

5 Minute Mason - Your Personal Compass

I'm sure that you all have read or heard the verses found in I Kings: 6 and II Chronicles: 3 that describe in great detail the building of Solomon's Temple. From Masonic history you learned the number of workmen that spent nearly seven years in its erection. All the thousands and thousands of pieces of stone and timbers brought from near and far that were fitted with such exactness that when finished it looked as though it was not made by human hands. You know of the sanctum sanctorum, that special holy place deep within the marble walls. As Freemasons, we've all been conducted to the middle chamber, but for a moment let me take you on a mental journey, in search of something not found in our ritual. Come, walk with me...it's just a little further within the depths of the temple.

Just down the hall from the middle chamber, way back in the far corner of King Solomon's Temple, and around the next corner we find a very plain door. Yes, the one you missed, or perhaps were never told of. I found it for you. It was easy to miss because it had no markings on it or no gilded framework.... it's just a plain wooden door with a simple brass handle on it, and behind that door was the private office of Hiram Abiff.

Its walls were stacked with shelves filled to overflowing with all sorts of scrolls and tablets, samples of polished stone, and tools of every shape and size whose purpose and use were known to only a few. In the center of the room there were a couple of thick hand hewn planks resting on wooden workhorses. That's where the trestleboard was placed with the designs for this grand labor of the craft. To one side of that trestleboard was a most important tool, one you may not know of....it was round, and held a small amount of liquid, and within its rim was a small metal needle, a pointer, if you will. Of course you recognize it....it's a compass.

This tool was acquired from merchant traders from the Far East where the sun rises to rule and govern the day. The compass allowed the Grand Master to lay out exactly how the building was to be placed according to the cardinal directions, regardless of the time of day, or if the heavens were visible or not. There is an invisible force that surrounds this orb known as earth, and keeps the needle floating on a small pool of water always pointing in the same direction. No matter which way you turn, indoors or out, on the high plains of Asia or the deep jungles of Africa, the compass always points in the same direction. From this tool Hiram Abiff derived the exact direction in which the temple would be situated....due East and West.

I believe that this tool should remind us of the invisible hand of providence that will always guide us in the right direction. It will work even in the darkest hour, under stormy skies or in the depths of the murkiest forest, when you can find no clear indication of which way to go and you feel as if you will never find your way again. All you have to do is wait for the pool of water that is your very being to settle, and allow the 'needle' of the Great Architect of the Universe to point you in the right direction again. The direction never changes, it's always there. The invisible force of right and good just needs a 'still pool' and the smallest indicator to guide those that will wait for it to set them on the true path to light.

I offer for your consideration...the compass. It's just like all the other tools you learned about early in your Masonic journey, but this one was found just down the hall from the middle chamber. True, it's not one of the tools of our ritual, but this one might just help get you turned in the right direction...heading toward the light that we all are seeking.



... The 5 Minute Mason: #86 in a series of nuggets from the Quarry of Freemasonry.SM

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