

VICTORIA LODGE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
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"MASONIC RESEARCHES IN THE CELLULOID MEDIUM."

by

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In the Fellowcraft Degree we learn about the seven liberal arts and sciences which are grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. This degree also informs us we are at the midway of our Masonic education, and that the study of the liberal arts and sciences, which tends so effectively to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended for your consideration,

Brethren, tonight, under the subject of liberal arts I wish to share some of the researches which I have undertaken in the celluloid medium,- the movies. It appears that even in my relatively brief and superficial researches, I have indeed discovered that Masonry is alive and well in the film industry.

Even before I was introduced to Masonry I watched the movie, "The Man Who Would Be a King" when it came out in the mid-Sixties. At that time I watched it three times as I could not fully grasp the intricate dialogue and was thrilled with its brilliant colours and a fast plot;- two thugs who came to the East from England, decided to become Kings in Kafirstan, of which one gets saved due to a medallion, a square and compasses, which he wore around his neck, and then lives to tell the story.

Brethren while the movie shows the square and compasses extensively, not once does it mention anything about Masonry. So here I was watching the movie in the sixties three times, to all intents and purposes, in the dark..

Many years later, when I was introduced to Masonry at my first degree initiation, the word "let there be light" took a new meaning for me. Immediately I went and rented the movie, "The Man Who Would Be a King" because I now linked Masonry with this movie, from the square and the compasses.

The actors in this movie are none other than the famous Sean Connary and Michael Caine,- a delightful pair. The whole movie is sprinkled with Masonic allegory, - for right at the start it shows a scene with Rudyard Kipling, a reporter in a train, and when someone asked him where he was going he answered, "towards the west", which was true as per the movie script for he was making his way to Kafirstan which was situated west of where he was. It now gave me that added message which all Masons received when they saw the movie. Please do go and rent the movie to get the numerous Masonic messages in it.

Brethren, Rudyard Kipling, the English writer who wrote the book, "The Man Who Would Be a King", was a Master Mason, who was born in India, went to school in England and returned to India in 1880. He was initiated in Hope and Perseverance Lodge No. 782 in Lahore, India in 1886. A special dispensation was necessary as he was only 20 years and 6 months old at the time. When he took the degrees there were four holy books upon the altar representing the dominant religions in the area. Upon his raising he was immediately elected secretary and he prepared the minutes of that meeting himself.

Bro. Kipling wrote extensively and gave interesting names to his writings, and is particularly known by "The Soldiers Three.", published in 1888, and "The Light That Failed.", published in 1890. "The Jungle Book", written 1884-85 is now a famous Walt Disney block-buster cartoon which I am sure many of you have seen. Brother Rudyard Kipling was indeed one of our true craftsmen and went on to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1907.

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Having now whetted my appetite for Masonic movies I was always on the lookout for films with Masonic content. I then discovered another called "Secrets", which depicts a Mason who had hidden a condom in a box containing all his Masonic books and regalia, the contents of which were discovered by his teenage daughter. The story is for you to discover but is one of the few movies where three girls are shown to be reading extensively from the Masonic Work.

We have all heard of Brother Mozart and his wonderful music, especially the Magic Flute. One can see the life of this famous Brother depicted in the movie "Amadeus". A wonderful movie not only showing the mastery of Bro. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart but also full of Salieri's dialogue with God.

My thoughts even drifted to my earlier days when as a boy I used to watch Monty Python. Their famous clip, "The Ministry of Silly Walks." raises a few questions for me. Was this, besides being another Monty Python comedy clip, Masons sending messages to viewing Masons, - with their knees bare, heels slip-shod and walking as if ascending winding stairs, or approaching the altar in the prescribed manner.~ I will let you review it and be the judge.

But the research which is consuming me right now is with none other than our famous secret agent, - James Bond. As I eagerly shared my findings with senior Masons I was informed that Ian Flemming, the writer of the James Bond novels was a Mason and the story goes that in his will he mentioned that any actor playing James Bond had to be a Master Mason. Sure enough the information holds, as I am told, Roger Moore, Michael Caine, Timothy Dalton and Sean Connery are all Master Masons.

Brethren this offers food for thought. Was Bro. Flemming, when writing the James Bond books influenced by Masonry? Why did he choose the number 7 to depict James Bond? Was it because 7 or more make it perfect? And why did he add the two zeros in front of the 7. Was it so that he could get three digits to denote that three is perfect and, therefore, "God", the Grand Geometrician of the Universe?

Talking about the universe, I was recently watching the trilogy, - the Star Wars, - the movies of the nineties, which depicts nothing more than good fighting evil. Even these movies have subliminal Masonic messages for Masons. In the movie, "The Star Wars", Ob-One-Kenobi, the Jedi master who knew how to harness the powers of the universe and using that force is shown teaching young Luke Skywalker how to fight blindfolded and thereby using the force.

At the same time, Darth Vader, all dressed in black, the ex-Jedi master who succumbed to the evil powers is shown demanding some plans from the captured Princess Leah and threatening if she did not tell him where they were that he using the operation death-star, a powerful intergalactic laser, would blow up the planet Obirion with its millions of lives.

As Darth Vader fires the laser destroying the planet, the action cuts back to the space ship where Ob-One-Kenobi is teaching Luke Skywalker and is shown to stagger, and giving the "sign of grief" slumps into a seat. When asked by Luke if he was fine Ob-One-Yenobi says that he had just felt that millions of lives

had just been destroyed,- all crying out at once for help. So Brother Masons if you have not seen a Sign of Grief being given outside a Masonic Lodge, please go and see the Jedi Master exemplify one in the "Star Wars".

"King David" is another movie where there are many Masonic messages as well, especially how King David changed his ways and started believing in God. But to me, it is the final few minutes of the movie which I enjoyed the most, where a very young Solomon is shown at his father's death-bed being given the final words of wisdom. You can hear them for yourselves and see his father showing him the model of the "Temple of God".

Brethren I will talk about my researches on temples at another Educational night but I cannot miss

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the opportunity to speak very briefly about the famous "Temple of God". History informs us that "King Solomon's Temple" was built in 605 B.C. It was 105 feet in breadth and 150 feet long. Our current ritual says it took seven years and upwards to build,- well it took just over 7 years. This was fast, and to give you a comparison of how fast, St. Paul's in London, England took 35 years to build.

There is also a relationship between Freemasonry and the light Operas. For years everyone has enjoyed the light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, like the "Mikado", "H.M.S. Pinafore and the "Pirates of Penzance". Sir William S. Gilbert, one of the team, was raised in Lodge St. Macher No. 54 in Aberdeen, Scotland on July 23, 1871. Sir Arthur Sullivan, the other team member was also a Mason and in 1887 served as the grand organist of the Grand Lodge of England.

There is also a Masonic association with the National Anthems. John Stafford Smith,, a member of Royal Summerset House and Inverness Lodge No. 4 of London wrote the music which became the United States national anthem. Its original use is not known but at an early date it was used by an Irish Masonic Orphans' Home as its song. When Francis Scott Key utilized this music for the "Star Spangled Banner" it was a popular drinking song known as "To Anacreon in Heaven". Brother Thomas Arne composed "Rule Britannia" and was the arranger of the tune of the British National Anthem.

In summing up, I am now working on the John Wayne movies to see if he sent any Masonic messages through the celluloid medium. I have come to the conclusion that any Masonic Research will raise more question. than answers and that is where the fun begins.

I hope that tonight each one of you will see Masonry and its impact in different light, - a brighter light- which will let you use the five senses you have, --- Is this where the five hold a lodge comes from? Brother Masons, the five senses you have; hearing, smelling, feeling, tasting and seeing,- the perfect lodge within each and every one of you,- where you are indeed the Worshipful Master.

So Worshipful Masters, use the five senses - hearing, smelling, :feeling, tasting and seeing in your own lodge within you and begin your Masonic researches in the liberal arts and sciences, namely grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy. Remember Brethren, Masonry is not just a ritual but it is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

Brother Masons may the Force be with you.
