

Chapter 9

The Three Ruffians

The “ruffians” are the three Fellow Craft (journeymen) who attack and kill Grand Master Hiram Abiff. Their true identities have long been a subject of speculation among Freemasons. The difficulty in understanding their identities is due in part to the conflation or blending of consciousness and form, and of the temples.

The conflation of the consciousness with the form it inhabits:

- When the soul incarnates and identifies with its form it experiences separation from the One Life. This enables the consciousness to develop individual awareness, but also causes it to act separately and selfishly.
- When substance builds an individual form, it becomes more sensitive and responsive to intent via that form.

The blending of the temples:

- If the Ruffians are lesser builders in the Tabernacle, then they appear to represent the three aspects of the persona.
- If they are greater builders in the Temple of Solomon, then they represent the light body of the Soul or the three-fold goddess.

While the ruffians are plainly identified as journeymen stonemasons, this identification is a result of the blending of the temples into a single structure. In the process, the workers in the temples have also been confused. In order to understand who the ruffians are and what their actions mean, we must first identify which group of workers they represent.

Fortunately, their identities become apparent when we examine their legendary roles in light of the process of spiritual growth and development. This examination includes their actions, the penalties they receive, and their names.

Their Actions and Penalties

“...being desirous of obtaining the secrets of a Master Mason”

The first significant action by the ruffians is their attack on Hiram Abiff. This attack is a bit confused, as there are two traditions surrounding the blows.

- One has the three blows delivered to the throat, chest, and forehead (as described in our version of the Legend).
- The other has the three blows struck against Hiram’s temples and forehead.

This is another example of conflation or blending, in this case, the combination of two levels of spiritual growth into a single symbolic event.

- The blows to the throat, chest, and forehead, represent the movement of the incarnate soul upward toward self-awareness and liberation.

These blows are struck by three aspects of the persona, the energy body, emotions, and mind. Those three bodies are also represented in the three chambers of the Tabernacle.

- The three blows to the head represent the transformation of the three-fold instrument of the Soul (symbolized by the Temple of Solomon).

These blows are struck by the three aspects of the goddess – virgin, mother, and crone – through the sounding of the creative Word of the Soul.

The events represented by the two versions of the “blows” are:

- The “death” and “resurrection” of the Spiritual Soul as it begins and ends the incarnation process (represented by the three blows to the head).
- The death of the form-identified incarnate consciousness, and its resurrection as the Spiritual Soul (represented by the blows to the throat, chest, and forehead).

In effect, the creative Word of the Soul is sounded three times, and each sounding creates a three-fold motion. That motion is symbolized in Freemasonry by the three blows. Where the three blows land indicate which spiritual unfoldment is involved.

The Persona Blows

At the beginning of the spiritual path, the seeker aspires to their higher self or Soul, but is still identified as their personality. As a result, any impression from the Soul is perceived in persona terms.

They view the spiritual path as growth and development of the personality (perfecting the physical body, purifying the emotions, and/or developing the mind).

This persona orientation distorts the aspiration. They may become identified, for instance, with the outer form of their spiritual path. The resulting distortions include:

- The “one true way” or the misinterpretation of their path or interpretation as the best or only correct spiritual path (when in truth, there is no true or best path).
- Interpreting the aspiration to serve as the desire to be somebody in spiritual

terms. This makes their sense of self-worth dependent on the outer “success” (popular and financial) of their service.

As the Spiritual Soul begins to influence its persona, the attention moves away from the forms of the body, emotions, and mind, toward the Spiritual Soul. The persona naturally resists the resulting loss of attention and control, and strikes out against the Overshadowing Soul.

These three bodies, and their reactions, are symbolically illustrated by the Three Ruffians.

The first action was that of Jubela, who waited by the *South Gate*, and struck Grand Master Hiram in the *throat* with a *measuring rod* or gauge.

The wall and courtyard of the Temple of Solomon are symbolic of the persona. The South Gate in the wall is symbolic of the Emotional Body, and (as we have seen) the fifth center is the subtle energy organ of the concrete rational mind or intellect. The intellect perceives and measures details, but is unable to see the relationship between those details.

In the hands of a persona-identified seeker, the gauge is a symbol of the nature and function of intellectual substance.

In Freemasonry, the attack of Jubela, and the penalty he received for his attack, is symbolized in the hand sign and by the *duegard* (another hand gesture) of the apprentice.

This *duegard* is given with the hands held before the solar plexus, and represent the energies of the solar plexus (fifth center), bound by the word or oath of an ap-

prentice.

Thus, Jubela represents the lower emotions, dominating and using the human intellect for its own purposes. As the Soul moves into the persona, and begins to control the persona instrument, the emotions lash out with the intellect, driving back the Soul.

Jubela's penalty for his action was to have "...my *throat cut across*, my *tongue torn out* by its roots, and my body buried in the rough sands of the *sea*, at low-water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours."¹

Those who do not understand the symbolic nature of the ritual sometimes take the penalties literally. I should mention here that after hundreds of years of effort to discredit Freemasonry, the detractors of the Order have not been able to find a single instance where any of these penalties have actually been applied. That is because they are an allegory of the process of spiritual growth and development, and are not meant to be taken literally.

In Jubela's penalty, he is buried at the shore of the sea, the place where water (symbolizing astral substance) meets land (symbolizing physical-etheric substance). This represents the stage of development of Jubela. He is the consciousness, identified with and thus interred in his physical-etheric and astral bodies.

#

Jubelo waited by the *West Gate*, and struck Grand Master Hiram in the *left breast* with a *square*.

¹ Quoted from: Duncan's Ritual of Freemasonry, by Malcom C. Duncan, David McKay Company, Inc., NY, third edition, p. 35

The West Gate of the Temple is symbolic of the Mental Body and (as we have seen) the fourth center is the highest subtle organ of the emotional body.

In the hands of a persona-identified seeker, the square is another symbolic tool of Divine Intelligence, the Third or Mother Aspect.

Thus, Jubelo represents the higher emotions, dominating and using the human persona for its own purposes. As the work of the Soul nears completion, and the Soul begins to move into the persona instrument, the higher emotions lash out, driving back the Soul.

In consequence, Jubelo's penalty was to have "...my *breast* torn open, my *heart plucked out*, and placed on the *highest pinnacle of the Temple*, there to be devoured by the vultures of the *air*."²

This represents the next stage of spiritual growth and development. The persona consciousness of the seeker, formerly trapped in the physical-etheric and astral bodies, is drawn up from the fourth center into the seventh center (the "highest pinnacle of the Temple"). There the persona consciousness merges with the creatures of the Air or Soul. The seeker experiences mystical union with the Soul, and through the Soul (and greater builders), with the One Life.

Thus, the penalty of Jubela represents the transition from persona emotions to the height of mystical at-one-ment.

#

Jubelum waited by the *East Gate*, and struck Grand Master Hiram on the *fore-head* with a *gavel*.

² Ibid, p. 65

The East Gate of the Temple is symbolic of the Soul Body and (as we have seen) the brow or Ajna Center is the highest subtle organ of the persona. The entire persona is integrated into a single unit by the sixth or Ajna center. The Ajna can both perceive the Spiritual Soul, and receive the impression of the Will of the Soul.

The downward moving gavel is a symbolic tool of the descending First Aspect, or Will.

Thus, Jubelum represents the persona consciousness, indwelling an integrated persona instrument. The integrated persona is a very powerful tool, and can be used to create just about anything one wants in the three lower worlds. The persona consciousness, identified with its integrated instrument, is naturally very reluctant to relinquish control over it. Therefore, as the Overshadowing Soul begins to influence the sixth center, the separated persona consciousness lashes out, driving back the Soul.

Jubelum's penalty was to have "...my *body severed in two, my bowels taken from thence and burned to ashes, the ashes scattered before the four winds of heaven.*"³

While the legend does not indicate whether it is a vertical or a horizontal cut, the ritual clearly indicates a horizontal cut in the region of the Solar Plexus. The bowels, in the region of the fourth or Solar Plexus center, represent the lower desire nature. Burning the bowels would therefore represent the purification of the emotions in the fires of Divine Mind. The purified emotions (free of all separative forms and feelings) are then subject and responsive to the four "winds".

The "four winds of heaven" represent the four motions of substance on the bud-

³ Ibid, p. 96

dhic plane. These four motions are the four divine elements:

- esoteric air or sound,
- esoteric fire or color,
- esoteric water or vibration, and
- esoteric earth or light.

Thus, the body and emotions having earlier been brought under the control of the mind and the mind dedicated to the Soul, the penalty of Jubelum represents the final purification of the three-fold persona, and its integration into the life and activity of the Spiritual Soul.

The Winding Stair is of interest at this point. The persona instrument is uplifted in the sense that it takes on and reflects the rhythmic motion of the Light Body of the Soul, effectively becoming an extension of that light body. When this occurs, the physical-etheric body reflects the motion of the first three petals of the Egoic Lotus. The astral body reflects the motion of the next three petals, and the mental body reflects the motion of the third set of three petals.

The Freemason has completed his journey up the stairs to the second chamber (the three, five, and seven steps). He is almost ready to begin the work of the Master Mason, and has only to find the Lost Word and open the three central petals of the Egoic Lotus.

With this in mind, we will look briefly at the demands of the Ruffians, and the Grand Master's replies.

The Demands

Each ruffian demanded the Master's Word three times, and was refused three times.

Jubela was refused with "cannot" twice and "shall not" once.

Jubelo and Jubelum were both refused with "cannot", "shall not", and "will not."

"Cannot" is an expression of Substance, the Third or Mother Aspect. The statement is properly made by the carpenter or lesser builders, who create temporary structures under the direction of the greater builders. Since it is their task to create in response to Divine Will, the refusal to create in response to the ruffian's demands indicates that those demands are contrary to their programming, or out of harmony with Divine Intelligence.

"Shall not" is an expression of the Consciousness, the Second or Son Aspect. The statement is properly made by the Mason or greater builders, who create permanent structures in response to Divine Will. The refusal is an indication that the ruffian's selfish demands are out of harmony with the identity of the One Life.

"Will not" is an expression of the First Aspect or Spirit. The statement is properly made by the Divine Architect, who creates the Plan that is embodied by the builders. The refusal is an indication that the ruffian's demands are out of harmony with Divine Intent.

That the Grand Master gave these replies suggests a great deal about both the ruffians and himself. We shall look into the implications for the Grand Master in a later chapter.

At this point, it is enough to note that Jubela was told "cannot" and "shall not",

but not “will not,” because Jubela represents the lower astral instrument. This instrument does not receive Divine Will directly, but indirectly through the higher mind or emotions (when those are aligned with the Soul).

Divine Will always moves downward, ideally from the Spirit, to the Soul, to the integrated persona (Jubelum), to the mind (Jubelo), to the astral body (Jubela).

Thus, the actions of and reactions to the three ruffians support our premise, leaving us free to examine their names.

The Names of the Three Ruffians

In the Legend, the three Fellow Craft who assault Hiram Abiff are usually identified as Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum. This unlikely similarity of their names suggests a hidden meaning. There have been many attempts to explore and explain this meaning, but few that are particularly convincing, leaving us to perform our own search.

The simplest place to begin is with actual Hebrew names.

The closest Hebrew name, “Jubal,” is derived from the Hebrew *yovel*, and means “jubilee”.

Webster’s defines jubilee as follows: “Heb yovel, a ram, ram’s horn used as a trumpet to announce the sabbatical year: infl. By L *jubilum*: ... 1 *Jewish History* a year-long celebration held every fifty years in which all bondmen were freed, mortgaged lands were restored to the original owners, and land was left fallow: Lev. 25:8-17”

The Latin *Jubilo* means “to shout”, while *Jubilus* means “to shout for joy”, and

Jubilum “celebration”.

Thus, it appears that Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum represent three shouts that result in a celebration of freedom or release, occurring every fifty years. This seems extremely inappropriate, until and unless we examine it more closely. We will begin with three questions:

- Three shouts – what is being shouted?
- Holiday of freedom or release – what is being freed?
- Cycle of fifty years – What has a fifty-year cycle?

What is being shouted?

As noted earlier, the Creative Word is sounded by the Soul three times. First, to create the Light Body of the Soul (the Temple of Solomon), second, to set the Light Body in motion, and third, to destroy the Light Body, freeing the Soul and creating the Sheath of the Spirit.

Thus, the names of the three ruffians represent the life cycle (creation, activity, and destruction) of the Temple of Solomon.

What is being freed?

The Soul (Hiram Abiff) is freed by the third sounding of the Creative Word. The Grand Master is then raised up to heaven (moves into the Sheath of Spirit) and takes on a new life in the Temple of Ezekiel.

What has a fifty-year cycle?

The Jubilee cycle is partly based on the sacredness of the number seven, which appears numerous times in the Bible, beginning with the seven days of creation. In

this approach, fifty is seven times seven years, plus one.

However, the ancient mystery tradition leads us to the Egyptian dog-headed god, Anubis, the guardian and guide of Souls. He carried a staff with a serpent wrapped about it, and was equated by the Greeks with Mercury (whose rod we have already discussed).⁴

Anubis, the patron of builders, was associated with the Dog Star, Sirius, a triple star with a 52 year orbital cycle⁵.

Esoteric traditions have long considered Sirius to be a place where advanced Soul's go once they complete the work here on earth.

Thus we have the names of the ruffians signifying the release of the Spiritual Soul from bondage on earth, and the movement on to a higher level of the Great Work.

The above, however, is based on only part of the puzzle. There are other clues to the identity of the ruffians. Clues we can use to check or augment our conclusions.

These clues are:

- The Ruffians are Fellow Craft
- There are three of them
- They strike the H.A. in three different locations
- The differences in their names

Between them, these clues indicate exactly who the ruffians really are.

⁴ *Morals and Dogma*, by Albert Pike, p. 506

⁵ The fact that the ancients knew of this cycle is made clear in *The Sirius Mystery*, by Robert T. K. Temple.

They are all “Fellow Craft”

The first three degrees of Freemasonry include the:

- *Entered Apprentice*, who, like Percival, are told to remain quiet and observe.
- *Fellow Craft*, who are expected to learn through avid study. They can perform basic tasks, but are not permitted to perform the work of a Master Mason.
- *Master Mason*, who is expected to have mastered Freemasonry.

Thus, the three Fellow Craft or journeymen may be able to perform fine work, but they are still studying and gaining experience in the Craft. They function under the supervision of a Master Mason and do not design the building or command greater builders.

There are three of them

If we assume that the three ruffians represent something real, then we are looking for three things that can perform basic tasks, but only under the supervision of something similar, but greater.

They strike H.A. in three different locations

In addition, those three things that can perform basic tasks respond differently in the same situation, striking out at different, symbolically significant portions of the Grand Master.

The difference in their names

The names *Jubela*, *Jubelo*, and *Jubelum* are exactly the same except for their final letter or letters. When these are combined, in the order they appear in the Legend, we get “AOUM,” a combination of the creative words of the incarnate Soul,

AUM and OM.

AUM is the creative word during the involutory phase of the Soul's incarnation (the movement downward into form). That movement from overshadowing to physical appearance is involution.

OM is the creative word during the evolutionary phase of the Soul's incarnation (the movement upward to self realization).

From the perspective of the Spiritual Soul, this downward and upward movement is one great cycle. From the perspective of the persona, it includes many "incarnations", or life in a sequence of personas.

Thus the combination of AOUM represents the great cycle of the Soul, the movement into and out of incarnation, which finally leads to the mastery of the form and release from the wheel of rebirth.

This in turn suggests that each of the ruffians represents a phase of that great cycle. In that case, Jubela represents the downward movement, in which the Soul builds and identifies with the form.

Jubelo represents the life in the form, in which the incarnate soul gains knowledge and experience through life in the three lower worlds.

Jubelum represents the phase of withdrawal from the form, in which the incarnate soul returns home with the fruit of its experience.

The common portion of their names, Jubel, represents the beginning and the end of the sounding word, Yah El, the Father-Gods of southern Judah and northern Israel (the creators of Genesis, whose names are usually translated as God or Lord).

However, this beginning and end (with a masculine deity) is distorted by a patriarchal bias.

The Patriarchal Veil

The Legend of the Temple is based on the ancient mythology of the Hebrews, as told in the Old Testament or Torah. The ancient Hebrews apparently derived their religious tales from regional sources, such as Babylon, Canaan, Egypt, and Sum-
eria.

This suggests that the Three Ruffians should be traceable to a mystery tradition in that region. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find a source for a trinity of men who murder or sacrifice another man.

However, the ancient Hebrews were originally a matriarchal culture, and did not become patriarchal until the time of the prophets. The remnants of their early matriarchy are still seen in their custom of matrilineal descent (i.e., one must have a Hebrew mother in order to be a Hebrew).⁶ Their patriarchism arose with the cult of JHWH, which rejected almost all of the matriarchal aspects of their culture, including worship of the Great Goddess.

Thus, we are fully justified in turning our quest from male trinities, to female. When we do, we immediately discover abundant examples of the three-fold goddess—virgin, mother, and crone, sacrificing the Divine King.

This triple goddess was often portrayed as the three goddesses of the seasons, or the goddesses of the three phases of the moon. The later brings us back to Ida or

⁶ Some modern scholars maintain that the Hebrew custom of matriarchal descent is a late development. However, it can be traced back at least as far as the story of the original Hebrew matriarch, Sarah.

Jachin, the pillar of the moon.

The triple goddess often included a virgin goddess of springtime, in charge of planting, a mother goddess of summer, in charge of growing fruit, and a crone goddess of fall/winter, in charge of reaping and gathering. The three represented the cycle of life in all living things, but a common symbol of the cycle was an ear of corn, such as wheat or barley.

As all Freemasons know, an ear of corn is one of the symbols of the Fellow Craft degree. However, no satisfactory explanation has been offered for this symbol. As a ripe ear of corn is associated with the second or Mother aspect of the goddess, this is an entirely appropriate symbol of the second degree or fellow craft from a matriarchal perspective.

Another significant point is that the Temple of Solomon was built on a “threshing floor” on the summit of Mount Moriah. One would, therefore, expect the site to have been sacred to a god or goddess of grain (in particular, to the third aspect of the goddess, the crone who represented reaping).

JHWH was not a god of grain, but several local goddesses were, including Asherah.

As mentioned above, Asherah was the consort of JHWH, and was originally worshipped in the Temple along with the masculine JHWH. Her devotees made household statuettes of her out of baked bread, indicating that she was associated with corn.

This suggests that the “threshing floor” on Mount Moriah (the high-place where

Solomon built the Temple, was originally sacred to Asherah, a complex goddess whose attributes included those of a triple goddess.

Thus, it becomes clear that the three ruffians are not men, but the three attributes of the goddess given a patriarchal guise. This patriarchal distortion must be removed from these and other characters of the Legend if we are to understand its true meaning, the journey of the Soul.

The three ruffians represent:

- The bodies of the persona
- The state of awareness of the Soul within those bodies
- The experience of the Soul within those bodies
- The great incarnation cycle of the Spiritual Soul (its descent into and ascent from the three lower worlds of mind, emotions, and physical-etheric energy)
- The smaller cycles of the incarnate Soul into and out of physical-dense incarnation.

When these are taken together, we see that the three ruffians represent the Soul's relationship with Substance, the Third or Mother Aspect of Divinity. Their representation as three men is a patriarchal veil, and in order for the polarity of Freemasonic work to be correct, the three ruffians must be represented by three women.

This supports the theory that the "three ruffians" were originally three priestesses, representing the three-fold goddess. The sacrifice of the builder would then be part of a ritual consecrating the Temple to the Great Goddess. This makes sense, as

the Temple represents the Substantial or Mother Aspect, the house of the Spiritual Soul during three stages of spiritual development.

Thus, in Freemasonic terms, the three ruffians represent Jachin (the pillar of substance), the three-fold goddess, and the cycle of incarnation and evolution. Their attack on the Grand Master represents the death of the Soul as it moves into the three bodies and loses itself in form, and their penalties represent the purification of the three bodies and their transformation into the house of the Spiritual Soul.

The next question we need to ask is, “Who is the sacrifice?”

Meditation

Our previous exercise integrated the heart and intellect, and pierced the veil between the realm of the persona and the realm of spirit. In this technique, we stand within the threshold of, and prepare to move into, the Holy of Holies.

- ◆ Opening alignment:
 - Sit in a comfortable chair and place *The Temple and The Word* in your lap.
 - Close your eyes and relax your physical body, finishing with your consciousness focused in your head.
- ◆ Review your progress thus far: Imagine yourself in the shadow of the wall, before the gate.
 - Knock, step into the courtyard, gaze into the Laver and calm your emotions.
 - Remove your raiment and rub your body with salt.
 - Pour water over your head and shoulders.
 - Pick up your raiment and lurch over to the Altar.
 - Light the altar, burn your raiment, and clarify and focus your mind by concentrating on the flames.
 - Burn your old raiment, and climb to the eleventh step.
 - Don your new raiment, including the robe, sandal, and knotted cord.
 - Step onto the porch and stride up to the central door.
 - Knock on the door and step forward.
 - Silently cry out for delivery.
 - Three sparks of light spring to life, illumining the altar in the great hall.

- Rise from your knees, walk up to the altar, and bow.
 - Get the shewbread and incense, light the incense, and hold the bread in the smoke.
 - Imagine a blue-white light, illumining the shewbread with Divine Love.
 - Consume the loaf of bread, and direct love forward through the Ark to the source of love.
 - Bow to the altar and walk east, toward the far side of the middle chamber.
 - Wipe the tracing board clear, and step up to the veil of the Holy of Holies.
 - The fifth candle flickers alight.
 - You try to pass the veil three times, and fail each time.
 - Focus your mind and heart on the Soul, and step through the veil.
- ◆ Opening your eyes, you find yourself standing immediately within the threshold of the Holy of Holies. The veil is at your back. On your right a twelve-foot statue of a male cherubim, and on your left a matching statue of a female cherubim, face inward toward you.

The Ark of the Covenant is before you, in the middle of the chamber. The Ark is a, oblong gilt box, with a narrow end facing you. Two small golden cherubim sit on its lid, with wings outstretched. The carrying poles are in place on its side, and the third column in the floor runs directly up to the stone base on which the Ark rests.

- Step forward, along the central column, up to the Ark.
- Stop when you reach the Ark, and bow to it, keeping your gaze on it.

- Step to the right-hand side of the Ark and face it.

You are now gazing at the broad side of the Ark from the south. Twin cherubim sit atop the lid or *Mercy Seat*, each with its three pairs of wings. Two pair of wings are stretched up and forward, forming an arch over the center of the Mercy Seat. Two pair are stretched up toward the heavens, two reach back and down, toward the lower world.

The cherubim on the right is male, that on the left is female, and they are united in perpetual sexual union.

- Renewing your union with Divine Will, stretch out your hands toward the Cherubim. Place your right hand under the male cherub (on the right) palm up. Place your left hand over the female cherub (on the left) palm down.

A glowing cloud of light, the *Shekinah*, forms between the cherubim, and a powerful current pours from the *Shekinah*, through the cherubim, and into your mind, emotions, and body, infusing your entire being. But, you remain united with Divine Will.

- When that current of energy reaches its height, aspire upward to the One Life.
- ◆ When your focused aspiration has reached its height, audibly state the seed-thought:

“As the Soul, a Child of God, I invoke my purpose, place, and function in the One Life, into my mind, emotions, and brain.”

Hold this thought, without thinking about it, for at least three minutes.

- Maintaining your awareness of your self as the Soul, with a purpose, place, and function in the One Life, release the cherubim, step back, and bow to the fading *Shekinah*.
- Take a deep breath, drop the image, and open your eyes.

Continue to the next chapter.

[4,860] Copyright © 2002 by Glen Knape