hours. Although the truths we seek to teach are veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols, they should be so revealed to the initiate that even the least thoughtful will understand the fundamental concepts that we enjoin. If our initiates become imbued with the solid substance of our lessons, there is small likelihood that they will fall by the wayside along the journey, or that they will wander into forbidden paths. Can you believe that such a Mason will make political expediency his God; that such a Mason can traffic in the prejudices and ignorance of his fellow human beings; that such a Mason can foster and encourage racial ill will among the races of men?

I have a firm conviction that if we did a better job in our Symbolic Lodges we would have a larger percentage of the kind of Masons you and I know that we need. In our rush to get a lot of degrees, as if there were any merit in numbers, we lose sight of the basic fundamentals

so essential to a well ordered Masonic life. If our Masonic teaching doesn't carry over into life in a work-a-day world, then it isn't worth much in this world, nor the world to come.

We are assembled tonight in our capacity as Capitular Masons. Never lose sight of the fact however, that we are always Symbolic Lodge Masons. What of our own Capitular degrees?

In the Mark Master's degree, there is portrayed in symbol important lessons pertaining to man's relation to man. We offer a professed creed in that regard, but it, too, must carry over into everyday life. This troubled world needs to recognize anew that the products of one's toil are his own; that he has rights and obligations therewith that all men should respect, and that he himself should recognize. Good work, true work, square work, is entitled to just recompense, and no man has the right to claim as his own the products of another's toil. Every man must present work that will pass the Great Overseer's inspection before he is entitled to the rewards of a well spent life. We hear much of the fact that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and that an honest day's work is entitled to an honest day's pay. We need also to recognize that an honest day's pay deserves an honest day's work. The workman in any vineyard that gives less than his best in order to protect the less efficient or the indolent is robbing his employer just as truly as the employer who grinds his workmen into the dust is robbing them. Both violate the plain lessons of the Mark Master's degree.

Again in the Mark degree we are taught the ancient law that the Lord of the vineyard is at liberty to do with his own as he wishes so long as he keeps faith with his obligations and commitments. We have departed from that lesson in this modern world and set up for ourselves a god of the policy of "free things". To sustain the policy of something for nothing we take from one group the products of their honest labors and give them to those unwilling to pay the price of producing for themselves. I would to God that we might learn that taking from you and giving to me doesn't make anything "free". Nothing is free in this world except the gifts of the bountiful Heavenly Father — the air that we breathe — the rain that falls on the just and the unjust — the life giving rays from God's sun in yonder sky. These things are free. All other gifts so glibly referred to as "free" are the products of someone's toil.

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ever occur to you that security can be purchased at too great a cost. Do we forge the chains of our own slavery under the guise of giving security? Man's relation to man is revealed in broad outline in the symbolism of the Mark Master's Degree. We would do well to study this degree in the light of the present day social order.

I pass on to invite your attention to man's relation to authority that we seek to teach in the Past Master Degree. Some must rule and teach, others submit and obey. Only those who have succeeded in the severe school of discipline and become masters of themselves can supply suitable leadership for less fortunate ones than themselves. Each and all must remember that there is a higher, a nobler, a wiser, a greater Authority, to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. Self a subject although a king — self a servant but still a master — self a craftsman yet a ruler of the craft! The true Ruler whose scepter is justice; whose kingdom is in the hearts of men; whose throne is builded in love is the model every ruler of earth should seek to imitate.

Men must respect authority in any well ordered society. Authority must be worthy of respect. The symbolism of both concepts is taught in the Past Master Degree.

With a clear understanding of man's relation to authority the initiate arrives at the completed Temple to learn man's proper relation to observance, to ceremony, as a Most Excellent Master. The labor is done. The principal arch of the temple is completed. The stone rejected by the builders is in its proper place. God is in His Heaven and all is right with the world. Is it any wonder that Most Excellent Masters can explain in exultant hearts — "For He is good, for His mercy endureth forever"! When men see man's proper relationship to man, to authority, to observance, the Shekinah shines in their hearts, and they are ready to penetrate the veils, equipped with the Signet of Truth, and learn as Royal Arch Masons man's relation to God.

How often have we heard that primal declaration: "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light; and there was light." This august declaration antedates time and eternity. "In the beginning God" — here the word translated "God" is "Elohim" — the creative manifestation of the Infinite to the objects of His

creation. Elohim (God) walked and talked with His son in the garden. In all the inspired record given for our guidance in the early chapters of the "Great Light" we continually find the revelation of the creative God — Elohim — calling order out of chaos; following the fleeting darkness from the eastern sky to the farthest western horizon and crowning His handiwork with man into whose nostrils he breathed the breath of life and man became a living soul, endowed with privileges and prerogatives not even vouchsafed to the angels.

But there came the day when man valued lightly his high estate and through transgression was separated from his intimate walk with his Creator.

In the Council of Infinite Wisdom, the choicest family of earth was called in Ur of the Chaldees to get up and get out into a land that they did not know, nor did their fathers before them know, and as a reward for their obedience to the Heavenly vision certain covenants were vouchsafed to them. These covenants I do not here recount, but they were recounted to Abram and his name was changed to Abraham. Because there was no higher authority by which the Heavenly Father could swear, He declared "By myself have I sworn" to keep and fulfill these covenants. But it was not "Elohim" speaking — it was El Shaddai — translated God Almighty here speaking, a revelation of a second attribute of the Infinite — the covenant-keeping manifestation of the Eternal God!

In due time there came a son of promise to Abraham's household in the person of Isaac and the Covenant-Keeping God — El Shaddai — recounted to him, when he had reached manhood's estate, the self same covenants that had been given to Abraham long before. Continue if you please the wondrous story. It has vital significance to Royal Arch Masons.

To Isaac's home came twin sons, but in due time one of them became the child of promise. When he was a man, he went as stiff necked old Jacob, down to Bethel. There he struggled all night with the angel, but at dawn he clung to the angel and declared he would not let him go until he blessed him. Jacob limped away with a new name — Israel — A Prince with God, who had listened to the self same covenants vouchsafed to Abraham and his seed in the distant long ago.

To Israel's household came 12 sons, one of whom was sold into slavery by his jealous elder brothers. In the providence of the covenant keeping God — El Shaddai —

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this was to be the means of succor for the distressed household of Israel, when the days of famine came and seventy souls went down into Egypt to reunite the covenant family of Israel and to secure the necessities of life. There they were to remain four hundred years, to grow into a people two million strong.

The Covenant Keeping God — El Shaddai — continued to watch over them and one day appeared to Moses as he kept the flocks of Jethro in the back side of the desert. The appearance was in the burning bush so strikingly portrayed in the Royal Arch degree. To Moses was given a commission from on high to lead this people out. He obeyed the divine instructions and for forty years led them in their wilderness journey until they came one day to Sinai's lonely mount. Moses was called up into the mountain and there, midst the lightning and mighty thunder, received the tablets of stone on which was graven the law — the basic fundamental law — that governs this fair land in this good hour.

But listen to me!!! It was not Elohim (God) nor El Shaddai (God Almighty) speaking that day. It was a third revelation of the Infinite to the children of His creation. Heretofore we have seen the Heavenly Father in His creative capacity; then in His Covenant-Keeping capacity. Here we see Him as Royal Arch Masons are taught to see Him — in His Royal, His Kingly, capacity — the Lord of Lords and King of Kings — The Jehovah God.

My Companions, the rubbish of the old temple is cleared away. In its stead a new temple is erected. Every stone is in its place. The Holy of Holies is fully equipped. The High Priest is there — I know — because I can hear the ringing of the bells on His garments. The symbolic story is entrusted to your keeping. If in your heart of hearts recognize the sovereignty of the Jehovah God and crown Him Lord of Lords and King of Kings, then you will have come into man's proper relationship and you have full title to the designation — EXALTED. That is the goal of the individual Royal Arch Mason.

So much for the chief goal of the most important unit in Royal Arch Masonry, namely, the individual Royal Arch Mason. May we look briefly at the group or mass of Royal Arch Masons that constitute the organizational structure and think of how that organizational structure can best aid the individual Royal Arch Mason to attain his goal, and best promote EXALTATION among men of good will in the ends of the earth?

I think the structure already exists. It only remains to utilize it. The structure consists of three individual constituent parts. These parts are: First, the individual constituent Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, wheresoever located and regardless of what jurisdiction may hold away. Second, the individual Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons, in its capacity in the jurisdiction it serves. Third, the General Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons.

These three groupings provide a structural organization not matched in potential power for good anywhere else in this troubled world. Their relationships are in no case that of sovereign and subject, but rather of body and member. Whatsoever hurts the humblest Royal Arch Mason in the remotest Chapter on earth hurts Royal Arch Masonry. Whatsoever helps the least of these to attain the richness that goes with exaltation in its fullest sense helps Royal Arch Masonry, and, what is more, promotes the ends of brotherhood in the ends of the earth. Democratic in spirit, in organization and in administration, this structure magnifies the individual and makes him of infinite worth in the sight of God and man. When correctly understood it is my considered judgment that there is no conflict of interest, nor over-lapping in fields of service.

The individual constituent Chapter, with officers and membership properly trained and interested, performs a job that no other group of Masons can perform. They take the individual Master Mason by the hand, so to speak, and lead him to the pinnacle we call exaltation that I have tried to picture this night. No Grand Chapter or General Grand Chapter can perform that service.

The individual Grand Chapter gives strength, encouragement, supervision, discipline when needed, instruction, and more to individual Chapters. It draws on its representative membership for leadership in every phase of Chapter activity. It is the clearing house, the pooling of resources, material and spiritual, to provide the best in guidance, to the end that the local Chapter may do the most for the individual Royal Arch Mason.

You and I, as members of the great Royal Arch family, are reasonably well acquainted with the local Chapter and the Grand Chapter. Since the General Grand Chapter is more remote and not so intimately connected with our Capitular life, we may not know as much about it as we should. I pass on in these remaining moments to touch some highlights of this member of the Royal Arch family,

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The General Grand Chapter is the largest Masonic group on earth under one head. It can attain ends and accomplish results that no Grand Chapter can hope to attain alone. Take a look at a few of these.

We publish **The Royal Arch Mason**, a magazine to promote the interests of Ancient Craft Masonry. More than 100,000 Masons now get this publication four times a year. The day is not too far distant when 200,000 Masons will be getting "more light" from its inspiring pages. Need I remind you that each of us one day most solemnly declared, "That wheresoever God may cast my lot there will I be found dispensing true Masonic light and knowledge to my lesser informed brethren". No single agency in all of freemasonry can or is more adequately discharging that responsibility than the General Grand Chapter is in the Royal Arch Magazine.

In the southern end of this continent and in the entire continent further south in this hemisphere the mother tongue is the Spanish language. The General Grand Chapter has translated the entire Chapter Ritual, all four degrees, into the Spanish language and made it available to our Spanish speaking Companions wheresoever dispersed. Our Chapters in the Latin countries are growing in numbers, in interest and in influence as a result of this worthwhile contribution. No individual Chapter or Grand Chapter could ever have attained such an end.

Our Ritual is now being translated into the German language so that our Companions who use that language as their mother tongue may likewise come to know and understand the lessons we seek to teach.

Who can catch a vision of the potential power for good that these contributions may exercise in a war torn world? Could any Grand Chapter alone ever make such a contribution?

I sat in a great auditorium one day with 1500 Royal Arch Masons and listened to one of our Companions from Canada describe the 3000 mile unguarded border between his country and ours; how it ought to excite the admiration of the world; how it is an example that all the nations of earth could emulate; how men of good will in mutual respect and confidence can adjudicate any differences across the council table in the spirit of the lowly Nazarene, each recognizing that the Jehovah God holds in His hands

the final destiny of men and Nations. Then the speaker declared that the red and the white and the blue of his flag, and our flag, and the flag of our Companions to the south of us could mingle to form a flag that would wave over this continent as a symbol of brotherly love and Companionship—the flag of a United Freemasonry. At that moment the Union Jack, the Stars and Stripes and the Tricolor of Mexico, from a common standard fluttered to the breeze, their folds intermingling to give a symbolism that brought tears to that great throng and would have warmed a heart of stone. Can you envision the day when brotherhood may encompass the earth under the banner of the Royal Craft? It isn't too much to hope for, yea, it isn't too much to pray for.

In far away Alaska, Royal Arch Masonry has been firmly planted by the General Grand Chapter and there is a Grand Chapter in that jurisdiction. In the Philippines, a Grand Chapter, in China; in Chile; in Nicaragua; in Cuba; in the Canal Zone, Royal Arch Masonry has outposts that teach the lessons I have tried to convey to you earlier this night, and along with them all the other lessons of our Royal Art.

I would to God that every Royal Arch Mason of this continent could catch the vision, could grasp the potential power for good in this troubled world; that a united Capitular Masonry could foster and promote. If they did, surely the immortal dream of the inspired writer that one day swords would be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks and the nations of earth would make war no more would be realized.

Need I remind you that when our own country was torn by fratricidal strife—when your forbears were arrayed on the one side in a uniform of blue; and my forbears were arrayed on the other side in a uniform of gray—each shedding red blood for what he conceived to be right; that when the issues were decided on crimson battlefields, one of the first organizations to set about healing the wounds was none other than the General Grand Chapter. In 1865, on September 7th, a little more than four months after the echoes of the guns of Appomatox had died on Virginia's hills, the General Grand Chapter met in Columbus, Ohio, and again in 1868, three years later in St. Louis, Missouri, once again a united Freemasonry.

The wounds healed long ago. The scars remain to remind us that we owe a lasting debt of gratitude to the men of all ages who so governed their lives as to reveal

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to a callous world that they believed in the justice and mercy of the Jehovah God and were willing to crown Him Lord of Lords and King of Kings; to accept His fatherhood as the only means known under Heaven whereby Brotherhood could be extended to the ends of the earth. Under God I pray that the Royal Arch Masons of earth may shortly have the courage, the attitude of mind and heart to minimize the things that divide and hinder and hurt, and to magnify the things that unite and heal and strengthen, to the end that Royal Arch Masonry may keep the rendezvous it has with destiny. May the exaltation of each of you be made complete in the Celestial Chapter where the High Priest of Heaven and Earth forever rules, forever reigns!

Thanks for your fine attention.