



Good day Worthy Knights,
In this part 20, 1 of 2

(JSM Ward / AN Wilson / J Bundy / Wikipedia)

In the East: Who directed you hither ? Hiram, the Widow's Son.



On the death of King David, his son and successor, Solomon, resolved to carry into execution his father's long-contemplated design of erecting a Temple on Mount Moriah for the worship of Jehovah.

But the Jews were not a nation of artisans, but rather of agriculturists, and had, even in the time of David, depended on the aid of the Phoenicians in the construction of the house built for that monarch at the beginning of his reign.

Solomon, therefore, applied to his ally, Hiram, King of Tyre, to furnish him with trees from Lebanon and with hewers to prepare them, for, as he said in his letter to the Tyrian King, "*thou knowest that there is not any among us that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.*"

Hiram complied with his request, and exchanged the skilled workmen of sterile Phoenicia for the oil, corn and wine from more fertile Judea.

Among the artists who were sent by the King of Tyre to the King of Israel, was one whose appearance at Jerusalem seems to have been in response to the following application of Solomon, recorded in the second book of Chronicles, the second chapter, seventh verse:

"Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple and in crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah, and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide."

In the epistle of King Hiram, responsive to this request, contained in the same book and chapter, in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses, are the following words:

"And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's. The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skilful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him, with thy cunning men, and with the cunning men of my lord David, thy father."

A further description of him is given in the seventh chapter of the first book of Kings, in the thirteenth and fourteenth verses, and in these words:

"And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass, and he came to King Solomon and wrought all his work."

In Masonic teachings Hiram Abiff is the architect of King Solomon's Temple and his story is one of faithfulness and death before dishonour. But more than that, Hiram Abiff (or Adoniram as he is known in some texts) is the template of excellence in Masonry and appears throughout the centuries in many Masonic degrees in various guises, lessons and references.

A figure of virtue, justice, skill and honour, if Freemasonry has a hero that hero is Hiram Abiff.

"What became our three degrees is similar to what was required for admittance to any of the middle age craft guilds: oath, rules and regulations read to the apprentice, and penalties for violations of the oath were impressed upon the candidate.

These were often combined into a ceremony or ritual. Many of these guilds had many secrets. The extreme consequences of revelation to others outside the guild were cause for the elaborate rites of passage.

Any intellectual knowledge that did not conform to orthodox teachings could lead to accusations of heresy, with great consequences, regardless of whether there were esoteric teachings involved, or only Masonic discussions of deity and teachings of the enlightenment. Truly, only those apprentices who were felt to be worthy could be trusted with the secrets of the order."

(Virginia Royal Arch Research Chapter No. 1753 July 16th, 2016 Companion Joel Bundy)

What is the exoteric teaching we can learn from Hiram Abiff ? It appears to be lessons on virtue, justice, and merit.

Hiram appears to be a virtuous man, full of integrity, regardless of the consequences, essentially the concept of virtue ethics. This would be the opposite of consequential ethics, or the ends justify the means theorem.

The concept of justice for wrongdoing is universal across cultures and political and religious thought.

We also learn that we have to earn what we have, we should believe in our merits and achievements. These are the basic tenets of the Hiram Abiff story.