



North Raleigh Masonic Lodge

J.J. Crowder Lodge #743 A.F. & A.M.

9920 Falls of Neuse Road, Raleigh, NC 27615

Stated Communication: 1st Thursday 7:30pm (Dinner 6:30pm)

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The Three Degrees of Freemasonry

The Blue Lodge consists of three separate degrees.

- [1st - Entered Apprentice Degree](#)
- [2nd - Fellowcraft Degree](#)
- [3rd - Master Mason Degree](#)

"The word degree, in its primitive meaning, signifies a step. The degrees of Freemasonry are, then, the steps by which the candidate ascends from a lower to a higher condition of knowledge." Albert G. Mackey, *The Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, 1873.

The degrees are: [Entered Apprentice](#), [FellowCraft](#), and [Master Mason](#). Each of the degrees requires the candidate to participate in the drama being presented. They are all of a very serious nature and not in the least demeaning of the candidate. Masonic catechisms are a series of memorized questions and answers pertaining to a specific degree. Usually, the candidate meets with a lodge member who knows these catechisms and helps him to memorize the work. The catechisms simply reiterate the degree work that the candidate recently completed and proves his proficiency with them. Once a catechism is completed the candidate can proceed to the next degree.

Entered Apprentice Degree

QUALIFICATIONS OF A PETITIONER

The qualifications to be a Mason are clear and distinct. There are physical, moral and spiritual qualifications. In California, the petitioner must be a man of at least 21 years of age. He must be free of any previous felonious criminal convictions and be of good moral character. He must also believe in a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul.

The physical qualifications are necessary because the person must be free to make his own life decisions and be responsible for himself. The moral qualifications are self-evident for the viability of any brotherhood and the lofty ideals of our society. The two spiritual qualifications not only inform the entire structure of Freemasonry but also align the Fraternity with the great Mystery Schools and religions of the world. It is the transition from belief to knowledge that seals the mark of true spiritual initiation.

THE SECRET BALLOT

After a man has applied for Masonic membership, and his background has been thoroughly investigated, the lodge members vote by secret ballot to accept or to reject him for membership.

Masonry's secret ballot is another of its ancient customs. It has been rather aptly said that when a petitioner is voted upon for Masonic membership he undergoes the "Ordeal of the Secret Ballot". To be elected, he must receive an affirmative vote from each and every member present at that meeting. Just one member out of all present - there could be twenty, or fifty, or a hundred members in attendance - can drop the black cube and deny him membership. When you consider the moral yardstick by which Masons measure membership applicants and that only one negative vote can reject a petitioner, it would seem reasonable to assume that a large proportion of petitioners would be rejected for membership. But that is not the case. Many, many more are elected than are rejected. That fact is

testimony to the generally good judgment of those who recommend applicants, and it also indicates that the fraternity, by and large, attracts good men.

Much has been said and written, pro and con, about the secret ballot. Some argue, not without logic, that it is not fair for just one member out of all those who may be present at a meeting to be able to deny a petitioner membership. Others argue, also logically, that if even one member knows something negative about a petitioner, then that one member should have the right and the opportunity to prevent the entrance into Freemasonry of one he feels would bring discredit to it.

It goes without saying that the secret ballot is occasionally abused by a member who rejects a petitioner for mere petty reasons having nothing to do with moral fitness, but such instances are rare and in almost every election the good man is elected to membership.

It is also undeniable that despite the requirements as to recommendation, as to background investigation, and as to unanimous secret ballot, an occasional undesirable person attains Masonic membership. Again, though, these instances are relatively rare. It should be remembered that if a member ever acts contrary to the rules and regulations of Freemasonry, he can be suspended or expelled from membership.

PREPARATION FOR INITIATION

Ideally, the candidate should find his way to the door of Freemasonry on his own. If a man senses the stirrings in his heart for a deeper understanding of life than that he has heretofore found, he will seek until he finds the Fraternity. This turning of the heart is really the beginning of his initiation. Therefore, each candidate who comes seeking light is said to be first prepared in his heart.

While Freemasonry is not a religion, its ceremonies are of a serious nature, dignified in their presentation and impart teachings that, if properly understood, obligate a man to lead a better life. To get the greatest good from the ceremonies, a candidate should first prepare his mind to understand and absorb these teachings. The candidate should pay strict attention to every part of the ceremony, in order that he may gain some understanding of the teachings of Freemasonry. The methods we use in teaching may be new and unusual to the candidate, but these methods have been used for many centuries and have not changed significantly since they originated. Finally, he should remember that every Mason in the Lodge room is his friend and brother.

DULY AND TRULY PREPARED

Being duly and truly prepared refers to the wearing of special garments furnished by the Lodge to emphasize our concern with man's internal qualifications, rather than his worldly wealth and honors. By wearing these garments, the candidate signifies the sincerity of his intentions. The symbolism of the Rite of Destitution reverts to those ancient times when men believed that the soul descended through the planetary spheres and vested itself with the qualities attributed to each sphere before birth. Each planetary quality corresponds to a specific metal. In ancient initiations, candidates were compelled to leave all metals behind, lest they bring into the assembly disturbing planetary influences. While this symbolism may no longer have an astrological character, the old point about excluding disturbing influences remains. The candidate is not to bring into the Lodge room his passions or prejudices, lest that harmony, which is one of the chief concerns of Masonry, be destroyed.

Being duly and truly prepared also refers to the state of a man's heart and soul as he seeks admission into our Order. "Seek and ye shall find. Ask and it shall be given unto you. Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

There are other factors involved in the preparation of the candidate that we will address in the next degree.

THE HOODWINK

The symbolism of the hoodwink is twofold: first, it emphasizes the veil of secrecy and silence surrounding the mysteries of Freemasonry; secondly, it represents the mystical darkness, or ignorance, of the uninitiated. It is removed at the appropriate time; that is, when the candidate is in the proper attitude to receive Light.

THE CABLE-TOW

The Cable-Tow is a rope such as would be used to tow or restrain. It is also generally regarded as a symbol of the voluntary and complete acceptance of, and pledged compliance with, whatever Masonry may have in store. To many, the Cable-Tow is symbolic of the umbilical cord, which is necessary to begin life; but is severed when love and care replace it, and the individual grows on his own. The length of the Cable-Tow is frequently referred to in the language

of Freemasonry, but many of the new Brethren do not understand its meaning. Formerly, a Cable-Tow was deemed to be the distance one could travel in an hour, which was assumed to be about three miles. In California this is any reasonable distance from which a summons may be answered, health and business permitting. Each Mason is bound to all other Masons by a tie as long and as strong as he himself determines his ability will permit. One may also consider the idea of the silver cord (Ecclesiastes 12:6) and the Cable-Tow.

ENTERING THE LODGE

As an Entered Apprentice takes his first step into the Lodge room, he enters into a New World: the world of Masonry. He leaves the darkness, destitution and helplessness of the world for the light and warmth of this new existence. It is not an idle formality, but a genuine experience, the beginning of a new career in which duties, rights and privileges are real. If a candidate is not to be an Apprentice in name only, he must stand ready to do the work upon his own nature that will make him a different man. Members are called craftsmen because they are workmen. Lodges are quarries because they are scenes of toil. Freemasonry offers no privileges or rewards except to those who earn them; it places working tools, not playthings, in the hands of its members. To become a Mason is a solemn and serious undertaking. Once the step is taken, it may well change the course of a man's life.

THE METHOD OF RECEPTION

The reception of the candidate into the Lodge room is intended to symbolize the fact that our rituals are serious and confidential and that there are consequences for violating this confidence. It also reminds a man that his every act has a consequence, either in the form of a reward or a penalty. The method of reception also points out the value of a certain virtue needed to gain admission into the mysteries of Masonry.

PRAYER IN LODGE

No Lodge can be opened or be closed without prayer, which is offered by the Master or Chaplain. The prayer is universal in nature, and not peculiar to any one religion or faith. But the act of invoking the blessings of Deity is a central Masonic practice. At the end of prayer, each member responds with the words "So Mote it Be", which means in Modern English, "So may it ever be".

THE PRACTICE OF CIRCUMAMBULATION

Circumambulation means to walk around some central point or object. In Masonry, the act is performed in a clockwise manner, patterned after the movement of the sun as it is seen from the earth, moving from East to West, by way of the South. The candidate's journey around the Altar also enables the brethren to observe that he is properly prepared. Circumambulation is an ancient practice found all over the world. Much the same idea as the labyrinth, it portrays the path of initiation as that of a journey. In another sense, it symbolically aligns one to a proper relationship with the order of the universe. There are references to circuitous routes in Psalms 26:6 and Job 22:14. And one may remember the action at Jericho.

KNEELING AT THE ALTAR

The central piece of furniture in the Lodge is the Altar. The Altar is symbolic of many things. As a temple symbolizes the presence of Deity, the altar symbolizes the point of contact. Its location in the center of the Lodge also symbolizes the place which God has in Masonry, and which he should have in every Mason's life. It is also a symbol of worship and faith. The candidate approaches the Altar in search of light and assumes his obligations there. In the presence of God and his Brethren, he offers himself to the service of the Supreme Architect of the Universe and to mankind in general. The Altar is the point on which life in our Masonic Lodges is focused and it should be accorded the highest respect.

The wisdom of the Master is said to flow from his station in the East to the Altar. Thus, one should never cross between the Master's Station and the Altar when a Lodge is in session.

THE OBLIGATION

The Obligation is the heart of the Degree; for when it is assumed by the candidate, he has solemnly bound himself to Freemasonry and assumed certain duties which are his for the rest of his life. The taking of the Obligation is visible and audible evidence of the candidate's sincerity of purpose. The Obligation has a two-fold purpose. In addition to binding the candidate to Freemasonry and its duties, it also protects the Fraternity against someone revealing the modes of recognition and symbolic instruction. The candidate should understand that the great truths which Masonry teaches are not secret, but the manner in which Freemasonry teaches these truths is considered secret.

Like much in the Fraternity, the roots of this practice are ancient. Making vows was a common practice in the Mysteries and was even a form of personal religion to the general populace. In many ways the vow defined their relationship with the deities of their homeland. Many vows were expressed in terms such as promises to a deity in return for safe voyages, successful crops, healing and so on. Although the nature of making vows and obligations has changed in modern times, it remains a very powerful method for setting direction in one's life and the building of character. The Latin obligato literally signifies a tying or binding. The relationship between the Cable Tow and the Obligation, along with the changing nature of this relationship as the candidate progresses, should not go unnoticed.

THE THREE GREAT LIGHTS OF MASONRY

The Three Great Lights of Masonry are the Holy Bible, Square and Compass. The Volume of the Sacred Law (no matter what religion) is an indispensable part of a Lodge. The Grand Lodges of the United States use the Holy Bible as the V.S.L. on their Altars. In our jurisdiction, a candidate may request to have his own sacred book present on the Altar with the Bible during his degree ceremonies. In Lodges in other countries, other sacred texts are placed on the Altar in place of the Holy Bible, but no Lodge in California may stand officially open, unless the Holy Bible is opened upon its Altar with the Square and Compass displayed thereon. The open Bible signifies that we should regulate our conduct according to its teachings because it is the rule and guide of our faith and is a symbol of man's acknowledgment of his relation to Deity. The Square is a symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. To "act on the square" is to act honestly. The Compass signifies the propitious use of action and is a symbol of restraint, skill and knowledge. We might also properly regard the Compass as excluding beyond its circle that which is harmful or unworthy. The Square and Compass are recognized by the general public as the symbol of Freemasonry.

The symbolism of the square and compass is seen in many ancient carvings and artwork. A stonecutter's square has been seen to represent the earth, while the compass has related to the arc of heaven. Thus their union has represented the union of heaven and earth. The Volume of Sacred Law can also represent God's communication to man through scripture and inspired writings. The triple symbol can also be seen as representing God's expression through the creation of heaven and earth.

The Three Great Lights are also consistent with the three tier system of Blue Lodge Masonry. One way of interpreting the triple symbolism is seeing human nature as divided into three parts – body, mind, and soul with a Degree for each part. In the same way, the Three Great Lights are the guiding principals of the three natures: the Square to the body, the Compass to the mind, and the Volume of Sacred Law for the soul.

PRESENTATION OF THE LAMBSKIN APRON

The Apron is at once an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. By innocence is meant clean thinking and clean living, a loyal obedience to the laws of the Craft and sincere good will one's Brethren. The Badge of a Mason signifies, among other things, that Masons are workers and builders.

Other aspects of this most visible vesture of our Fraternity should be mentioned. The apron as a mark of distinction has been found in many similar organizations of initiatory nature including the Essenes and the Mythraic Mysteries, and has been conspicuous on statues of some Egyptian and Greek deities. The lamb has always been a symbol of innocence and sacrifice. There are two senses in which innocence is being used here. Innocence in one sense is free from moral defect. The other sense used is that of being new born.

Another consideration of the white lambskin apron is that the Sign of the Ram begins at the Spring Equinox – the time of year that life is renewed.

The Masonic Apron is made up of two parts: a square and a triangle, representing four and three respectively. The symbolism of these numbers, as well as their sum, should be studied in connection with the form of the apron in the different degrees. Finally, it should be mentioned that the word candidate comes from the Latin candidatus which means, "clothed in white."

WORKING TOOLS OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE

The Working Tools presented to the candidate were those used by the ancient operative craftsman in the erection of the building on which he was working. To the Speculative Mason, these represent the moral habits and forces by which man shapes and reshapes the essence of his human nature. By these symbolic tools, he also fits his own behavior to society and community. While they do not contain the whole philosophy of Masonry, the various Working

Tools allocated to the three degrees, by their very presence, declare that there is constructive work to be done; and by their nature, indicate the direction this work is to take.

The Working Tools of this degree are specified as the twenty-four inch gauge and the common gavel. The symbolic description of these tools is provided in the ritual and the Monitor, so there is no need to repeat that here. It is interesting that one tool (gauge) is used passively and the other (gavel) is used actively. One is a tool of measurement and calculation, while the other is one of force. One tool decides what to keep, while the other gets rid of the rest.

The three parts may also be seen to represent the tripartite nature of the soul defined by Plato: the desirous, emotional, and mental. When properly cultivated, they embody the virtues temperance, fortitude, and prudence. These three virtues combined in proper order promote the supreme virtue of the whole self: equilibrium or justice.

THE NORTHEAST CORNER

The Northeast Corner is traditionally the place where the cornerstone (the first stone) of a building is laid. The Apprentice is thus placed, because from here he will erect his own temple by the principles of Freemasonry.

Other considerations on the northeast corner are the following. The north in Masonry is attributed to darkness and the east to light. Therefore, the northeast is a place midway between darkness and light. Being midway, it is also symbolic of equilibrium. Furthermore, this spot representing equal light and darkness corresponds with the point of the Spring Equinox when the nighttime is equal to the daytime. There is some evidence that the lambskin apron was presented to the candidate at one time in the northeast corner of the lodge.

It needs to be mentioned that there is a seeming contradiction of this symbolism with physical reality. If we imagine the lodge's boundaries to be the eastern and western horizons, with the north and south walls being the Tropic of Cancer and Capricorn (where the sun reaches its northern and southern limits), then the day that the sun rises in the northeast corner of the "lodge" is the Summer Solstice near St. John the Baptist's Day. Sometimes symbolism overlaps, but in many cases it is a hint at a deeper meaning.

THE LECTURE OF THIS DEGREE

The Lectures given to the candidate by the Worshipful Master are intended to elaborate certain phases of the ritual, giving a broader explanation of the ceremonies in order for the candidate to understand the lessons of Freemasonry. The four cardinal virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice are explained here as well as the three tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

The lodge is dedicated to Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist. Freemasonry long ago chose as its patron saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. By doing this, the Brethren arrived at the conclusion that their patron saints belonged to a Lodge and that it must have been in the city in which they lived - Jerusalem. By this tradition, all Lodges symbolically come from one at Jerusalem. By tradition, also, every Mason hails from such a Lodge. By claiming to come from this mythical Lodge, he proves that he hails from a "just and legally constituted Lodge."

The form of a Lodge is an oblong square, or a rectangle. It extends from East to West (horizon to horizon) and between North and South. The covering of the Lodge is the canopy of heaven. It is not a coincidence that the two major patrons of the Masonic Lodge have their birthdays near the Summer and Winter Solstices where the sun reaches its most northern and southern limits. The East in a Masonic Lodge does not necessarily mean the actual point of the compass. The East in the Lodge is the station of the Worshipful Master whence he dispenses light and instruction to all his brethren. Some Lodges may actually have the Master sitting in another compass location, but the important point is that the Master is always symbolically located in the East and the other symbolic points of the West, South and North are located in proper relation to the station of the Master. Further instruction is given in the long form of the lecture regarding the Supports of the Lodge: the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, which also relate to the three immovable Jewels of the Lodge: the Square, Plumb and Level, which still further relate to the three principal Officers and three Lesser Lights of the Lodge.

The three movable Jewels of the Lodge consist of the Rough and Perfect Ashlar and the Trestleboard. The Rough and Perfect Ashlars are precise symbols of the process of initiation. In a Hermetic sense, the Rough Ashlar is the prima materia, while the Perfect Ashlar is the Philosopher's Stone. The Ornaments of the Lodge consist of the Mosaic Pavement, the Indented Tessel, and the Blazing Star. We walk in a world of opposites: good and evil, night and day,

hot and cold, love and hate. The Mosaic Pavement symbolizes this fact. Again, all of these symbols should be studied further to find out what they conceal and what they reveal.

THE CHARGE

At the end of the ceremony and instruction in each degree, the candidate is charged to perform his Masonic duties. The Charge given him explains these duties especially in their relation to the particular Degree. These Charges should not be ignored as mere conventionalities.

THE PROFICIENCY

The Proficiency is a series of questions and answers, which the candidate is required to commit to memory prior to being advanced to the next degree. Among other things, it is intended to:

1. Teach each candidate the language of Freemasonry.
2. Fix in his memory the teachings and structure of the Degree.
3. Impress upon his consciousness the different points of the Obligation.
4. Give each candidate an ancient method to contemplate the meanings behind the degree.
5. Give the new candidate a point of contact with an established member.

THE LANGUAGE OF FREEMASONRY

Why is the language of Freemasonry so different from that which we normally use? This question is often asked by new members of our Fraternity. The Ritual of Freemasonry is a product of the early decades of the 18th century. It contains much of the language of that time period and other words and phrases from the very old work have been incorporated. This is why the language is written and spoken as it is. If the time and effort is spent to study the words of our Ritual, one will discover that the thoughts and teachings imparted cannot be put in fewer words and still retain their meaning.

WHEN TO RISE AND WHEN TO BE SEATED

The gavel in the hands of the Master of a Lodge is one of the symbols of authority by which he governs. When the gavel is sounded once in the East at the beginning of Lodge, the Brethren must come to order. Two raps call the principle Officers to their feet, and three raps mean that all Brethren must stand. If everyone is standing, one rap seats everyone in the Lodge. If the Worshipful Master addresses you by name, arise, face the East, give the due guard and sign of the degree and listen to his instructions. If you wish to speak, arise and wait until the Master recognizes you. Give the due guard and sign of the degree, and then address your remarks to him.

SUBJECTS NOT PROPER FOR DISCUSSION IN LODGE

Sectarian religion and politics should not be addressed in Lodge, and there are good reasons for this. When we meet in a Lodge, we are all on a common level, and are not subject to the classes and distinctions of the outside world. Each Brother is entitled to his own beliefs and convictions. Our objective is to unite men, not to divide them. These subjects create honest differences of opinion that might well cause friction between brethren.

There will also be subjects concerning the Lodge's business that should not be discussed. All deliberations should be kept within the bounds of propriety and everyone should show tolerance for the opinion of others. Every Master wants harmony in his Lodge. Once a matter has been put to vote in the Lodge and a decision is made, the decision should be accepted by all members, regardless of how they voted. We try to teach every Mason to be a good citizen and to perform his civic duties. We do not try to keep anyone from expressing his opinion or from serving his city, county, state, or nation, in an honorable manner. Anyone who serves in political office should not act politically as a Freemason, nor use the name of Freemasonry in exercising his political rights, such as showing affiliation with any Lodge in his campaign advertising.

THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Why is the presiding officer of the Lodge called Worshipful? This is an Old English word meaning, "worthy of respect." Since he is chosen by the Brethren, they deem him to have sufficient wisdom, integrity and Masonic knowledge to govern the Lodge properly. Why is the Worshipful Master's station in the East? In the world of nature, the sun rises in the East to shed light and luster on earth. In a like manner, it is the province of the Master to be the source of

Masonic knowledge for his Brethren as they "approach the East in search of light." Why does the Master wear a hat in the Lodge? He wears the hat, and the remainder of the Brethren remain uncovered, for several reasons. Keeping the head covered while others are uncovered has long been a symbol of superior rank. Men, as a mark of respect, usually uncover in the presence of those they deem to be of superior rank. Also, it is possible that the Worshipful Master wears a hat because King Solomon wore a crown as a mark of dignity. The title Master is not unlike the Master of a ship or one who has received a Masters Degree in his chosen discipline. He is capable of teaching his subject - thus imparting "light" or knowledge.

THE TILER

The Tiler guards the avenues approaching the Lodge. A Lodge is said to be "duly tiled" when the necessary precautions have been taken to guard against intrusion by cowans, eavesdroppers or other unauthorized persons. (A cowan is one who tries to masquerade as a Mason. He has not done the work but says he has in order to gain admittance. An eavesdropper is one who tries to steal the secrets of our Society. He would forge a dues card or may find one and try to masquerade as the owner.) If a Brother comes to Lodge late and wants to join the meeting, the Tiler sees that he is properly clothed and then vouches for him as qualified to enter. It is the duty of the Tyler to inform the Junior Deacon when a qualified Brother wishes to enter the Lodge and to let the Brethren know in which Degree the Lodge is working.

NO HORSEPLAY OR HAZING

There is no place for horseplay or hazing during our ceremonies, and the candidate can be assured that there will be none. The rituals are serious and solemn, and we try to teach moral lessons with great dignity. Anything which is told to the candidate in a joking manner serves only to desecrate the honorable purposes of Freemasonry. The candidate should have no apprehension about entering a Lodge. He is always entering a society of friends and brothers where he will be treated with dignity and decorum at all times.

THE RIGHTS OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE MASON

These are very limited, since he cannot vote or hold office. He is, however, entitled to a Masonic funeral. The Entered Apprentice is not entitled to organized Masonic Charity, but this does not bar him from receiving assistance from a Mason, as an individual. He can attend a Lodge while an Entered Apprentice Degree is being presented. He has a right to be instructed in his work and in matters pertaining to his degree. If charged with violating his obligation, he is entitled to a trial. He is entitled to apply for advancement to the Second Degree, when proficient in the Entered Apprentice Degree. He may not receive the degrees of Craft Masonry elsewhere without consent of the Lodge. Also, the Apprentice possesses modes of recognition by which he can make himself known to other Masons.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE

An Entered Apprentice Mason has very few actual Lodge responsibilities. He must keep secret everything entrusted to him, conduct himself with proper decorum and diligently work to learn his proficiency and as much about the Craft as possible. He should not be content with learning the words letter-perfect, but should study the meanings also. If he cannot interpret these for himself, he should seek help from others. Complete faithfulness to his obligations and implicit obedience to the charge are among his important and lasting responsibilities. Freemasonry preserves a secrecy about all its work in the Lodge: it meets behind closed doors; it throws over its principles and teachings a garment of symbolism and ritual; its Art is a mystery; a great wall separates it from the world. Nor is its work easy to understand. If this be true, we urgently advise you not to be content with the letter and outward form of this, your beginning period, but to apply yourself with freedom, fervency and zeal to the sincere and thorough mastering of our Royal Art.

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Fellowcraft Degree

BASIC TEACHINGS OF THE SECOND DEGREE

In one sense the Fellowcraft Degree symbolizes the stage of adulthood and responsibility during a man's life on earth. In this stage, his task is to acquire knowledge and apply it to the building of his character and improving the society in which he lives. As the father of our Masonic lectures, William Preston saw Masonry as a means to educate men in

the liberal arts and sciences. A Fellowcraft Mason is urged to advance his education in these fields during the ritual of this Degree.

Some view the three grade system of Blue Lodge Masonry as representing a progressive teaching directed toward perfecting human nature. It is a simple and straightforward view of human nature divided into three parts: body, mind and soul. Each Degree addresses and instructs one part. The First Degree encompasses the body and our faculties of action in the world. The four cardinal virtues are extolled as the proper guides to our action in the world that we may perfect our relation to it. The Second Degree addresses the mind and its faculties. We are instructed in the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences which were formulated hundreds of years ago in order to develop and perfect the mental nature. The intention was to prepare the mind for spiritual truths. The Third Degree confers the central Mystery of Freemasonry; that is, how the soul may be brought to its perfection.

If we accept the view of Masonry purpose given above, then it is obvious that the Fellowcraft Degree encompasses much more than just gaining a normal and broad-based education. The teachings of this Degree are extremely profound and surprisingly exact.

SYMBOLISM OF THE DEGREE

The symbolism of the Entered Apprentice Degree emphasized beginnings, spiritual birth, the first steps and youth, orientation to the Light, which are all consistent with a rite of induction into the Fraternity. The Second Degree of Fellowcraft symbolizes the methods of developing and progressing in the Craft; and, in a sense, the emergence into spiritual manhood. Therefore we find symbols of advancement, passage, instruction and elevation throughout this Degree. We find symbolism of taking the next step and a new way of approaching the East. What was considered in the last Degree to be our weaker nature has now been squared and elevated. While keeping our fidelity to the Three Great Lights, we deepen our connection with the Fraternity and take on new commitments.

Our Working Tools are now testing instruments. With them we try, square and prove. With them we learn to develop the faculty of judgment: what is valuable, what is true, what is real.

The central motif of this Degree being one of advancement we are presented with the symbol of the Winding Staircase consisting of so many steps and leading to the Middle Chamber of the Temple. Staircases, ladders, extended vertical ropes, and mountains are all symbols of ascending to new heights.

Gaining entrance to a new place symbolizes a distinct advancement in our work as Freemasons. Attaining this level gives us access to certain benefits that we were not entitled to before. These benefits are symbolized by Corn, Wine, and Oil. There are other things granted here as well. We become invested with the ability to hear the teachings of our Fraternity and keep them close to our heart. Finally, we are reminded of our central focus in the symbolism of the letter and the humility it should inspire.

DULY AND TRULY PREPARED

At the outset of this Degree, it should be clear to the candidate that although much of it seems familiar, it is also very different, and some aspects even seem to be in opposition to the previous Degree. There are certain avenues of further exploration that should be brought out here. We are usually given an explanation for most parts of the ritual in the various lectures. Some seem to allude to deeper interpretations. As we prepare to enter the Mysteries of Freemasonry certain things should be kept in mind. For example, the number three keeps emerging in the rituals in one way or another. Geometrically, three is the triangle. And in fact, there are three kinds of triangle the equilateral triangle (all three sides equal), the isosceles triangle (two sides equal), and the scalene triangle (no sides equal).

Many of the mythological gods or heroes that were smiths or artificers for the gods were lame. For example the Roman god Vulcan and the Greek god Hephaestus. Vulcan was crippled as a result of being thrown down to earth. He is usually depicted with tools as he is patron of craftsmen. Scalene in one sense means unequal and used in another means limping. The most celebrated scalene triangle is of course the 3-4-5 right triangle which is of special concern to Freemasons. We will cover this more fully in our discussion of the Master Mason Degree. There is an interesting story by the Roman poet Virgil in his epic *The Aeneid* that is highly suggestive. In Book IV he writes about Queen Dido who, because of her despair and anguish, commits to sacrificing herself. She performs various rites in preparation of that supreme moment and finally: Dido herself with consecrated grain in her pure hands, as she went near the altars, freed one foot from sandal straps, let fall her dress ungirdled, and, now sworn to death, called on the gods and stars that knew her fate. It is also noteworthy that she was supposed to be of Tyrian origin.

There is a Byzantine painting known as "Our Lady of Perpetual Help," which pictures the divine child in his mothers' arms. Angels are shown at either side with implements of the Crucifixion. The child is turning towards an angel, and one of his shoes is falling off.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A FELLOWCRAFT

In addition to the rights you acquired as an Entered Apprentice Mason, you have the right to sit in a Lodge when opened in the Fellowcraft Degree, when accompanied by a Master Mason who has sat in Lodge with you. You may visit another Lodge opened in the Fellowcraft Degree. You have the right to be instructed and examined. If found proficient, you may request advancement to the next degree.

The responsibilities are found in part in the Obligation, and you should review these along with the Obligation of the Entered Apprentice. Finally, you are reminded that you are to acquire the special knowledge introduced in this Degree and seek to apply that knowledge to your duties in life so you can occupy your place in society with satisfaction and honor.

THE WORKING TOOLS THE SQUARE

The Square is the symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. The direction of the two sides of the Square form an angle of 90°, or a right angle, so-called because this is the angle which stones must have if they are to be used to build a stable and upright wall. It symbolizes accuracy, not even varying by a single degree. When we part upon the Square, we go in different directions, but in full knowledge that our courses in life will be going according to the angle of the Square (which means in the right direction), until we meet again.

THE LEVEL

The Level is a symbol of equality. We do not mean equality in wealth, social distinction, civic office, or service to mankind; but, rather, we refer to the internal, and not the external, qualifications. Each person is endowed with a worth and dignity which is spiritual, and should not be subject to man-made distinctions. Masonry recognizes that one man may have greater potential in life, service, or reward, than another; but, we also believe that any man can aspire to any height, no matter how great. Thus, the Level dignifies labor and the man who performs it. It also acknowledges that all men are equal without regard to station. The Level also symbolizes the passage of time.

THE PLUMB

The Plumb is a symbol of uprightness of conduct. In Freemasonry, it is associated with the plumb line which the Lord promised Amos he would set in the midst of His people, Israel, symbolizing God's standard of divine righteousness. The plumb line in the midst of a people should mean that they will be judged by their own sense of right and wrong, and not by the standards of others. By understanding the Plumb, a Mason is to judge his Brothers by their own standards and not those of someone else. When the plumb line is thought of in this way, it becomes a symbol of an upright life and of the conscience by which each person must live. This idea is closely tied to the concept of Justice. For, in truth, Justice is giving another man his due.

OTHER IMPORTANT SYMBOLS THE PILLARS ON THE PORCH

Two pillars were placed at the entrance to King Solomon's Temple, which are symbolically represented within every Masonic Lodge. These pillars are symbols of strength and establishment - and by implication, power and control. One must remember that power and control are placed before you, so you might realize that power without control is anarchy, or that control without power is futility. Man must have both if his life is to be successful.

The construction of dual pillars, obelisks, sphinxes and so on was not uncommon in the ancient Near East. It is not known what their exact symbolism was. Speculation ranges from their signifying duality (that duality or polarity are twin forces throughout Creation), guardianship of the temple, symbolic gateways, to the idea of being a connection between heaven and earth.

Some researchers have thought that the two pillars before Solomon's Temple represented the Pillar of Cloud and the Pillar of Fire which led the Israelites through the desert to the Promised Land. It was their guide in the light as well as in the dark.

The globes on the columns are said to be the celestial and terrestrial spheres representing heaven and earth.

The two pillars also correspond to the Three Great Supports of Masonry. The columns of Wisdom and Strength are emblematically represented by the pillars in the South and North, respectively. The candidate, as he is brought into

the Lodge, comes to represent the third column of Beauty or Balance.

THE WINDING STAIRCASE

As we mentioned before, the Winding Staircase is a symbol of ascension. It is described as consisting of three, five, and seven steps. The number of steps has changed over the years. Sometimes there were only five and at others seven. Preston listed thirty-six, dividing them into one, three, five, seven, nine and eleven. The Hemming lectures listed the number at twenty-five. American Masonry has kept to fifteen. Note the connection between this number and the number of Fellowcrafts in the Third Degree.

Much of the symbolism of the Winding Staircase is explained in the ritual itself. There are some points to bring out that may lead one to further research and insight.

The significance of the number three has already been mentioned. We have the three Degrees, the Three Great Lights, the three Columns, the three Officers, the Three Grand Masters and the three Principle Tenets of Freemasonry. What we want to emphasize here is the Three Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity. These virtues were considered a ladder to heaven, another symbol of ascent. The Four Cardinal Virtues presented in the First Degree compliment these in the sense that the Four are symbolically horizontal (basically dealing with our actions here on earth) while the Three are symbolically vertical (referring to our method of ascent to further light). Our Aprons are composite examples of the Three and the Four making Seven.

The Five Steps are also explained in some detail. A few points for further consideration concern the symbolism of the number five. The geometrical symbol of five is, of course, the pentagram. The emblem of Pythagoras' fraternity was the five-pointed star. At each point of the star was a Greek letter which all together spelled a Greek word meaning "health" (ugitha). The pentagram is a symbol of the Microcosm, that is, Man.

Another avenue to explore is the ratio of the column height to diameter. They are approximately: Tuscan 1/7; Doric 1/8; Ionic 1/9; Corinthian and Composite 1/10. It is also worth studying which order of architecture was used to build a particular type of temple. The Parthenon on the Acropolis, dedicated to Athena, is Doric, as is her temple at Delphi. The Ephesian temple of Diana, a moon goddess, is Ionic. The importance of the compass to the Ionic Order is also worthy of study.

The Seven Steps symbolize the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. These were formulated as early as 330 CE. The Christian scholars adopted them soon afterwards and we find their full flowering at the Neo-platonic Cathedral School of Chartres in 12th Century France. The interesting work that came together here was the union of the philosophies of Neo-platonism and Christianity. The study of the Seven Liberal Arts was considered a means to the knowledge of God. This principle was actually expressed in the construction of the Gothic Cathedral of Chartres. We even find for the first time sculpted representations of the Seven Liberal Arts on the West Door of the Cathedral.

The Masters of Chartres taught that the proper study of the Seven Liberal Arts guided the intellect to approach the hidden light behind the world. The invisible underlying structure of Reality, the Truth, could be apprehended in this way. As another matter of interest, it was in the mid-thirteenth century that the humble mason who had mastered the Seven Liberal Arts was entitled to the designation of architect.

ADMISSION TO THE MIDDLE CHAMBER

The passage from the Outer Porch to the Middle Chamber represents a definite step in the journey to enlightenment. The wages received in the Middle Chamber come as a result of achieving this distinction. Remember that the candidate had to first ascend the Winding Staircase in order to gain admission. The Fellowcraft must become proficient in the Seven Liberal Arts. A regular study of the subjects is demanded to gain admission to the outer doors leading to this Middle Chamber. It is when the initiate begins to perceive the synthetic vision of this Masonic education and a special intuition begins to dawn within his mind and conscience that he knows the inner doors are opening to that Chamber within. Outside, the candidate was shown a symbol of plenty, but here it has been established in fact.

THE WAGES OF A FELLOWCRAFT

Corn, Wine, and Oil are symbolic wages earned by the Fellowcraft Mason who arrives at the Middle Chamber. These symbolize wealth in mental and spiritual worlds. Corn represents nourishment and the sustenance of life. It is also a symbol of plenty, and refers to the opportunity for doing good, to work for the community, and to the performance of service to mankind. The Corn referred to in this Degree is actually what we call wheat.

Wine is symbolic of refreshment, health, spirituality, and peace. Oil represents joy, gladness and happiness. Taken together, Corn, Wine, and Oil represent the temporal rewards of living a good life.

The actual "wages" are the intangible but no less real compensation for a faithful and intelligent use of the Working Tools, fidelity to your obligations, and unflagging interest in and study of the structure, purpose and possibilities of the Fraternity. Such wages may be defined in terms of a deeper understanding of brotherhood, a clearer conception of ethical living, a broader toleration, and a more resolute will to think justly, independently, and honestly.

Corn or grain has also represented the concept of resurrection. Wine has symbolized mystical attainments, divine intoxication and ecstasy. Oil is one of the elements of consecration. Perfumed oil was used to anoint.

THE MASONIC LETTER "G"

Why the letter "G" is so prominently displayed in Masonic lodges is an enigma to Masonic historians. Like the sphinx before the pyramids, it stands before us in silence and mystery. It is not consistently displayed throughout the Masonic world and there are Masonic scholars who feel it should be removed. The reason that it is so displayed is plainly given to the candidate in this Degree. We are told that it is the initial of Geometry as well as the initial of the name of the Supreme Being. From the time of the "Old Charges" and manuscripts up to the present, the synonymous nature of Geometry and Masonry is clearly stated. It is also obvious that "G" is the initial of God. This alone may be sufficient reason for its presence.

There are other considerations that the Masonic student might want to take into account. The immediate question for some may be why is Geometry given such exalted status? One might also observe that the word "God" is not a name per se, but is a category of being – like "human being". The name of the Supreme Being depends on what tradition a person follows, and it would not be incorrect to say that the True Name of the Supreme Being cannot be known. Obviously, then, the letter "G" does not refer to the common usage of that term.

These two issues have given rise to much speculation regarding the focus given to this one letter of the alphabet. We will offer a few of these speculations for your benefit.

The ancient languages of Phoenician, Hebrew and Greek all placed the "G" in the third place. In Hebrew, the order is aleph, beth, gimel. In Greek, the order is alpha, beta, gamma and so on. The Phoenician/Hebrew letter gimel means camel. There is an interesting passage in the Gospel of St. Matthew regarding our patron John the Baptist: "And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins." (Matt 3:4) In both Hebrew and Greek, each letter is assigned a numerical value as well as a phonetic one, so that "G" is equivalent to the number "3" in both languages. The Greek letter gamma looks like an upside down "L". It is two perpendicular lines forming the angle of a square. Gamma is also associated with Dionysus and resurrection.

The importance of Geometry to a full understanding of Freemasonry becomes apparent to the candidate as he progresses through the degrees. He is unequivocally informed that Geometry is the basis or foundation of Masonry. A full explanation for this importance is not forthcoming, just that it is very important to undertake the study. We would suggest that the Masonic student might follow some of the following lines of research, that he may come to his own conclusions.

It is thought that the Egyptians became skilled at surveying because the annual flooding of the Nile obliterated boundary markers in their fields. They had to set out and calculate new boundaries each year. The Greeks named this skill Geometry, or "earth measurement." Empirical generalizations were derived, presumably, from their experience in field measurement. The Greeks, it is thought, made the advancement of using deductive logic to expand the knowledge into a theoretical science, and Pythagoras is credited with this achievement. This actually set the groundwork for the development of the sciences. So we may consider Geometry the first science.

Pythagoras and his Society, and later, Plato and his Academy, raised Geometry to a sacred science of discovering the nature of reality and through it the Deity. We have such statements from Plato as: "Geometry rightly treated is the knowledge of the eternal." And also: "Geometry must ever tend to draw the soul towards the truth." Later, Euclid systemically presented all the knowledge of Geometry in his work Elements of Geometry, beginning with five unproved principles about lines, angles, and figures, which he called postulates. Euclid uses only the compass and straight edge for all the drawings, proofs, and solutions.

There are some Masonic researchers who think that the letter "G" represents a little known method of Biblical interpretation known as gematria. One of the earliest known references to this method is found about 200 CE in the Bariatha of R. Eliezer ben R. Jose, the Galiean, which is a collection of 32 rabbinical rules. Gematria is listed within this treatise as a rabbinical method of biblical exegesis. As already mentioned, the Hebrew and Greek alphabets were also used as numbers. Therefore, every Hebrew word and every Greek word is the sum of the value of the individual letters. Exploring this technique of letter-number substitution, one looks for words, names, and phrases that add up to like values. Like values are thought to have meaningful relationships. For example, the Hebrew word for "heaven" (ha-shamayim) has the same gematria value as the word for "soul" (neshamah); that is, 395, derived by adding up each letter to arrive at a total. The Qabalist would say this means that the soul is identical with heaven.

Another example of gematria can be found by comparing the Hebrew words for "love" (ahabah) and "unity" (echad), both of which add to 13. Combining the values of these two words gives us 26, the number of the Hebrew word rendered in English as Jehovah, the principal Name of God. This is a clear intimation that the nature of God can be understood as Love and Unity.

This exegetical technique can be used with both the Hebrew scriptures and the Greek Christian scriptures. There are other texts that have been found to contain hidden gematria in Latin and Arabic, as well. From the practice of gematria have arisen extremely interesting techniques, which reveal a type of spiritual Geometry hidden within the Scriptures.

NUMBER, ORDER, SYMMETRY AND PROPORTION

The great teachings of this Degree revolve around the importance of the Masonic study of number, order, symmetry and proportion. The Masonic use of the term Geometry includes all of these. Nature is the true temple of the Deity. If this is so, then cosmic and natural laws are like the Trestleboard. These laws are discovered in the practice of the Seven Arts (they were called liberal arts because their practice liberated the mind). The ancient philosophers considered Geometry to have the power to lead the mind from the world of appearances to the contemplation of the divine order. Further study would most certainly include a detailed study of Pythagorean number philosophy, the Golden Mean, Plato's work, the Neoplatonists, and Qabalistic gematria.

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Master Mason Degree

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEGREE

This Degree is the crown of the Blue Lodge. It is the culmination of all that has been taught to the candidate in the two preceding ceremonies. At this point the candidate has symbolically, if not actually, balanced his inner natures and has shaped them into the proper relationship with the higher, more spiritual parts of himself. His physical nature has been purified and developed to a high degree. He has developed stability and a sure footing. His mental faculties have sharpened and his horizons have been expanded. The candidate is now ready to approach the portal of the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

The above would be the ideal scenario, but is rarely carried out so seriously. However, regardless of the candidate's pace through the Degrees, he should always review his personal progress and take action to improve himself in Masonry. He should not be satisfied with taking the Degrees halfheartedly and then consider himself a Master Mason. Very few of us are truly Masters of our Craft, and we should maintain a healthy deference for this exalted status. For the designation Master Mason should always be before us in our journey toward the Light as the ideal of our Fraternity.

Being "Raised to the Sublime Degree" is the appropriate terminology. Sublime is defined as being exalted or elevated so as to inspire awe and wonder. And it also means to undergo sublimation that, like distillation, requires a volatilization of a substance that rises and reforms at a higher level. The significance of this Degree is the portrayal of the removal of everything that keeps us from rising to that state where the soul communes with the Supernal Light.

SYMBOLISM OF THE DEGREE

The candidate enters the Lodge of the Master Mason in darkness, for he has not witnessed the Light at this Degree before. But the difference of this entrance from that of the others is that he is now in a state of equilibrium and is

prepared to walk on sacred ground. He becomes fully committed to the Fraternity and completely puts his faith on the Three Great Lights. The initiate is given full use of every working tool, but the one tool exalted above the others from this point on is the one that symbolizes the spreading of brotherly love.

After ceremonies in the first section which seem quite familiar, the candidate partakes of the central Mystery Drama of our Fraternity. The very nature of participating in this rite and assuming the role of the Grand Master Hiram Abiff is to forge a link with the inner soul of our Fraternity. And as our legend is completely and absolutely consistent with some of the august Mystery Schools of antiquity, we are communing with the archetypal forces that are the foundation of our tradition. And at least in some small way, we may momentarily forget who we were when we entered the Holy of Holies and realize who we really are.

The symbolism that we encounter in this Degree can be traced back for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Some of it is almost identical with very ancient usage, but most of it has taken on the cultural flavor of its successive conveyors. We will try to rediscover the hidden meaning of some of these symbols.

THE WORKING TOOLS

The Working Tools of a Master Mason are "all the instruments of Masonry." In the United States, the Trowel is especially assigned to this Degree. The Master Mason uses the Trowel to cement ties between Masons, and to spread Brotherly Love.

It may be remembered that this Degree is specifically related to the soul and, as such, the Trowel being the symbol of love is specifically related to the soul's relation with Spirit. Although all the tools are available to the Master Mason, it is the Trowel with which he must now work.

It should be remembered that tools have always aligned us with the creative and builder spirit within us.

THE LEGEND OF HIRAM

Hiram Abiff, the skilled artificer, was the Son of a Widow of the Tribe of Naphtali. The earlier accounts of Hiram are recorded in the 1st Book of Kings, 7:13 & 14. His coming to work on the great Temple at Jerusalem is mentioned in a letter written to King Solomon by Hiram, the King of Tyre, and recorded in II Chronicles, 2:13 & 14. The word Abiff is believed to mean "his father", and the name is often translated as "Hiram, my father". He was regarded as the father of the workmen on the Temple. One of the lessons of the legend of Hiram Abiff is that of fidelity to one's highest ideals.

Hiram Abiff is, in essence, identical with many of the Mystery School heroes. The drama of the Egyptian god Osiris began with his tragic death, the search for his body by Isis, its discovery and restoration. The Greek god Dionysus was attacked by the Titans. In the course of the fight he went through many transformations but was finally overcome. The Titans dismembered him, but in due time the goddess Rhea came to his aid and he rose glorious and entire. This formula is ancient. It is the concept of the sacred king, who in many instances is lame (which signifies his dedication), and is destined for sacrifice, that the earth might become regenerated and uplifted by divine power.

Regarding Hiram as the "Son of the Widow," there are a few things to mention. The Egyptian god Horus, as the child of Isis and Osiris, was also the son of a widow. Hermes Trismegistus called the stone "orphan." There seems to be a Manichaeian origin to the terms "son of the widow" and "children of the widow". The Manichaeians were called "children of the widow". Etymologically, the word individual is related to the word widow. Vidua, Latin for widow, derives from the verb videre, meaning "to part."

THE THREE GRAND MASTERS

The three Grand Masters mentioned often in our rituals concerning the building of the Temple are: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abiff. In early times, some religions regarded Deity in three aspects. The secrets known only to these Three Grand Masters typify Divine Truth, which was known only to Deity, and was not to be communicated to man until he had completed his own spiritual temple. Once these secrets were attained, a man could reap the rewards of a well-spent life, and travel to the unknown country toward which all of us are traveling. By knowing the meaning of these names and references to their offices, you will better understand what the ritual means. Tyre, by the way, means stone or rock.

TRAVELING IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

The goal of our ancient operative brethren was to become masters, so they might possess those secrets which would enable them to practice the art of the builder, no matter where they traveled, even in foreign countries.

The term "foreign countries" is used symbolically in Speculative Masonry, and is not meant to refer to a certain geographical location. Freemasonry itself is a foreign country to every new member. To fully appreciate and enjoy the privileges of membership, he must become familiar with its territory. He does this by learning its language, customs, and history.

Once Raised, many of our members continue their journey into the inner recesses of the Craft. This can be a most rewarding experience. Truly, Freemasonry is the journey of a lifetime. We must continue to search for light and truth where ever it may be found, even in foreign countries.

The term "foreign countries" may also be a metaphor for the spiritual worlds. The ancients, and some not-so-ancients, concerned themselves with vast spiritual worlds. Their method of gaining admission was through secret passwords, grips, signs, and sometimes angelic names and holy words.

THE THREE RUFFIANS

There are many symbolic explanations for the appearance of these three ruffians in our ritualistic work. Their attempt to obtain the secrets not rightfully theirs, and the dire consequences of their actions, are symbolic of many things. Trying to obtain knowledge of Divine Truth by some means other than a reward for faithfulness, makes the culprit both a thief and a murderer. Each of us is reminded that rewards must be earned, rather than obtained by violence or devious means. The Ruffians are also symbolic of the enemies we have within us: our own ignorance, passions and attitudes, which we have "come here to control and subdue".

LOW TWELVE

In ancient symbolism, the number twelve denoted completion. This sign arose from the twelve signs of the Zodiac being a complete circle and the twelve edges of the cube being a symbol of the earth. The number twelve denoted fulfillment of a deed, and was therefore an emblem of human life. High Twelve corresponds noon, with the sun at its zenith, while Low Twelve denotes midnight, the blackest time of the night.

THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

The lion has always been the symbol of might and royalty. It was the sign of the Tribe of Judah, because this was the royal tribe of the Hebrew Nation. All Kings of Judah were, therefore, called the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah." This was also one of the titles of King Solomon. This was the literal meaning.

In the Middle Ages, the lion was a symbol of resurrection. There were common tales that the lion cub when born lay dead for three days until breathed upon by its father. This breath brought the cub back to life. Representations of roaring lions symbolized the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. The lion, being such a majestic animal, has long been considered the "king" of beasts; associated with the sun because of its mane. Its likeness is commonly found on the thrones and palaces of rulers. The Mithraic god Aion had a human body with a lion's head.

Because of its association with the sun and its correspondence to the zodiacal sign of Leo, the Lion is also considered a symbol of alchemical Fire.

THE LOST WORD

In the search for "That Which Was Lost," we are not actually searching for a particular word. Our search is a symbol for our "feeling of loss" or "exile" from the Source of Life. What we are searching for is Divine Truth, which should be the ultimate goal of all men and Masons.

The Book of Genesis gives us a clue to the power of speech. In it, we learn that the first Act of Creation occurred when "God said." The utterance of the Word is also closely connected with the idea of Light, and therefore knowledge. Having the power of speech is perhaps the noblest attribute of man, because he can communicate his thoughts to his fellows. Thus, The Word has been carried down through the ages as synonymous with every manifestation of Divine Power and Truth. We must always search diligently for truth, and never permit prejudice, passions, or conflicts of interest, to hinder us in our search. We must keep our minds open to receiving truth from any source. Thus, Masons are devoted to freedom of thought, speech and action. In our Craft Lodges, we have but a substitute for the True Word. Each person must ultimately seek out and find the True Word for himself, through his own individual efforts.

Some Masons feel that the names of the Ruffians give us a blatant hint at the Lost Word. Indeed, there is an allusion to the sacred syllable of the Vedic texts found in these names. But again, that word is itself a symbol of the underlying Reality that upholds and sustains the world. Some Masons feel that the Lost Word is spoken of in the scriptures variously as "the sound of rushing waters" and "I heard behind me a Voice like a great trumpet," or "a great roar like a lion" and such.

THE SETTING MAUL

This was a wooden instrument used by operative masons to set polished stone firmly into a wall. The Maul has been shown to be a symbol of destruction from prehistoric times, and is shown many times in mythology. One of the best known is that of Thor, God of Thunder, who is shown as a powerful man armed with a mighty hammer.

THE SPRIG OF ACACIA

Hebrew people used to plant a sprig of acacia at the head of a grave for two purposes - to mark the location of the grave, and to show their belief in immortality. Because of its evergreen nature, they believed it to be an emblem of both immortality and innocence. The true acacia is a thorny plant, which abounds in the Middle East. Both Jews and Egyptians believed that because of its hardness, its evergreen nature and its durability, it signified immortality. It is believed that the acacia was used to construct most of the furniture and the tabernacle in the Temple. Acacia has red and white flowers. It is a tradition in the Near East that the Crown of Thorns was acacia. In Egypt, it symbolized rebirth and was an emblem of Neith.

RAISING OF A CANDIDATE

Most people do not understand what being "Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason" means. This Degree is the sublime climax of Symbolic Freemasonry. If you learn only that the living, dying and raising of a Master is a drama, designed to teach the virtues of fidelity, faith and fortitude, you have received only partial light and have seen nothing but a moral lesson. This Degree seeks to answer the age-old question put forth by Job - "If a man die, shall he live again?".

The Degree delves into the deepest recesses of man's nature. While it leads the initiate into the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple, it probes into the Holy of Holies in his heart. As a whole, the Degree is symbolic of old age and by the wisdom of which we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent and properly directed life, and die in the sure knowledge of a glorious immortality.

It teaches no creed, no dogma, no doctrine, no religion; only, that there is immortality.

QABALISTIC ALLUSIONS OF THE THIRD DEGREE

The system of Traditional Jewish Mysticism known as Qabalah often provides important clues to the interpretation of passages of Scripture. Since much of our ritual is derived from Scripture, there are certain very interesting Qabalistic allusions throughout the rituals of Freemasonry.

We will here list only one of the more interesting occurrences, without reference to either Hebrew or Greek. However, some familiarity with these languages can be useful when searching for Qabalistic allusions within Freemasonry.

Using the Qabalistic discipline of gematria, the Hebrew spelling of Hiram Abiff equals the number 273. So does the Hebrew word for "Hidden Light". And the phrase found in Psalms 118:22 "the stone refused by the builders" also adds up to 273. Sometimes Gematria can cross languages, too. For example, the Greek word *athanasia*, which means "immortality," also equals 273. From the standpoint of gematria, the message could not be clearer.

HIEROGLYPHICAL EMBLEMS

In The Three Pillars we have the three great supports of Masonry - Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. The Three Steps remind us of how youth, manhood and old age is each an entity in itself, each possessing its own duties and problems, and each calling for its own philosophy. The Pot of Incense teaches that, to be pure and blameless in our inner lives is more acceptable to God than anything else, because that which a man really is, is of vastly greater importance than that which he appears to be. It is also a symbol of prayer and meditation. The Beehive recommends the virtue of industry and teaches us that we should never rest while our fellow creatures are in need of assistance. It should be mentioned that bees have also been symbols of messengers from the heavens. The Book of Constitutions Guarded By The Tyler's Sword is the emblem of law and order, and reminds us that our moral and spiritual character is grounded in law and morality as much as is government and nature. It teaches that no man can live a satisfactory life who lives lawlessly. The Sword Pointing To A Naked Heart symbolizes that one of the most rigorous of these laws

is justice, and that if a man be unjust in his heart, the inevitable results of injustice will find him out. The All Seeing Eye shows that we live and move and have our being in God; that we are constantly in His Presence, wherever or whatever we are doing. The single Eye is found in many countries from Egypt to India: The Eye of Horus, the Eye of Shiva and so on. The Anchor and Ark stand for that sense of security and stability of a life grounded in truth and faith, without which sense there can be no happiness.

The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid, or the Pythagorean Theorem, is a very potent symbol and is so important in Freemasonry that it cannot be overemphasized. It is the Sacred King of the scalene (limping) triangles. Its properties have incredible implications in many different areas. Plutarch informs us that the Egyptians attributed the holy family of Osiris, Isis, and Horus to this specific triangle: Osiris the vertical (3), Isis the horizontal (4), and Horus the diagonal(5). Remember that after Osiris is killed, Horus becomes the Son of the Widow.

In The Hourglass we have the emblem of the fleeting quality of life. The Scythe reminds us that the passing of time will end our lives as well as our work, and if ever we are to become what we ought to be, we must not delay.

THE RIGHTS OF A MASTER MASON

These consist of Masonic Relief, Masonic Visitation, and Masonic Burial.

MASONIC RELIEF:

Masonic Relief may be applied for by any Master Mason - either to his own Lodge, or to an individual Master Mason. In every case, the individual asked has the right to determine the worthiness of the request and whether such aid can be granted without material injury to his family. Relief is a voluntary function of both the Lodge and the individual. If the Lodge's financial condition will not allow it to help, he can apply to the Grand Lodge for help. In order to be eligible for Masonic Relief, the Brother must not have been suspended in the past five years, and there can be no charges pending against him at the time of application. The widow and/or orphan of a Master Mason, who was a member of the Lodge at the time of his death, are entitled to consideration if they apply for assistance. The same conditions as to worthiness and the ability and willingness of the Lodge apply in these cases.

MASONIC VISITATION:

Visitation of other Lodges is one of the greatest privileges of being a Master Mason. Before you can sit in another Lodge, you must prove yourself to be a Mason in good standing. If you can so prove, and if no member of the Lodge you are visiting objects to you sitting in the Lodge, you may do so. In order to attend another Lodge, you should learn the memory work and modes of recognition in each Degree (if you have not already done so), and carry your paid-up dues card with you at all times.

You can gain admission to another Lodge in one of two ways - examination or avouchment by a Brother who has sat in Lodge with you previously. An examination usually consists of showing your dues card, followed by examination by a special committee appointed by the Master of the Lodge. After successfully passing the examination, the committee will vouch for you and you may be admitted to the Lodge.

THE RIGHT OF BURIAL:

The Masonic Funeral Service is conducted only at the request of a Brother or some member of a Mason's immediate family. The choice belongs to the family, not to the Lodge. This service can be held in a church, the Lodge room, funeral parlor or grave site. It is a beautiful and solemn ceremony and, like Masonry herself, does not conflict with a man's personal religious beliefs.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MASTER MASON

The constant responsibility of a Master Mason is "to preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied". Leading a good life is the best means of carrying through our individual responsibility to our Lodge and our Craft. The conduct of each Master Mason is strictly his own responsibility. He should choose the course which will bring credit to himself and honor to the Fraternity.

We would all do well to remember that brotherhood is the cornerstone of our Fraternity. Treat others with the same respect and consideration with which you would like to be treated. In all your actions, be an example of brotherly love in action.

Be not hasty to condemn others. How do you know that in their place, you could have resisted the temptation? And even were it so, why should you condemn one who is weaker than you? If your brother should slip, offer your hand to

him without judgement or harsh criticism. Judge him not by your standards but by his own.

LODGE ATTENDANCE

We do not have a mandatory attendance requirement as ancient Lodges did; nor is there a penalty for not attending, as there once was. However, every Master Mason has an obligation to be loyal to the Lodge which gave him Masonic Light and all the benefits which come with his membership. This should be your inducement to attend Lodge as often as possible and to join in the fellowship that is an important part of Freemasonry.

BALLOTING

Only Members in good standing have a right to vote. No member present can be excused from balloting on any petition before the Lodge. No member will be permitted to retire from the Lodge to avoid casting his ballot. The white balls indicate an affirmative, or favorable ballot, and the black cube indicates a negative, or unfavorable ballot. If you have no reason to believe otherwise, then you should accept the word of the Investigating Committee and cast a favorable ballot on a petition for membership. If you have an objection to an applicant, the time to raise that objection is before the ballot is taken. You have the right to speak to the Master privately and express your objection. This is one of the reasons we wait a full month after a petition has been presented before voting on it. However, if you know of some legitimate reason why the petitioner is unworthy, for strictly Masonic - not personal - reasons, a black cube may be cast to protect the Lodge from an undesirable member.

As you approach the ballot box, examine your motives and be sure that the ballot you are about to cast will do justice to the candidate and Freemasonry. The Right to Secrecy of the Ballot is guaranteed by Masonic law, and custom allows each member to have perfect freedom in balloting on petitioners. No brother should disclose how he voted and no brother should inquire into how another brother voted on a particular candidate.

DEFINITIONS OF NON-AGE, DOTAGE AND FOOL

In the jurisdiction of California, non-age refers in this Degree to one who is not yet 21 years of age. Dotage is a condition associated with old age, and is marked by juvenile desires, loss of memory and failure of judgement. Being old does not bar someone from seeking membership, but we require that he be mentally alert and healthy. A fool is a mature man without good sense. Legally, he may be of age, but mentally he is incapable of understanding.

WOMEN AND FREEMASONRY

The question of women's role in Freemasonry has arisen many times. When we were an operative craft, the buildings were built by masons who were, by all accounts, men. The Craft became a fraternity for men. Thus, it was a practice that only men became operative masons. This practice has continued down through the years.

Women are certainly included in the Family of Freemasonry through Concordant Bodies, such as the Order of the Eastern Star, the Order of Amaranth, and so on.

EXAMINING VISITORS

This responsibility belongs to the Lodge itself and is delegated by the Master to a committee of Brethren who are to satisfy themselves that the visitor is a Master Mason in good standing in a regular and recognized Lodge. The Master may call upon any member of the Lodge to serve on the examining committee.

It should ever be remembered that the purpose of examination is to prove that a visitor is a Mason, not to prove that he is not a Mason. Kindness and courtesy should be shown to all visitors at all times.

VOUCHERS ON PETITIONERS

Before endorsing the petition of anyone for initiation into our Mysteries, you should take the time to discuss Masonry with the applicant. You should know why he wishes to become a Mason, what he expects and what may be expected of him. The Investigating Committee should explain much of this to him, but you should be satisfied with his understanding and know that he is of good moral character. The signing of the petition should be a source of great pleasure for you.

You should also remember that signing the petition of a man who wishes to become a Freemason is a significant responsibility. By doing so, you are committing to assist him to learn and grow as a Mason. Nor does your responsibility end when he has been Raised. From the moment your sponsor his petition, you are bound to him by a strong tie.

INVESTIGATING PETITIONERS

This responsibility belongs to every member of the Lodge, and should not be taken lightly. Serving on an Investigating Committee should be regarded as a mark of special trust by the Master of your Lodge. It is a solemn responsibility. Only those who can be counted on to make a complete and impartial inquiry into the petitioner's character and determine his worthiness to become a Mason, should be selected. The members of the Investigating Committee are known only to the petitioner and to the Master who appointed them.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Your financial responsibilities are twofold. The first is in the area of mandatory support - the payment of annual dues. The second is in the area of voluntary contributions to certain charities, distressed worthy Brothers, and other Masonic organizations as you desire. By paying dues, each Brother carries his share of the expenses to run his Lodge. Regarding voluntary financial support, he must determine the extent of his participation, measuring the need against his ability.

Any member failing to pay his dues for a period of more than twelve months is subject to suspension. There is no reason a Brother should be suspended for non-payment of dues. Not being able to pay dues can be handled easily and without embarrassment. No Lodge desires to suspend a Brother who is unable to continue payment of dues. A distressed Brother should inform the Master or the Secretary of his situation. One of these Officers will take care of the situation so no record is shown on the books and no debt is accumulated. This is not Masonic Charity, but rather Brotherly Love. In most cases, the other Brethren in the Lodge know nothing about his situation.

LODGE MEMBERSHIP

Although Entered Apprentices are considered Masons in every sense of the word, one does not become a member of a Lodge until after being Raised. Termination of membership can occur in one of four ways - demit, suspension, expulsion or death. One can apply for a demit (or transfer to another Lodge) if his dues are current and he is otherwise in good standing. You can also hold plural or dual membership in more than one Lodge. This sometimes occurs when one Lodge raises a candidate and he then moves to another area and wants to become active in a new Lodge. One must be a member of a Lodge in order to become an officer there. Plural Membership refers to being a member of more than one Lodge in this Jurisdiction (California), while Dual Membership refers to being simultaneously a member in this jurisdiction and in a Lodge of another jurisdiction. See your Lodge secretary for proper handling of the paperwork.

You can be suspended for nonpayment of dues or "unmasonic conduct". If suspended for nonpayment of dues, you can apply for reinstatement. At any time, you may pay back dues for the year of nonpayment, plus the current year. If suspended for "unmasonic conduct", you may petition for reinstatement through the proper procedures and channels. If convicted of ununmasonic conduct by trial, the trial board may direct expulsion from the order. The verdict can be appealed to the Grand Lodge. A Mason suspended or expelled from a Lodge is automatically denied membership in all Masonic organizations.

ENTERING OR RETIRING FROM A LODGE

Courtesy dictates that you should always arrive before a Lodge meeting is scheduled to begin. This also allows you to share in the fellowship of the Lodge, meet any visitors who may be present, and so on. If you are unavoidably detained and arrive after a meeting has begun, you should clothe yourself properly, inform the Tiler, and ask to be admitted.

The Tiler will inform the Junior Deacon, who will then request permission from the Master that you be admitted. The Junior Deacon will notify you when it is appropriate to enter and also of the Degree in which work is taking place. When permitted to enter, proceed West of the Altar, give the due guard and sign of the Degree, and then quickly take a seat. Keep in mind that you are likely interrupting the business of the Lodge, so be as unobtrusive as possible.

Retiring from a Lodge is accomplished in much the same way. Move West of the Altar, give the appropriate signs, and then leave.

DEPORTMENT WHILE IN THE LODGE

Your deportment while the Lodge is open should be governed by good taste and propriety. You should not engage in private conversations, nor through any other action disrupt the business of the Lodge. Discussions in the Lodge are always a healthy sign and promote the interest of the Lodge - if properly conducted. If you wish to speak, rise and, after being recognized, give the due guard and sign and make your remarks. Always address your remarks to the

Master, even if you are responding to a direct question from another Brother. When finished, you may then be seated. Religion, partisan politics and any other subject which might disrupt the peace and harmony of the Lodge, should not be discussed in Lodge. Voting on routine matters is usually conducted through a voice ballot.

OFFICERS OF A LODGE

There are five elected officers of a Masonic Lodge: the Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Master appoints the Chaplain, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Marshal, Senior Steward, Junior Steward, Tiler and Organist. The Master, Wardens, and Senior Deacon must be proficient in the Work of their respective positions, and the District Inspector must certify their proficiency. Any qualified member may be elected by the Lodge to hold office, but most officer lines are progressive.

APPENDANT AND CONCORDANT BODIES

Once you have been Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, you may choose to join any number of Masonic Appendant Bodies. The two most common Appendant Orders are known as the **Scottish Rite** and the **York Rite**.

There are other rites, degrees, and organizations one may join upon becoming a Master Mason, depending on one's interest in searching for further Light in Masonry. The Philalethes Society is an International organization of Masonic Research and offers members an outstanding quarterly publication, The Philalethes magazine, which includes excellent Masonic information from around the world. The Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis (the Masonic Rosicrucian Society of the United States) is the most esoteric of all the rites and degrees of Freemasonry. It is an invitational body open to Master Masons. The Order of the Eastern Star, Order of the Amaranth, and the White Shrine of Jerusalem are popular concordant bodies which admit both men and women. Often, they provide the chance for a husband and wife to share in the Masonic experience together.

There are also three Masonic Youth Orders, which include boys and girls (and young men and young women) in the family of Freemasonry: The Order of DeMolay for Boys, the Order of Job's Daughters, and the Order of Rainbow for Girls.

Each of these Appendant and Concordant Bodies is an important part of the larger Family of Freemasonry.

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