

When I first decided to do this presentation on Masonic Widows I didn't know what direction it would take. I started my research and found there is really very little beside the indictment to every mason to support brother Mason's widows. So I had to go back to a beginning as to where widows are first mentioned.

So I turned to the Holy writings to see what they have to say about widows and find some Masonic connection. There are about 8 widows found in the writings, and 5 have Masonic connections.

The first three are all in the book of Ruth; Namoi, Orpah and Ruth. This book contains my mom's favorite verse in the bible, and mine as well, "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy G'd my G'd. All three became widows, with Namoi being the mother-in-law of Orpah and Ruth.

After the death of their respective husbands, the three returned to Judah. Since the two daughters-in-law were Moabites, Naomi persuaded them to return to their respective places so that they can return to their own normal lives before they got married. But while Orpah heeded her mother-in-law, Ruth decided to stay. It is while living with Naomi that Boaz took notice of Ruth, and in accordance with ancient Israelitish custom claimed her for his wife. Ruth was the Great Grandmother of David. The Book of Ruth has also produce biblical passage that traces part of the EAM degree regarding redeeming and changing. This was great research, but still no help.

Next was the beautiful Bathsheba, This is a unique story in itself and concerns one of the Grand Masters that Masonic tradition teaches us is the very foundation of Masonic teachings. The Holy Writings (1 Samuel 11: 1-27) says that one evening David walked on the roof of his house and saw a very beautiful woman washing herself. Learning later that she is the wife of Uriah the Hittite who is one of his generals, and secretly coveting her for himself, he ordered that Uriah be sent to the most dangerous part of the battlefield, there to do battle and consequently died. After the required mourning, David took Bathsheba as one of his many wives and on the second pregnancy, Solomon was born. Probably not the nicest story in the book and is sometime skimmed over when speaking of King David by saying he was not allowed to build a Temple, but he fathered Solomon, who was directed by the GAOTU to do so. Bathsheba, the short termed widow, has Masonic connections, however, nothing here as to why we do honor to our brothers widows

The one most familiar to Masons was Hiram's mother. Undoubtedly the most popular to Freemasons (and understandably so since all have represented Hiram Abif), this widow is neither named nor clearly identified in the Bible. To confound matters, the writer of 1 Kings says she is from the tribe of Naphtali, while the author of 1 Chronicles claim he is the son of a Danite woman. However, since Naphtali and Dan are sons of Jacob by the same mother named Bilhah, then it should follow that if Hiram Abif was a descendant of Naphtali, then he could not be a descendant of Dan, and vice versa!! More confusion among the craft, here and still no reason as to the oath we take to honor our brothers'

widows. By the way, the name “Abif” is not mentioned in the Scriptures. It is likely that it is a form the Hebrew word for father “abba”.

I turned to the New Testament for guidance.

1st Timothy 5-9 “Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man.” If this were a baseball game I have just struck out.

Since we recognize all holy writings, I next tried the Quran.

"Those of you who die and leave widows should bequeath for their widows a year's maintenance and residence. But if they [the widows] leave (the residence) there is no blame on you for what they justly do with themselves"
(Quran 2:240).

Better, I like this. It is coming into line now. I am getting closer, but still I am perplexed. One more try, going ancient this time. I found an article so esoteric, so far out there that I couldn't resist mentioning what it had to say. In short, in Freemasonry we are encouraged as Master Masons, to contribute to the relief of worthy, distressed brother Master Masons, their **widows** and orphans. Truly this is one of the greatest things we can do in the name of brotherly love, relief and truth, and this thread is not to diminish that in any way.

In the ancient mythologies world wide, and in the teachings of Jungian Psychology, titles implying “Master”, “Widow”, and “Orphan” had specific symbolic connotation. The earliest examples of this use is in the ancient Egyptian myths, in which the Master Osiris dies, leaving his widow Isis, and an orphan Horus comes out of it.

Symbolically, an orphan represented that stage of development in which we feel abandoned and want to be taken care of.

The widow on the other hand, represented not only the feminine side of man which is not complete without being wed to the Master side. It is that side of ourselves that recognizes we are stuck in the world, and we have to deal with it.

Therefore, as Master Masons we are told that part of our duty is to come to the relief of worthy, distressed Master Masons, their **widows** and orphans. From a symbolic standpoint, this would imply helping those brothers around us achieve greater levels of Mastery, raising up those aspects of themselves (and ourselves) that are still in the “orphan” or “widow” side of things, and reminding ourselves that we have Mastery within us. This thread is created to explore these concepts further, so that we can define these traits from a symbolic standpoint, and give examples from world mythology. Not it should be clear. Not to me. So I guess I have to go my own and express it in my own way.

When a candidate first approaches the door of the Lodge and asks admission into the room, he is addressed as Mister. This title follows him during the first part of his initiation until he takes the solemn obligation of an Entered Apprentice Mason at which time he is referred to as “Brother”, and in a very real sense he has become a part of our fraternal family. But does that mean that his wife is now part of the fraternity? After all she doesn’t pay dues, except they are usually the ones who write the check because we are too lazy to do it. When I was a DeMolay we had something called the “Flower Talk”. This was a public ceremony honoring mothers and I gave this talk quite a few times. I regarded it a success if I could get some of the mothers in the room to start crying, and I think I was pretty good at it. I still remember one of the poems and it is as relevant to women as wives as it is to mothers.

*Far in the dim recesses of her heart
Where all is hushed
She keeps a shrine
'Tis here she kneels
And from above
Long shafts of Light
Upon her shine.
Her heart is flower fragrant
Aquiver like a candle flame.
Each prayer takes wing to bless the world she works among
And leave the radiance of the candle there.*

So, our obligation to “aid and assist” our widows comes not so much from any obligation we take at an altar, but rather from that of our faith in our Masonic family, of which you became a part of when your husband, our brother, became a Mason. For while masonry continually reminded him of that purity of life and rectitude of conduct so essential to gain admission into that Celestial Lodge above where the Grand Architect of the Universe presides, it was you, his wife, who made sure that he remained on the path that allowed our departed brother to arrive there. G’d bless you for your honoring the memory our brother by being here tonight and on behalf of our Lodge and Masonry in general. I thank you.