

## **The Working Tools Of A Mason**

(An abridged version of the paper that follows was presented  
in Lodge by Bro. John Kent on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011)

Galileo Galilei, an Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer and philosopher who played a major role in the scientific revolution, wrote simply that, "Mathematics is the language with which God has written the universe."

We can see by innumerable creation stories that the earth and the universe were taken from the flesh of the Great Architect. As Freemasons, we say that the Universe is a temple to the deity whom we serve. By being a part of the one God or pantheon of deities, everything we touch is then described as the manifestation of God. It matters not how you define that God, whether it is Gaia, Allah, or Bob the Builder.

How then do we define that manifestation? How do we define what is or isn't? We can only define the universe by our senses. We live in a world of four dimensions, which is a mathematical construct. Thus I would argue that to define the world, we need to use mathematics.

What is mathematics? By definition, it is the study of the measurement, properties, and relationships of quantities and sets, using numbers and symbols. Geometry, a concept we describe as synonymous with masonry, is one of the oldest mathematical sciences with complex systems that use logical statements of universal truths to derive volumes of massive areas. Euclidean geometry has led to the ability to map the stars and planets in the heavens.

A universal truth is a statement that has a definitive logical answer whether you come from Canada, China or a planet halfway across the galaxy. For example, one of these truths gives us the finite Masonic concept of equality. Two plus three equals five is true, while two plus three equals four is false. We are given our first ideal of equality and falsehood. Whether we use the titles two, three, four, or five is irrelevant as the numbers themselves do not depend on the system or the symbol we assign to them. We could use a base counting systems of ten as we do with our fingers, five as the Romans once did or sixteen like the computer hexadecimal system. In any case, the logic of equality is universal.

Other universal truths include the speed of light in a vacuum, and that there are certain numbers called prime numbers that are only divisibly by themselves and one. At approximately 3.14159 and goes on indefinitely never repeating, Pi represents the ratio of the circle's area as the square of its radius or the ratio of the circle's circumference to its diameter. Every circle, every time. Furthermore, if you were to take Pi on its own, you could argue that it is divine as to truly comprehend the digit you have to understand the concept of infinity. The decimal places go on never repeating and never ending. How else can you describe God except infinite? For both, while we may continue to gain more understanding, the best we can do is attest to them with our imagination and faith alone. Some would argue that triangles are even more interesting with far more complex rules; rules that once again are defined by mathematics. Sign, cosign, hypotenuse, etc. etc.

The learned among us can attest to the fact that the major religious texts of the world are filled with curious uses of numbers and mathematics.

*"Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, a **hundred and fifty and three**: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken." (John 21:11)*

153 is an interesting number. Here are some reasons:

1.  $153 = 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9 + 10 + 11 + 12 + 13 + 14 + 15 + 16 + 17$
2.  $153 = 1^3 + 5^3 + 3^3$  This is called an Armstrong number or a plus perfect number ... the digits are raised to the power of three because there are 3 digits. An Armstrong number is a number such that the sum of its digits raised to the third power is equal to the number itself. For example, 371 is an Armstrong number, since  $3^{**}3 + 7^{**}3 + 1^{**}3 = 371$ .
3.  $153 = 1! + 2! + 3! + 4! + 5!$  (i.e.,  $1 + (1 \times 2) + (1 \times 2 \times 3) + (1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4) + (1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 5)$ )  
1 factorial plus 2 factorial plus 3 factorial, plus 4 factorial plus 5 factorial.

The last reason however is unique:

4. 153 lies dormant in every third number. Take any multiple of three, sum the cubes of its digits, take the result, sum the cubes of its digits, take the results, etc. Believe me. You eventually get 153. Take 12, for example.  
 $1^3 + 2^3 = 9$ .  
 $9^3 = 729$ .  
 $7^3 + 2^3 + 9^3 = 1080$ .  
 $1^3 + 0^3 + 8^3 + 0^3 = 513$ .  
 Finally,  $5^3 + 1^3 + 3^3 = \mathbf{153}$ .

Now as another example:

*In Genesis 32:14, Jacob gives Esau **220** goats ("two hundred she goats and twenty he goats") as a gesture of friendship.*

The Pythagoreans identified 220 as a "friendly" number. What made it friendly? Well, 220, unlike most numbers, had a close friend, 284. Namely, each are equal to the sum of the proper divisors of the other. Proper divisors are all the numbers that divide evenly into a number, including 1 but excluding the number itself. The proper divisors of 220 are 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11, 20, 22, 44, 55, and 110. Add all those numbers and you'll get 284. Likewise, the proper divisors of 284 are 1, 2, 4, 71, and 142 and they sum to 220.

How about the Quran? There are many treatises on the concept of math and numbers and the Quran, but let me highlight a few. We all know that the Quran was written a very long time ago. In that book the word for sea is repeated 32 times and the word for land is repeated 13 times. Wow, that's wonderful, but here is where it does get a little odd. If you add the two numbers  $13 + 32$  it equals 45. Now the ratio of the two becomes, Land:  $13/45 = 29\%$  and Sea:  $32/45 = 71\%$ . For those who may not know, the actual ratio of land and sea on earth are in fact, 29% and 71%.

Without delving too far, there are entire societies devoted to the concept that 19 is the signature of God as seen through Quran. Dr Rashad Khalifa, a Muslim scholar living in the United States wrote in "The Perpetual Miracle of Muhammad," that in verse Sura 74:30 reads, "Over it are nineteen." He then goes on to show how everything in the Quran can be divided by nineteen, be them the number of times a word is repeated, or adding the value of different verses or even adding all of the numbers mentioned in the Quran in total. In fact, so powerful was his argument that he was eventually assassinated for it.

Interesting for sure, but possibly only a quirk in the writing. That said, the bible is filled with many direct references to basic mathematics and logical construction. One could; however, say "great, but who cares?" I would counter with the argument that we are given a glimpse of God's plan in these books. Something the Pythagoreans fundamentally agreed with as they delved into the esoteric consequences of mathematics. And because Freemasonry is purported to share many precepts with the Pythagoreans, both in form, ie, the secretive nature of the brotherhood in using allegory and symbolism, but also in the use of mathematics, we must in mutual respect at least nod our heads in respect to our ancient brethren, even if we do not share their fundamental beliefs.

How else, but for math, could we calculate the energy of smashing atoms together or how much an electron or proton weighs? Could we drive without a concept of speed? Even music, what many describe as the most beautiful art, can be broken down into mathematical derivatives. A computer, given a set of rules, can create music indistinguishable from the greats. Ultimately, math is paving the way to greater understanding of the universe and by extension God.

Now, to argue this fact, we have to acknowledge the argument that mathematics isn't the voice of the Great Architect. The non scientifically inclined could say that the world simply exists and that to find proof in what we can touch and measure is by its very nature, viewed through human eyes; that we have defined the rules as they are. To go a step further, many of these people would argue that proof of the Great Architect should be taken from those things that we cannot measure; miracles of crying statues, healing hands etc. etc. First I point out that we still attempt to define every miracle by our understanding of the universe; an understanding couched in the rules defined by mathematics. I would then counter their argument with this one question. Who, except the Great Architect, can break the rules that define our very existence? Then, for those who would argue that Humanity continues to break those rules, I counter with the realization that humanity isn't breaking the rules, only redefining our understanding of those rules. Daily, scientists test the bounds of our understanding of the universe. They come up with their own "miracles" that would years ago be considered magic and heresy.

So, if we accept the argument that God's word is reflected in mathematics and its several schools such as logic and geometry, then we necessarily need tools to interpret that language. I would argue that at one time, Freemasons understood this concept and that the working tools and the allegorical meaning we apply to them is that translation.

The working tools are laid out in order of complexity across the degrees. The working tools of the entered apprentice are designed for simple exertion; those of the fellow craft are slightly more complex as they require not only that exertion, but genuine mental use; while those of the master reflect the complexity of the degree with heavy calculations and mental use.

The working tools of the entered apprentice are the twenty four inch gauge, the common gavel, and the chisel.

The operative twenty four inch gauge is used for basic measurement. When you apply the Masonic spiritual context, we see it as the basic measurement of God's language. That is why we as speculative masons interpret the gauge as the separation of the day into equal parts; labour, rest and refreshment and prayer.

The work that speculative masons accomplish is not just that of building a stone structure, but the betterment of ourselves. Consequently, the measurement that we are taking is ourselves. The work at hand isn't something that can't be accomplished overnight and like any artist can attest, you can work your entire life attempting to create a work of art and always have another flaw to correct.

Another way to look at this is that time is the measurement of life. Our very existence is measured by our memories or the things we have done. When we say something was a waste of time, we realize that there is a portion of a day that we cannot gain back. Fear of our ultimate death isn't necessarily that of the unknown, but that we have no more time in this life.

Consequently, we cannot waste days by idly watching them transpire. Arguably, when we say the work that speculative masons do is for a more noble cause, it cannot be construed as anything less. What we do is try to achieve the best possible use of our time. Unlike the operative mason who shapes the rough ashlar into the perfect, we cannot start anew. We do not have the liberty to choose another ashlar.

*The ruined minute is forever away; the crooked hour can never be made straight. The day unfit for the Building Not Made With Hands can never be set in the Eternal Wall, nor can the workman find in any quarry a new day to mould. - Unknown*

Life is a gift and though we may not have the same length allotted to us, everyone's is finite. Therefore to lose one minute of the day would be waste the greatest gift we have been given. It follows then that wasting time is sin against the Great Architect so that the mason's true goal isn't necessarily to allot the day into equal parts, but that by using every portion of the day to its fullest is to embrace the Great Architect in every minute and every act that we do.

We only have to look to Islam to see how this plays out in one of the largest religions of the world. The Quran considers idleness - the squandering of time in pursuit of unproductive and non-beneficial work - as lack of faith. Hard work is considered a virtue, arguably one of the four cardinal virtues - prudence which by definition is to judge between virtuous and vicious actions, not only in a general sense, but with regard to appropriate actions at a given time and place. The Quran indicates that those who work hard are more likely to get ahead in life. Conversely, not working hard is as failure in life. In brief, the Islamic work ethic argues that life without work has no meaning.

On a physiological level we see more to this truth. As the body is the temple, our mind is in a way the tool we have to creating our temple. Consequently as we age, it has been shown that there is a decline in our mental acuity, be it memory or logic. There was a time when scientists believed that this

was a one way path and that we couldn't resist this decline. I expect that most of us know someone who has fallen to the decay of these degenerative afflictions.

Dr. Jon Ratey of Harvard Medical School however, says that if we stop being sedentary and become active "enough to sweat and breathe a little harder" three to four times a week for forty minutes then we can stave off this decline. While these days we call this exercise, the concept was foreign to the operative masons because the physical labour they partook in precluded the need. Consequently, as the operative mason aged, they continued to work and managed to keep hold of their abilities to read the language of God.

Dr. Art Kramer of the Beckman Institute at the University of Illinois has shown that this "exercise" can increase the cognitive function of sedentary older adults by as much as 15 to 20%. Thus, work continues to give us the tools to achieving our spiritual goals by allowing us to hold dear that beautiful gift of time.

Our ancient brethren saw this sentiment again reflected in the second working tool of the entered apprentice; the common gavel. The gavel, which is in the shape of a gable or gavel end of a house, comes from the German gipfel which means, a summit top or peak. Unlike those we see in the lodge, the stonemason's gavel is actually designed with a cutting edge on one end that is used to break off the corners of stone.

Through history we have seen many hammers. One of the most notable is that of the Norse God Thor; Mjollnir. Though Thor used his hammer to smash through the Norse pantheon, most often against his enemies the Giants, it also had the ability to bless things like the goats they ate and the funeral ship that carried the God Balder's body out to sea. It had great spiritual value to the Norse and on the day of Ragnarok, Thor will use the hammer to kill his greatest enemy Jormungand, the Midgard Serpent, and in so doing will die from the serpent's poison. The hammer however will be inherited by his children.

The gavel is considered a tool of both destruction and construction. Although it is similar in form, the gavel is not a sledgehammer and as such, it isn't designed to smack the ashlar once or twice to crack it in twain, but to slowly chip away and mould into the perfect ashlar. As we say, skill without exertion is of little avail.

To delve further, one could muse that the lesson we gain from this isn't just that we, like the people of Islam, need to continue to work to enjoy the Great Architect's presence, but that we need to work at it every day. You aren't a mason because you were initiated into the order. You are a mason with every breath you take. You can't sit by idly when action is needed.

As the 24 inch gauge blends with the gavel, so too does the gavel blend with the chisel. It too is a tool of deconstruction and construction. It is said to be of exquisite temper and strength.

The chisel has been morphed over the years into many objects. Its cutting edge is akin to the blade on a knife and consequently the sword which has been used in terrible misdeeds. It is however also almost the same instrument that carpenters use to perfect wooden furniture.

Spiritually, we see the chisel as the manifestation of perseverance and education. You won't accomplish anything with the stone by hitting it once. You must continue to shave small pieces from your figurative ashlar in your search for perfection. How many of you learned by repetition in school? Even now we learn the work for one of our degrees by reading and reciting the words over and over. So too does our behaviour correct when we apply our metaphysical chisel. We cut off the tethers of life; our poor behaviours, our inappropriate language, habits, and even our impure thoughts.

With this in mind then with repeated action, we see that Islam recognizes the same concepts as the devout stop what they are doing five times a day to pray in the direction of Mecca. So too do our Christian's who offer the Lord's Prayer at night. Or Tibetan Buddhists who pray by repeating certain sounds called Mantras such as the words "Om mani padme hum" which mean "the truth at the heart of teaching or praise to the jewel in the lotus." Buddhists argue that even if you do not understand the meaning of the words, the mere fact that you are repeating them is enough to invoke their power. As such they are repeated by ordinary Buddhists as they go about their daily lives and the words are inscribed on prayer wheels or written on banners.

So then our rude matter and rude thoughts are corrected by the repetition and learning that we continue to strive for.

*The mind like the diamond in its original state is unpolished, but by grinding away the external coat we are enabled to discover the latent beauty of the stone.* W.Bro. Kent Henderson - MASONIC EDUCATION COURSE The Working Tools

Now as we finish the first degree and we sit atop our white horse looking down at those who haven't been initiated and as a consequence walk the world bereft of our teachings, devoid of the truth, we are given our next challenge. The working tools of the second degree are a reminder to us that there is no time to worry about how we may be more spiritually advanced than our neighbour. It is the true test here of a mason to reflect on how alike we are.

The importance of the working tools of the second degree cannot be understated. At one time, the fellowcraft degree was the highest degree that a mason could attain. There were no 33<sup>rd</sup> degree masons. Those working tools are paramount to erecting the operative building.

All of the tools in the second are for measurement and testing and then by extension correcting. First we measure the rectangular corners of buildings and then the levels and uprights. We then use those adjustments to correct the imperfections in the building.

The square is a measurement of angles. To accomplish its goal the square's creator had to understand the concepts of mathematics. They had to use the calculations of a right angle to prove the square was actually perfect.

Now as we shift from the operative to the speculative, the square shows us many things about ourselves. It points out once again that we are the rough ashlar and that it takes more work to ensure that we are made perfect. We constantly need to correct our path and choose the right conduct through the highest morality, truthfulness, and honesty because only then will be brought closer to God. Interestingly if you look closer at the concept of mathematics, we don't have to stray too far from the

operative to see this. So true has this concept become that we see it lending to colloquial language such as deals that are “fair and square.” And so important is this idea that the square has been adopted as one of the three great lights, the jewel that the master wears around his neck.

The level is used to ensure a building is erected level. With multiple stories, known as levels themselves, we must ensure that everything is parallel so that on one side of a building we have the same height to the ceiling as another. It would be quite the calamity to force the tallest of our brethren to all sit at the far end of a lodge because it wasn't built level. At the extreme it also ensures the floor is easily covered. Most of us have either been on a plane or watched a show with the stewardess chasing the drink cart because the plane was no longer level as it ascended.

When we look at the speculative action for the level, we are taught that we come from the same place, share in the same goal, and will eventually be judged by the same immutable law.

Huston Smith wrote in *The World's Religions*, “It is possible to climb life's mountains from any side, but when the top is reached the trails converge”.

There is no doubt that the world's religions have a vast difference. In fact, many of them are exclusionary. Stephen Prothero, a professor of religion at Boston University wrote, *The Great Christian Question is “What must I do to be saved?” The great Buddhist question is, “How can I eliminate Suffering?” The great Confucian question is, “What can we do to create social order?” Hindus inquire about the cycle of life, death, and rebirth; Taoists, about health long life and immortality.*

Ultimately however as we learn in the second degree working tools, that although we individually strive to answer these questions in life, when our time comes and we stand before the Great Architect, in whatever form you believe this being to take, we will all be the same. Unlike the ancient's, we realize we cannot take our physical world with us; only the actions that the Great Architect has seen us do in life. So whether you come from a family of fortune or one which is destitute; whether you have power, happiness, one friend or a million, we will all stand naked before the Great Architect, our earthly possessions long since crumbled to dust. As it says in Genesis 3:19

*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till though return unto the ground; for out of it wast though taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. Ie Ashe to ashes, dust to dust.*

As masons, we embody this tenet while in lodge. Whenever a visitor joins us in lodge, the master request grandhonours before meeting them on the level. He then comes down to prove that although he is the master of his lodge, he does not carry himself above another, but embraces him as an equal.

The operative plumb rule can actually be constructed by fashioning the level to the square. It is used to set uprights, or pillars so they stay perfectly perpendicular or upright.

Now, if you will permit me, the plumb is a bob of lead on the end of a cord. The Greeks named it Molubdus which the Romans renamed it PLUMBUM. The Gauls eventually adopted the tool, and their successors, the Normans, shortened the word to PLOMB. The Britons added the letter "a" to coin a new word: APLOMB, meaning not easily upset -- not off center and then later revised the spelling to

plumb. Now, the French began to call the lead bob a ball. The French word BOULE means a ball of lead which was the first form of bullets. The Latins then modified the word to BULLA. They used very small bullas which they compressed into a thin wafer, utilizing it as a legal seal for documents. Thus was born the Papal BULL. And many of you know well what the Papal Bull has done for Masonry.

By passing the test of the plumb, we are assured that a building has the utmost integrity. Consequently, as we test ourselves with this speculative tool to ensure that we have that same integrity and moral rectitude, we learn not to be an enthusiast, a persecutor, slanderer or a reviler of religion, bending neither towards avarice, injustice, malice or the envy and contempt of our fellow creatures, etc., etc. Can there be a more important passage in any faith or following? Be good. Don't hurt others.

The plumb rule is described akin to Jacob's ladder as a stairway to heaven. As you climb a ladder you must first release the rungs that are beneath you. You ascend by letting go of your earthly connections; you defy gravity by letting go of physical and expounding on the spiritual.

What then should we do, but to accept that the things that come at us in life? If in the end we will all be on the same level, then this life is only a vector. We must accept the difficulties that life throws at us without falling to the demands of our passions. As Mason's how can we truly accept another mason if not for this lecture? We sit here, unable to have a discussion on religion for the simple reason of fulfilling this doctrine. We are not our religions and we cannot persecute others for theirs. Whether we share their concepts of faith is irrelevant to the discussion because having the discussion alone has been the cause of so much strife in the world.

In generations past, this is where the speculative mason would end his journey. He would be a man well on his way to becoming a better person and skilled craftsman. He would be treating everyone with absolute respect regardless of whether he shared his belief structure, or if they had personal misgivings outside of lodge.

Then however the degree of a master mason was created. As the entered apprentice is concerned with a concept of self measurement, and the fellowcraft is concerned with the prospect of adjusting one's self with those measurements in hand, the master mason reaches out and crafts a plan for the work to be done, not just by themselves, but by others within their circle of influence.

Interestingly, the various jurisdictions have different working tools for the third degree. With this in mind, I must then accept that there are other figurative paths that a mason can follow. We could explore the way masonry is spread by the trowel, however in Ontario, we adhere to the skerrit, the pencil, and the compasses.

The skerrit, known as the means by which we set our foundation could actually be taught to the entered apprentice, for while the younger members may not be designing full buildings at the start of their career, they would benefit from the realization that a structure intended to climb to the heavens will not reach towards anything if it is not built true from its base.

Consequently, our path will not lead us towards enlightenment unless it is straight and true or as the colloquial term says, on a path that is “Straight and narrow”. Regardless of what colour our volume of the sacred law is, we must ensure that we do not wander from the goal of perfection that we have set.

At one time, everything was learned without the pencil. We learned our life’s lessons through word of mouth. But then, man showed his affinity to the written word. We see it from the hieroglyphics in Egypt to the codification of law in any faith to the allegorical teachings that we can learn from pulp fiction. The pencil is an instrument of teaching. One, many people in this room might attest to in the form of chalk. How many of you remember the teacher standing at the head of a classroom, chalk in hand? It is as recognizable as a symbol of learning as the square and compasses are to masonry. Now, while the pencil is for writing, we as humans can write down the truth or untruth which has caused much strife in the world. The act of writing untruth has its own legal liable ramifications. The great architect however only sees what is. The pencil teaches us that on the day that we stand in front of the great architect, we will be looked upon through the lens of time. Every deed that we have done, for good or ill will be laid out before us such that we will have to explain ourselves.

The compasses, yet another very important tool which masons have adopted as one of our symbols, is one of measurement. By their composition, astrologists have described the compasses as the symbol of the body of the luminary (sun and the moon, both being the rulers over the other planets). The circular pivot representing the body of the luminary, and the diverging legs his rays.

The operative mason uses the compasses to prove the calculations of the square, but also for drafting, mathematics and navigation. Ancient mariners used the compasses for the measurement of distances on maps. They were the primary tool used for navigation for many years until the inception of the magnetic compass was founded in China. It must be noted that those same mariners used the heavens as a measurement of their passage across the oceans. Operative masons use the compasses in the same manner as the mariners to ensure the draft is correct in dimensions and proportions. The compasses are laid to the draft and then set against the gauge to prove the dimensions.

Because we have already described the 24 inch gauge as the basic tool to understanding the language of God, we see that the Compasses, in defining limits and proportions, teach us the limits of good and evil as laid down by the Great Architect. From this we come to the realization that with the understanding of those limits we will either be punished or rewarded for adhering to them.

The compasses do however indicate another concept. For while they are used in conjunction with the gauge or the square, the compasses are fundamentally used by the operative mason to create circles. Those circles have made their way into everyday humanity in the form of many concepts, the wheel being one of the most important. Consequently, our circle of influence as a master mason grows as we begin to use the compasses in a much wider conceptual manner.

Through the operative and speculative use of the working tools of all the Masonic degrees, we take a step closer to the divine. We are given a glimpse of the special by learning how to interpret God’s language. That said, we would hope that the lectures on the working tools would be pondered by the newly initiated masons of the various degrees. We would hope that they take them as the life lessons that the operative masons learned without realizing it.

I would argue however, that the world today has seen a decline in moral rectitude and we as masons have been a part of this decline. The lessons that are derived from the working tools are not being employed and in fact are falling on deaf ears.

To test this I would ask a simple question. There is an old lady standing at a cross walk holding a dozen bags. Her granddaughter stands across the street waiting patiently. Now, as masons I won't ask you if you help her because I know you are all of moral character and that you would do it. The question I pose to you is why you did it? What was your reason for helping the old lady across?

Many would say, I helped her for my karma. Even our lectures would point out that we would do to someone as we would wish they would do to us. Unfortunately, this whole concept is in contravention of the working tools. We are taught to give up all selfish propensity, which might tend to injure others. I must then apologize for the trick question. With this in mind, the answer to my question should be because. We help the old lady across the street because she needed it. It was the right thing to do. The need was the old lady's and not our own.

This sentiment is the fundamental schism that the world has experienced.

Let us start with the entered apprentice. The 24 inch gauge, the common gavel, and the chisel. Granted, as our lives become more complex, we find it more difficult to apportion them properly. All things being equal, however, the primary difference between our lives and those of old can be described by a concept of size. Essentially, for all of the changes in the world, things are still the same; you'll notice the lesson of the level here.

My point is that as it was last year, ten years or even a hundred years ago, there are more demands on our time and it is still our responsibility to apportion that time. Unfortunately, the world is moving away from both spirituality and morality.

The lesson of not wasting our days hasn't been learned. I will be the first to step forward and admit there are minutes, hours, and days in which I look back and say, "What happened? What did I accomplish?" And so I realize that my day was wasted. I am a day closer to the end and I cannot retract the time lost. This is no game that I can reset, a book I can reread. The astute person would say that as long as you learned something it wasn't wasted, but then there is a high likelihood that that astute person would already know that lesson enough so those days wouldn't get wasted in the first place.

Let us now ask about the gavel and the chisel. Repeated work? How many projects go unfinished these days? Or better yet? How many people practice their faith and the concept of repetition? To return to my question regarding the old lady, does it happen every time? Do you help every lady every time? Granted there comes a point when you could spend your entire day helping those old ladies, but then how many times do you drive by an accident and assume the police have already been called, or avert your eyes to the homeless in hopes that they don't see us. Is this not the same? Are we not failing to adhere to the rules of charity, morality, and integrity? We can't donate once a year and assume that our duty is performed.

So what then of the square, the level and the plum rule? We have stepped away from God by turning too far inward. No longer do we walk the straight and narrow, or live on the level. Even our

dealings with one another aren't fair and square as the people of the world have secret meetings and try to find a leg up. The concept of social and corporate espionage wouldn't even exist if the world were to adhere to the lessons that the working tools offer.

Or better yet, how many television shows around the world are designed to elevate people towards their 15 minutes of fame. People scramble around on seemingly deserted islands to achieve that fame. But now we even have television shows and magazines about those people and their fame. That concept certainly didn't exist centuries ago. They wouldn't have been voting for their favourite "star." Singers and movie personalities wouldn't hold so much sway over the young. No, that is a mistake that we have made, that is power that we have given up; or as the well read would remember, a false IDOL.

What then of the tools for the third? The skerrit, the pencil and the compasses. In a strange sense, not only has the world forgotten the lesson of the pencil, but they have decided that not only will the great architect know, but so too will the world. Social networking is a reflection of what power we give to the pencil as everyone posts pictures of their drunken parties and questionable actions. Fascinating to point out, that the world is beginning to take notice and your actions in this life are having direct consequences either through employers or insurance lawsuits as organizations troll through the internet for proof of any wrongdoings.

In closing, I would offer a personal example. One time I was very angry. Yes I know it wasn't a very Masonic mindset, but in my defence, it was before I joined the fraternity. As I stood in the barn, I threw a glass coffee mug as hard as I could at the wall. I thought, let me destroy something and feel better. That cup managed to hit exactly so and it bounced perfectly off the wall and hit the concrete floor again and rolled back to my feet. There wasn't a chip or a crack in the cup. It was I would say a God moment.

The point of this is to say that there are times when God speaks to us in strange languages. Many times we cannot understand those languages, but what we can do is accept that we can become better people. If we had the tools to detect it, I must assume that my cup hit perfectly on the corner so the force was deflected away such that nothing was damaged. A mathematician could calculate the exact angles and force at which it hit. The spiritualist would simply accept that God was telling me that I shouldn't be so angry.

I attribute Masonry to much of my rude matter being corrected. Granted, I, like every other mason, was an ashlar before I came to the fraternity. I was already on the path, masonry gave it form. For me, however, I think back to this cup and to the lessons that I derive from the working tools so I can understand the language of God, both physically and spiritually.

And as each lecture attempts, I leave you with this; Strive for perfection and remember that as the compass can open infinitely, our work can never be truly finished until we stand before the great architect and look back to determine whether our conduct was square and we had upright intentions regardless of which straight and narrow path that we walked to enlightenment.

-Bro. John Kent (Presented in Templum Fidelis Lodge on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011)