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*The*  
**SHORT  
TALK  
BULLETIN**®



**Harmony  
and  
Reputation**

THE MASONIC SERVICE ASSOCIATION  
OF NORTH AMERICA

*Two Short Talks are presented here, both focusing on two fundamental concerns of a Freemason. The first is "Harmony," written by R. Stephen Doan, a Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of California, and was originally printed last year in The Byzantium, the magazine of the Red Cross of Constantine. The second examines "Reputation," and is a story initially printed in The New Mexico Freemason in January, 1977.*

## **Harmony**

**By R. Stephen Doan**

In the early times of Speculative Freemasonry, Pythagoras was often mentioned without really much discussion why. Of course, the Harmony or Music of the Spheres is attributed to his school of philosophy: no matter how violent the Universe may be, it will always return to harmony.

Geometry measures that harmony when exhibited by celestial objects, and thus becomes not only the symbol of that harmony but also the symbol of its source: the Great Geometrician.

The Fellow Craft degree lecture encourages us to find that harmony

on Earth, in the return of seasons, for instance. Just as good and bad happen in Nature, so it is among humans: we have free will to choose good or bad. Yet, everything eventually returns to harmony.

Scientists find that harmony at the quantum level: everything is energy that will return to equilibrium and follow the rules after it is disturbed.

That quantum harmony originated in the Big Bang, which we metaphorically refer to as Let There Be Light.

That harmony is also the meaning behind the Word (or the *Logos* in the original Greek) at the opening of John's Gospel. Good and bad are part of existence, but so is *Logos*. We observe that harmony, the *Logos*, by its nature will return. That expectation should offer us hope that we can overcome the bad when it does come.

There is a Masonic degree, a now unused version of which compared human existence to a bird flying in the night. The bird enters, through an open window, a great, lighted hall, flying around in it for a time, experiencing pleasure and pain, before flying out another window back into the night. The energy that is our spirit takes physical form upon entering the metaphorical hall but returns to spirit

upon leaving. The spirit does survive despite the time of trial.

When I was a boy and first learned about what I thought was limitless space (not yet understanding the theory of expanding bubbles of space and time), I came to doubt that there was a place for God in the Universe, until after many years of thought I came to find in Geometry and the *Logos* my proof of a Great Intelligence whose harmony pervades everything.

## Reputation

Reprinted from  
*The New Mexico Freemason*

As Freemasons we are known by the way we affect other people and by the works of ourselves as a group. The following story illustrates how two men came to present their petitions for Freemasonry.

A young man passed a pawnbroker's shop. The moneylender was standing in front of his shop, and the young man noted that he was wearing a large and beautiful Masonic emblem.

After going on a whole block,

apparently lost in thought, the young man turned back, stepped up to the pawnbroker, and addressed him, "I see you're wearing a Masonic emblem. I'm a Freemason too. It happens that I'm desperately in need of \$25 just now. I shall be able to repay it within 10 days. You don't know me; but I wonder whether the fact that you are a Freemason and I am a Freemason is sufficient to induce you to lend me the money on my personal note."

The pawnbroker mentally appraised the young man, who was clean-cut, neat and well-dressed. After a moment's thought, he agreed to make the loan on the strength of the young man's being a Freemason. Within a few days the young man repaid the loan and that ended the transaction.

About four months later the young man was in Lodge receiving the Entered Apprentice degree; he had not really been a Mason when he borrowed the \$25.

After he had been admitted for the second section of the degree, the young man looked across the Lodge room and saw the pawnbroker from whom he borrowed the \$25. His face turned crimson and he became nervous and jittery. He wondered whether he had been recognized by the pawnbroker.

Apparently not, so he planned at the first opportunity to leave the Lodge room and avoid his benefactor.

As soon as the Lodge closed he moved quickly for the door, but the pawnbroker had recognized the young man, headed him off and, to the young man's astonishment, approached him with a smile and outstretched hand.

"Well, I see you weren't a Freemason after all when you borrowed that \$25," the pawnbroker commented.

The blood rushed to the young man's face as he stammered, "No, I wasn't but I wish you'd let me explain. I had always heard that Freemasons were charitable and ready to aid a Brother in distress.

"When I passed your shop that day I didn't need that \$25. I had plenty of money in my wallet, but when I saw the Masonic emblem you were wearing I decided to find out whether the things I'd heard about Freemasonry were true.

"You let me have the money on the strength of my being a Freemason, so I concluded that what I had heard about Masons was true, that they are charitable, that they do aid Brethren in distress.

That made such a deep impression on me that I presented my petition to this Lodge and here I am. I trust that with this explanation, you will forgive me for having lied to you.”

The pawnbroker responded, “Don’t let that worry you too much. I wasn’t a Freemason when I let you have the money. I had no business wearing the Masonic emblem you saw. Another man had just borrowed some money on it, and it was so pretty that I put in on my lapel for a few minutes. I took it off the moment you left. I didn’t want anyone else borrowing money on the strength of my being Freemason.

“When you asked for that \$25, I remembered what I had heard about Masons, that they were honest, upright, and cared for their obligations promptly. It seemed to me that \$25 wouldn’t be too much to lose to learn if what I’d heard about Freemasons was really true, so I lent you the money and you repaid it exactly as you said you would.

“That convinced me that what I’d heard about Masons was true so I presented my petition to this Lodge. I was the candidate just ahead of you.”

## THE SHORT TALK BULLETIN

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