

FROM WEST-TO-EAST:  
JOPPA / JAPHO / JAFFA and MOUNT SINAI IN FREEMASONRY

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The Biblical town of "Joppa" is also referred to, by various names, such as Jaffa, Japho, and "Yafo" (amongst others). It is now the oldest part of the modern city of Tel Aviv, Israel. The name 'Tel Aviv' means 'The Hill of Spring.' Joppa was the ancient port city known for its Biblical references to Solomon, Moses, Jonah, and Saint Peter.

Mythology says that the name of the town was named after Japheth, one of the sons of Noah. Piny-the-Elder associates it with Jopa (spelled with one letter 'p') the daughter of Aeolus, the 'god of the wind.' Joppa is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as the port-of-entry for the Cedars of Lebanon which were then transported by land, and materials used in the construction of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, with the assistance of Hiram, King of Tyre. Interestingly, "Tyre" is now a small city in modern Lebanon, just barely north of the border of Israel.

The noted Masonic scholar, Dr. Albert G. Mackey, M.D., 33<sup>o</sup>, and a Knight Templar states that the town of Joppa figures prominently in the lectures:

The lectures teach us that at the building of King Solomon's Temple there was not heard the sound of ax, hammer, or other metallic tool. But all the stones were hewn, squared, and numbered in the quarries; and the timbers felled and prepared in the forest of Lebanon, whence they were brought on floats by sea to Joppa, and thence carried by land to Jerusalem, where, on being put up, each part was found to fit with such exact nicety that the whole, when completed, seemed rather the handiwork of the Grand Architect of the Universe than of mere human hands. This can hardly be called a legend, because the same facts are substantially related in the First Book of Kings; but the circumstance has been appropriated in Freemasonry to symbolize the entire peace and harmony which should prevail among Freemasons when laboring on that spiritual temple of which the Solomonic Temple was the archetype.

Centuries later, Joppa figures prominently as a stopover-point for pilgrims wishing to visit places where Jesus walked. Ships generally went by sea from Venice, Italy onward to Joppa. It is speculated that Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz briefly landed-in Joppa and passed by Beit Shean, then was diverted to Damascus, Syria. He learned Arabic in order to communicate with the local peoples.

Henry Bolingbroke (1367-1413), Earl of Derby and later King of England from 1399 (Henry IV), made himself notable through his knightly prowess and that he for some years made several adventurous trips. In 1390-91, he made a journey to serve the Teutonic Order in Prussia and Lithuania. After that, in 1392-93, he made a similar pilgrimage through Prussia and Cyprus to Jerusalem; in order to pay his respects at the Holy Sepulchre and the Mount of Olives. Later, he promised to lead a crusade to liberate Jerusalem; but he died before this could be achieved.



Henry IV's exploits re-traced a good portion of the travels of Fr. Christian Rosenkreutz. Although he departed Britain, he nevertheless went from Germany to Cyprus to eventually Jerusalem. Granted, Rosenkreutz visited far more Arabic lands: yet, the Christian intention of the "pilgrimage" was essentially the same.

Mount Sinai, in the Hebrew language: {הַר סִינַי} is also known as Mount Horeb and also by the name "Moses' Mountain." From a purely historical standpoint: According to Jewish, Christian, and Islamic tradition, the Biblical "Mount Sinai" was where Moses received the Ten Commandments. The summit has an elevation of 7,497 feet above Sea-Level. This would make Mount Sinai roughly about 53.1% as tall as our "Pike's Peak" in Colorado. Even at that -- it is a fairly significant elevation to reach its summit. Interestingly, there is a Greek Orthodox Monastery {Saint Catherine's Monastery} at the foot of Mt. Sinai. It has been called "the oldest working monastery in the world" which lies at the mouth of the Sinai Peninsula and there are two principal routes of ascent to the summit. The longer {and steeper} route is up the 3,750 "steps of penitence," in the ravine behind the monastery. Geology studies indicate that the majority of the rocky terrain that composes Mt. Sinai is of several types of granite stones that may have come from various depths of the earth in prehistoric times and some may have been volcanic in origin. Interestingly, the other name for the mountain "Mount Horeb" -- 'Horeb' is thought to have meant "glowing heat." Some scholars debate whether Mount Sinai and Mount Horeb are the same place or two different places. The New Testament of The Bible doesn't mention 'Horeb,' but in Galatians 4:24-25 it does mention Mount Sinai.

In the book: "The Rosicrucians: The Rites and Mysteries", Frater Hargrave Jennings speaks of 'the Aetheraeum' of Robertus de Fluctibus (Robert Flood), the Rosicrucian." Jennings further states that: "Fire, indeed, would have been the chosen element of God. In the form of a 'flaming bush' HE {God} appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai." Aether was defined as a "spiritual fire." Frater Hargrave Jennings astutely describes his purpose or role in writing his book that he {Jennings} solely is "the author, wishes to be regarded simply as the Historian of the Rosicrucians, or as an Essayist on their strange, mysterious beliefs." Jennings states: "In regard to the singular name of the Rosicrucians, it may be here stated that the Chemists, according to their arcana, derive the Dew from the Latin word Ros, and the figure of a cross (+) they trace the three letters which compose the word Lux, Light." He further alludes to the "Labarum" which is the celebrated sign that appeared in the noonday sky to the Emperor Constantine. Although a few elements of "the Cabala" were used as ancient historical Hebrew references, the principal focus was on the Judeo-Christian evolution and the harmony that all Christians seek by following the teachings of The Saviour.

"The Holy Land" constitutes a vast area. Many of the prime areas {as mentioned earlier} are considered sacred to Hebrew, Christian, and Islamic traditions. It would be a wide circumference to travel the vast expanse of territory from Joppa (today's Tel Aviv, Israel) to Mount Sinai in Egypt. Yet, this entire area is of great import to Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism. Jennings claimed that all Egyptian obelisks were "Judaised" into the Pillars "Jachin and Boaz" and that obelisks which have a triangle at the top, symbolizes the Pillars of Hermes {Hercules}.

In Chapter 9 of his book, Frater Jennings says: "The appearance of God to mortals seems always to have been in brightness or great glory, whether HE was angry and in displeasure, or benign and kind." When God appeared on Mount Sinai, it is said: "And all Mount Sinai was in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in Fire..." {Exodus 19:18}.



And, when Moses repeats the history of this to the Children of Israel, he said: "The Lord spoke unto you out of the midst of Fire" {Deuteronomy 4:12}. Furthermore, "the bush burned with Fire, and the bush was not consumed." {Exodus 3:2}.

While Bro.: Jennings gives some brilliant insight into obelisks, spires, minarets, tall towers, upright stones, monumental crosses and tall steeples and "architectural perpendiculars of every description" pointing upward to the Heavens as a tribute to the Creator, it is equally apparent that Jennings did go out on a limb with some questionable theories pertaining to obelisks. Yet, Jennings does a remarkable job of reminding us to evaluate what is "Real versus what is Unreal." Perhaps it is important to contemplate the phrase: "God in us" {meaning: inside our hearts and souls} as to when we strive to do all virtuous things that God set forth in the Bible as Commandments.

Jennings clearly states that Rosicrucians {and hence Masonic Rosicrucians} recognize that Almighty God is immortal. Prior to the days of writing on stone tablets or parchment, there were hieroglyphics by means of which, mortal human-beings endeavored to describe the Mystical Sacredness of Almighty God or The Holy Spirit. Men desired to discern "Good from Evil" and "Light from Darkness." Our fraternity is sometimes ridiculed because non-members fail to see that all Masons {and indeed all Masonic Rosicrucians} firmly believe in Almighty God.

In Hargrave Jennings' book, he uses a unique play-on-words as a Chapter heading "Cross-Roads." He describes church steeples or spires as "beacons" ---and that Beacons have their origins in Antiquity. Aside from symbols of religious devotion, he notes how they have been used in military signaling {and this was long before the advent of modern aviation and aircraft}. He even cites ancient Mexican and Toltec symbolism as well.

In many ways, Mount Sinai continues to be a beacon in The Middle East region. Notable historic sites are there -- as the previously mentioned: Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. Michael the Archangel. Nearby is believed to be the tomb of Saint Tabitha. Saint Peter's Church is a Roman Catholic basilica and hospice built upon the remains of a Crusaders' fortress. Napoleon Bonaparte is believed to have stayed there, on that site.

Numerous migrations of Jews and Gentiles made that pilgrimage from West-to-East. From Mt. Sinai to Joppa or modern-day Tel Aviv is basically a northeasterly trek. All of us when we were initiated as an Entered Apprentice Mason can call to mind the significance of "the northeast corner."

Jaffa or Joppa was soon outpaced for growth by Tel Aviv. Today, Tel Aviv is a global city with its own Stock Exchange. Tel Aviv has the second largest economy in the Middle East, after Dubai. Oddly enough, Tel Aviv is known as "The City That Never Sleeps" {which I thought was a nice lyric in the late Frank Sinatra's song "New York, New York." Although Tel Aviv has modern amenities: Jerusalem still has a special place in history. It is the epicenter of our Fraternity which reveres Solomon's Temple; and Jerusalem is the hub of sacredness for the various Abrahamic religions.

As Freemasons, we are taught to study the Liberal Arts and Sciences. 'Music' is part of the Liberal Arts. Brother Hargrave Jennings contended that "the following is a fair view of the Rosicrucian theory concerning music: The whole world is a musical instrument...Every man has a little spark {tune} in his bosom." He further noted that "the



Rosicrucians taught that the 'harmony of the spheres' is a true thing, and not simply a poetic dream." Further, that there is a "melodious combination of the holy lights playing over the lines of the planets: light flaming as the spiritual ecliptic, or the gladius {Latin word for 'sword'} of the Archangel Michael, to the extremities of the solar system."

Possibly Jennings' greatest statement is that: "we must not mix up heathen ideas and Christian ideas." As Freemasons, we do not speak about nor debate Religion or Politics within any Tyled Masonic Lodge. While Bro.: Jennings may have applied his own Christian Faith into the aforementioned statement: It is equally true that the term 'Christian' has been used by people of other faiths to denote "all that is good, noble, and Christ-like." While he was not condemning any of the major religions or faiths, he was telling us not to delve into what is unworthy, ungrounded, spurious, selfishly invented, contorted or contrived ---and to avoid completely all suspicious doctrines or extremist doctrines which are not redeeming. And the dictionary defines 'heathen' as "a person who does not belong to a widely held religion, especially a Christian, Jew or Muslim as regarded by those who do." Freemasons meet in harmony and part in harmony. If any word can be applied to Masonry, it is the word "Mainstream." As members, we don't hazard guesses or partake of uncivilized norms or practices. We strive toward developing and maintaining an Honorable Brotherhood of Mutual Aid, with the aim of improvement of ourselves and our Communities.

- Mt. Sinai or "Moses' Mountain" is a place where refugees wished to "Travel from the West to the East" to experience Liberty and Freedom from bondage. In doing so: They helped establish the notable places of Jerusalem and Joppa (modern Tel Aviv). Without this migration: Much of human History would have been vastly different and our gentle Fraternity of Freemasonry might not exist in its present-form.
- Joppa represents a city where city where civilized balance can occur, despite differences.
- Freemasonry is a fraternal Order, having origins influenced by BOTH PLACES whereby a civilized balance can occur and where men can meet together in happiness and Harmony.

"Joppa" represents a place where men of diverse Faiths believe {and largely AGREE on the basic or central theme, at least} that Almighty God appeared, spoke, and imparted ethical codes of conduct to Mankind at that unique site. Several Masonic Lodges have been named "Joppa Masonic Lodge" as an honor and tribute to this significant place. Such a naming is entirely appropriate since we {as a Fraternity} are comprised of honorable men who do honorable deeds. We believe in The Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. "Joppa" embodies that sentiment. Similarly, some Masonic Lodges have been named "Mt. Sinai Masonic Lodge" as well.

The Masonic scholar, Bro.: and Sir Knight Albert Mackey clearly correlates the CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO PLACES: " 'The angel of the Lord appeared unto {Moses} in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.' {at Mt. Sinai} and there communicated to him for the time his ineffable Name. Then, Mackey jumped ahead in history to state that the Kingdom of Tyre was 120 miles by sea and 30 miles closer by land, from Jerusalem. Therefore, an agreement was reached between Hiram King of Tyre and King David and also King Solomon in obtaining materials for the building of the Temple's construction. Mackey states that the inhabitants of Tyre (fairly close to Joppa)



were "skilled artificers, especially as workers in brass and other metals." Mackey further tells of an even smaller city of Sidon, under the Tyrian government, whose area had the best and tallest cedar trees and its inhabitants were skilled "wood-cutters, engaged in felling the trees, which were afterward sent on floats by Sea from Tyre to Joppa, and thence carried by land to Jerusalem, to be employed in the Temple building." Mackey even notes that "Dr. Rob Morris visited Tyre in 1868" which attests to the interplay that all these towns had....as connecting-links with each other.... not just in World History but in Masonic History, too. Each town or place depended upon another place ---to continue the evolution of "progress."

Freemasonry, too depends on its members ...one member depends on another member and on another and yet others, to "build that band of Brothers" who faithfully seek to build upon our present foundation to make our future a better World for everyone!!! Freemasonry is not a Church, nor a Synagogue nor a Mosque or the like --- but it is an social, fraternal and benevolent institution where invocations and benedictions are said before an open Holy Bible or Sacred Writ...and all Glory and Honor is given to Almighty God to aid us in our laudable social and fraternal endeavors. As Masons, we honor places such as Mt. Sinai and Joppa for those milestone-moments of History.

#### Sources / References / Exhibits /Recommended Readings:

- Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Dr. Albert G. Mackey, M.D., 33<sup>o</sup> and a Knight Templar.
- Archives of The Masonic Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon, Canada.
- "The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries, Volume 1". by Frater Hargrave Jennings. Second Edition and Newly Revised and Corrected {Published by John C. Nimmo, 14 King William Street, Strand, London,WC1, England -- January 1, 1887 }. Preface by Hargrave Jennings, London, April 6, 1879.
- "The Real History of The Rosicrucians" by Frater Arthur Edward Waite. Chapter XVI
- Macoy's Masonic Manual by Robert Macoy, 33<sup>o</sup> and a Knight Templar. Fifteenth Edition. New York. Published in New York, Year 1861 by Clark, Austin, Maynard & Company located at 3 Park Row & 3 Ann Street, New York, New York. "A Pocket Companion for the Initiated".

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