

The Resurrection and the Raising of Grand Master Hiram Abiff
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Last week marked the fortieth day after the Resurrection of Yeshua ha Meshiach which is called Ascension Day. This day is important because of what it implies for all of us. I thought it would be good to talk about the doctrine of the bodily resurrection from the dead at the end of time of all persons of which this day is a precursor.

In the earliest written book of the Bible, Job, we find these words according to the New American Bible:

“I know that my Redeemer lives, and that He will at last stand forth upon the dust; whom I myself shall see: my own eyes, not another’s, shall behold Him, and from my flesh I shall see G-d.” Job 19:25-27.

With these words, the discussion of Resurrection must begin. The Prophet Job says that he has faith that he will see G-d in his own flesh and not another’s flesh. This idea does not allow for a resurrection of a spiritual body, which may well occur as well. It proposes a physical resurrection. It is this doctrine of faith that is well attested in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism and Freemasonry.

The Prophet Ezekiel says in Chapter 37:

“Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! See! I will bring spirit into you, that you may come to life. I will put sinews upon you, make flesh grow over you, cover you with skin, and put spirit in you so that you may come to life and know that I am the Lord.” 5-6.

In this graphic form, Ezekiel continues the discussion of Resurrection. There must have been many who doubted Job, but Ezekiel added to his words and told us with graphic certainty that the resurrection would be of our bodies, just as we have them today, not some other body, not some spirit body, but the body we have today.

St. Paul, raises the question again in 1 Corinthians 15:12-17 where he says:

“But if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then neither has Christ been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then empty too is our preaching; empty, too, your faith. Then we are also false witnesses to G-d, because we testified against G-d that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if Christ is not raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins.”

He raises the question even higher. He says that the ultimate proof of the doctrine of resurrection is found in the resurrection of the Meshiach. For if the Meshiach is raised, then the doctrine is true and all of us shall be raised as well. While I consider the way in which Paul presents the argument as spurious, nonetheless, the point is well taken. We

are not saved by resurrection, nor solely by the resurrection of Yeshua, but rather his Ascension into Heaven and his ministry as High Priest of Heaven. However, that High Priesthood is dependent on the Resurrection of Yeshua and without it, we are still in our sins. Why would we fear death if we are not going to meet the Supreme Judge sometime in the future? Why would we fear death if there is no judgment on our very bodies? The judgment is reserved for the end and will not occur except in our own bodies. Therefore, the Resurrection is the proof that we will have a final reward or punishment.

In the Book of Revelation, St. John the Revelator says:

“I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Yeshua and for the word of G-d, ... They came to life and they reigned with Meshiach for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over.” 20:4-5.

St. John assures that those who were the highest of saints would be resurrected first and only later would everyone be resurrected. However, his testimony is entirely consistent with the teaching of ages.

Why is this doctrine important for us? Without this doctrine the threat of judgment would have no meaning and it is the threat of judgment that keeps the world in check. Ultimately, the fear that after death is the judgment keeps the most hardened tyrants in check for fear that they will suffer the pains of Hell. Many say that this threat is bad because it creates a false appearance of holiness and makes people be good from fear. I do not agree. There is no lack of mercy in the threat, but there is a promise of justice and G-d is equally Just and Merciful.

For Freemasons, the doctrine takes on new meaning. In Yeshua, we see a man whose work was not done. We see in Him the archetype that is represented by our Grand Master Hiram Abiff. The Ritual says in the Third Degree, Second Section:

“My mind is now clear and the body shall be raised....Yea; my brethren, I have a word, and though the skin may slip from the flesh and the flesh cleave from the bone, there is strength in the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and He shall prevail.”

Our ritual proclaims that the Body shall be raised. It recognizes that it has undergone corruption and that to raise it seems impossible for men. Yet, it proclaims that just as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, that is, Yeshua ha Meshiach, Jesus the Christ, has been raised, that his strength can raise the Body and He shall prevail. So, we know that our faith is not vain, because our secular Path to Glory is true and using it we shall see G-d, who we know as the Great Architect.

We as Freemasons have ensconced that faith in our 20th Landmark where it says:

That every Mason must believe in a resurrection to future life.

While that Landmark allows for the belief in both a spiritual and a physical resurrection, which are different, nonetheless the reason for our believing in this event is our assurance that our good works will at some time be rewarded as craftsmen on the Temple Above, that spiritual building. It also guarantees that the brother who breaks his vows will be punished by the Supreme Grand Master.

It is therefore appropriate that we should remember Ascension Day each year as it is essential to all we stand for and all we believe.