

THE MASTER MASON



The Third Degree Of Freemasonry

THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

Introduction

It is safe to say that among the countless thousands, who have in the past been raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, not one of them realized at the time the full implications of the ceremony. Yet it is vitally important that the deeper meaning of this Degree be understood if one is to become a Master Mason, in fact, as well as in name.

The Third Degree is at once the climax of the Symbolic Lodge Ritual and the most profound Degree in Masonry. Its meaning is difficult to understand thoroughly, so while the Degree is fresh in your mind, we bring you the following subjects for discussion and reflection.

- The Reception and Obligation
- The Legend of The Master Workman
- The Lecture, Symbols, Emblems, and Allegories of the Laws and Landmarks of Masonry
- The Duties, Rights and Privileges of a Master Mason

Master Mason

The Master Mason Degree is sometimes called the Sublime Degree, not just for the solemnity of the ceremonies, but also for the profound lesson of wisdom it teaches. This Degree symbolizes the great lesson of immortality of the soul.

The Master Mason Degree differs in many ways from the previous two Degrees. Many of the symbols are the same but they are interpreted differently.

In other Degrees, the Lodge is a symbol of the world in which we live trying to sustain life; striving to obtain knowledge; and becoming virtuous through wisdom.

In this Degree, the Lodge becomes a representation of the Sanctum Sanctorum, or Holy of Holies, of King Solomon's great Temple at Jerusalem. This magnificent structure was a symbol of Heaven to the Hebrew people. Supposedly, Solomon built it as the dwelling place of Jehovah, or, Yahweh, that he might be in the midst of his people in Israel. The Hebrew law of cleanliness was strictly enforced and nothing unclean was permitted to enter the Temple. When you attain the Sublime Degree of Master Mason you receive this most valuable lesson and truth that having been faithful to your trust, you must at last die in order to attain the ultimate reward of your fidelity. This teaches hope for the immortality of the soul.

In this State of life, man is represented to have died and then he is raised from the grave to another and better place. Thus, the ceremonies of the Degree lead to the inevitable conclusion that youth, properly directed, leads to an honorable and virtuous maturity and that regulated by morality, faith and justice, life will be rewarded in its closing hours by the prospect of eternal bliss and immortality.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEGREE

The importance of the Master Mason Degree can best be understood when we compare it to the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft Degrees. In the first two Degrees, Architecture was the theme of the symbols. The symbols in the Degree of Master Mason refer to life, its tragedy, and its ultimate triumph if we lead virtuous lives. In other words, the symbols of this Degree deal with the spiritual part of man's life. We should keep in mind that, in our later years, we are getting closer and closer to immortality, and that we have work to perform which is given us by the Supreme Architect of the Universe.

PREPARATION OF THE CANDIDATE

The preparation of the candidate reminds him of several things. First, through the clothing, he is reminded that he is to be humble. He is also taught that his Obligations become more extensive and binding each time he advances. Finally, he is reminded that he is able to attain many of his desires only with the assistance given by a friend or Brother.

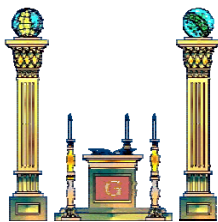
RECEPTION

In the reception at the door you are reminded that all the Lessons of Freemasonry must be implanted in the heart if they are to serve a useful purpose and become a part of your way of life. You should practice these in your daily life.

THE OBLIGATION

By the time you have reached the Master Mason Degree, the duties and responsibilities you have sworn to observe have become much more extensive. Some of the areas covered by the Obligation are outlined below.

AT THE ALTAR



Your Obligations now take on more and more responsibility. As a Master Mason, your charity and love must know no limits. Your family, your friends, associates, widows, orphans and, especially God, have a constant claim on you. The circle drawn by the Compasses of friendship, morality and Brotherly love has no beginning, no ending.

This time when the Compasses were revealed to you, they were fixed so they would ever remind you of your Obligations.

CLANDESTINE LODGE AND CLANDESTINE MASON

A Clandestine Lodge is one that is operating with a Charter that has not been issued by a duly recognized Grand Lodge. An individual who belongs to one of these lodges is a clandestine mason.

Clandestine Lodges are rare. They are considered to be irregular and not eligible for visitation or Masonic communication.

MASONIC DEFINITIONS

- Lawful age refers to one who has not attained legal age in Maryland Masonry which years of age is 21.
- Dotage is a condition associated with old age. Being old does not bar someone from membership, but we require that he be mentally healthy and alert.
- A fool refers to a man without prudence and judgment. He is of legal age, but is lacking in common powers of understanding.
- Profane means someone who is "not a Mason." The word is derived from the Latin "pro" meaning before, and "fanum" which means Temple. Thus, someone profane is one who is "outside the Temple," or uninitiated.

SIGNS, TOKENS AND WORDS

The Signs, Tokens and Words are important because they provide modes of recognition. Each has a symbolic meaning that helps to illustrate and explain the lessons they accompany. You should know how to give all the Signs properly, in order to show your respect for the dignity of the ceremonies and to enable yourself to visit other lodges.

THE WORKING TOOLS



The working tools of a Master Mason are all the implements of Masonry. In the United States, the Trowel is especially assigned to his Degree. The Master Mason is to use the Trowel to cement ties between Masons, and to use it to spread Brotherly Love and Friendship.

THE LEGEND OF THE THIRD DEGREE

You have been raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. It is indeed a "Sublime" Degree, which a man may study for years without exhausting his resources. In the First and Second Degrees you were surrounded by the symbols and emblems of architecture. In the Third Degree, you found a different order of symbolism, cast in the language of the soul. To recognize this symbolism is the first step in interpretation.

The second step is to recognize that the Third Degree has many meanings. But most essentially it is a drama of the soul, setting forth the truth that, while a man withers away and perishes, there is that in him that does not perish, which can be described by the word, immortality.

That this is the meaning most generally adopted by the Craft is shown by our habits of language. We say that a man is initiated an Entered Apprentice, passed a Fellowcraft, and raised a Master Mason. To most Masons the raising is the center, or heart, of the Master Mason Degree. Any interpretation must necessarily be a hint only, yet a hint may stimulate a man to reflect upon it for himself and to study it more thoroughly in the future.

In this tragedy, evil is set forth in the drama of the Third Degree. Here is a good and wise man, a builder, working for others and giving others work; the highest work we know, for it is dedicated to God. Through no fault of his own he experiences tragedy from his friends and fellow workers. Here is evil pure and simple, a complete picture of human tragedy.

How did the Craft meet this tragedy? First, by imposing the supreme penalty on those who had possessed the will to destruction and, therefore had to be destroyed, lest another tragedy follow. Evil, the greatest enemy man has, makes war upon the good; to it no quarter can be given.

Next was to discipline and pardon those who acted not out of an evil will but who were misled through weakness. Forgiveness is possible to a man who himself condemns the evil he has done, since in spite of his weakness he retains his faith in good.

The third step was to recover from the wreckage caused by the tragedy whatever of value it had left undestroyed. Confusion had come upon the Craft; order was restored. Loyal Craftsmen took up the burdens dropped by traitors. It is the nature of tragedy that the good suffer for the evil, and it is one of the prime duties of life that a man shall work to undo the harm wrought by sin and crime, because in time the world would be destroyed by the evils that are done in it.

But what of the victims of the tragedy? Here is the most profound and difficult lesson of the drama, difficult to understand, difficult to believe, if one has not been truly initiated into the realities of the spiritual life. Because the victim was a good man, his goodness rooted in an unvarying faith in God, that which destroyed him in one sense could not destroy him in another. The spirit in him rose above the reach of evil; by virtue of it he was raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular.

Let us imagine a really good man who has been the victim of the most terrible of tragedies, one caused by the treachery of friends. This treachery has brought destruction upon the foundations of his life, his home, his reputation and his ability to earn a livelihood.

How can he be raised above the clutch of such circumstances? By his spirit rising to the plane of forgiveness, refusing to stoop to retaliation or to harbor bitterness. In such spirit, the truest happiness is found.

The secret of such power is, in the Third Degree, symbolized by the word. If the word is lost, a man must search for it; if a man possesses that word, he has the secret of the Masonic Art. To rise to the height of spiritual life is to stand on a level above the reach of tragedy or the powers of evil. To have the spirit rest in God, to have a sincere and unwavering faith in truth and goodness is the inner secret of a Master Mason. Since the drama of the Master Workman is ritualistic, it is immaterial whether it is historical or not. There was a Master Workman in history, but our Third Degree goes far beyond what history tells of him. Our Master Workman is a symbol of the human soul. If, therefore,

you have been troubled with the thought that some of the events of this drama may not have happened, you may ease your mind. Even if not historically true, they are symbolic of what occurs in the life of every man.

It is inexcusable to treat the drama as a mock tragedy or serious comedy. Savage peoples employ initiation ceremonies as an ordeal to test the nerve and courage of their young men, but Freemasonry is not savage. Boys in school enjoy hazing, but Freemasonry is not juvenile. The exemplification of our ritualistic drama should be as sincere, solemn and earnest as a prayer before the Altar. He who takes it trivially or with perverted humor betrays a shallowness of soul that shows him unfit to be a Mason.

Yes, the Master Workman is a symbol of the human soul. The work he supervised is symbolical of the work we do as we organize and direct our lives from birth to death. The enemies he met are symbols of our own lusts and passions that make war upon our characters. His doom befalls every man who becomes a victim to these enemies, to be interrupted in his work to lose mastership of himself, to be buried under all manner of rubbish, defeat, disgrace, weakness, misery, evil habits and scorn. His raising symbolizes the way any man may rise from self-defeat to self-mastery; through the power of the Great Architect, the God in whose arms we forever lie, and whose help we need to raise us from the grave of defeat.

Did you ask while participating in the drama, why you were made to participate, why you were not permitted to sit as a spectator? It was YOUR drama, not another's! No man can ever be a mere spectator of the drama of his own soul. Your participation was designed to prepare you to become a Master Mason by teaching you the secret of a Master Mason by which the soul may rise above its internal enemies if a man is a Mason in reality, as well as in name. The real Master Mason is Master of himself

Why did the enemies come from within your own circle, not from the outside? The enemies most feared by the soul are always from within its own ignorance, passion and sin. Did you wonder why there was so much confusion among the Craft? The Temple is a symbol of man's character, and therefore breaks and falls when the soul, its architect, is helpless.

Another profound lesson we learn in this Degree is that of fidelity. Even in the face of certain death as a result of refusal to betray his trust, this Ancient Grand Master steadfastly guarded his secret; his standards allowed no compromise with evil; his principles were not sacrificed to expediency.

The most we can obtain from others is such hints and suggestions as these. Print the story of the Master Workman indelibly on your mind; ponder it. When you are at grip with your enemies, recall it and act according to the light you find in it. Your inner self will give, in the form of first hand experience, that which the drama gave in the form of ritual, and you will be wiser and stronger for having the guidance and light the tragedy provides.

THE THREE GRAND MASTERS



The three Grand Masters, mentioned often in our rituals as they relate to the building of the Temple, are: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abif. 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 Mason could reap the rewards of a well-spent life, and travel to that well-known country toward which all of us are traveling. All of us are forever reaching outward and upward, looking for further knowledge of God and our relationship with Him, which is Divine Truth.

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

This Temple was located on Mount Moriah, at Jerusalem. It was near the place where Abraham was about to offer up his son, Isaac. The site was purchased by David, King of Israel, for it was here that the hand of the Destroying Angel was stayed after David had repented. The incident is recorded in II Samuel, Chapter 24, verses 15 through 25, and I Chronicles, Chapter 21, verses 14 through 30.

The building of the Temple was begun around 1012 BC, and finished eight years later, around 1004 BC. It was about 480 years after the people of Israel came out of Egypt as a band of refugees. The people later lost their sense of spiritual direction and destiny resulting in the destruction of the Temple in the year 586 BC, by Nebuchadnezzar.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE TEMPLE

The chief purpose of Solomon's Temple was to provide a dwelling place for God in the midst of his people, Israel. People thought that God dwelt with man in those days, and this should still be a fundamental human thought, today. Some people of that day claim Solomon's Temple was the most perfect building ever erected by man. Whether it was or not is open to conjecture, but perfection was certainly the goal of both David and Solomon.

The symbol of the Temple for each of us is founded upon the idea that man himself is a living Temple where God resides. Freemasonry tries to undertake the task of helping each of its members build a more Stately mansion within themselves where God can reside. Each of us should work toward the same type of perfection in our own Temple as that sought for in the Temple at Jerusalem.

Our individual Temples are mental, physical and spiritual. Our work on these Temples should be as close to perfection as is possible.

SOLOMON, KING OF ISRAEL

Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba. He became king at the age of 20 and reigned 40 years. During Solomon's reign, Israel had its greatest power, prosperity and recognition. The name Solomon means peaceful, and his reign was one of peace.

HIRAM, KING OF TYRE

Hiram was a friend of King David, and became both ally and friend of King Solomon. According to Biblical accounts, he helped Solomon by supplying certain materials for the construction of the Temple and, in return, received a gift of ten cities from King Solomon.

THE MASTER WORKMAN

The Master Workman was the son of a woman of Tyre, from the tribe of Naphtali. He was sent by King Hiram to help Solomon in building the Temple. He was a well-known person who is alluded to in the Second Book of Chronicles, which tells us of his skill in the Arts and Crafts during that period.

TRAVEL IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

The ultimate goal of our ancient Operative Brothers was to become Masters that they might possess secrets and knowledge that would enable them to practice the arts of the builder no matter where they traveled, even in foreign countries.

"Foreign countries," as used in Freemasonry, is a symbolic place and is not meant to refer to a certain geographical location. Freemasonry, itself, is a foreign country to every member. If he is to travel in it, if he is to earn Master's wages, he must learn its language, understand its customs and study its history and traditions. He must become a part of it to fully appreciate and enjoy its privileges and pleasures.

We, as Speculative Masons, still desire to travel in foreign countries. Some of us feel the urge strongly enough to diligently study Masonry, so we may receive proper instructions and be permitted to travel and receive Master's wages. Becoming a Master Mason gives each man the right to travel in foreign countries in Freemasonry. All you have to do is learn the work and keep yourself in good standing that you may find Lodges open to you everywhere. By studying the writings of Freemasonry, you will find pleasant traveling.

The areas of study include history, traditions, philosophy, ritual and many other areas leading to countless treasures which each of you must discover for yourself. These are the rewards of Master Masons who travel in foreign countries.

THE WAGES OF A MASTER MASON

Operative Masons performed manual labor and received wages which would contribute to their physical welfare. These wages are symbolically cited as Corn, Wine, and Oil.

The wages of a Speculative Mason must come from within, because he is concerned with the moral rather than the physical labor. The intangibles of love, friendship, respect, opportunity, worthwhile labor, and association are the wages of a Master Mason. Not all earn them. That is why the Senior Warden, in the opening of the Lodge, declares: "To pay the Craft their wages, if any be due"

LOW TWELVE

High Twelve denotes noon, with the sun at its highest. Low Twelve denotes midnight, the black of the night. Therefore, the solemn stroke of twelve marked the completion of life and the coming of death. Masonically, Low Twelve is a symbol of death.

THE FIVE POINTS OF FELLOWSHIP

In the instructions on the duties of Brotherly Love and the specific Obligations which a Mason has toward his Brethren there is a symbolic allusion to certain points of the body which, from the lessons taught, are called the "Five Points of Fellowship." These points are summed up as "assisting a Brother in his distress, supporting him in his virtuous undertakings; praying for his welfare, keeping inviolate his secrets and vindicating his reputation as well in his absence as in his presence." These Five Points of Fellowship are very important for you to learn.

THE SETTING MAUL



This was a wooden instrument used by Operative Masons. In Freemasonry it is also an emblem of casualty or disease which shall eventually terminate our lives. In Proverbs 25:18 we find, "A man that beareth false witness against his neighbor is a maul and a sword, and a sharp arrow."

THE SPRIG OF ACACIA

Hebrew people planted a sprig of acacia at the head of a grave for two purposes: to mark the location of the grave, and to show 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 that abounds in Israel. Both Jews and Egyptians believed that, because of its hardness, its evergreen nature, and its ability to live in the face of despair, it signified immortality.

It is believed that the acacia was used to construct most of the furniture and the tabernacle in the Temple.

RAISING THE CANDIDATE

Most people do not understand what being "raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason" means. Symbolically, it represents our Masonic faith in the immortality of the soul. This Degree is the climax of Symbolic Freemasonry.

Masonry teaches no creed, no dogma and no religion; only that there is a hope of immortality and through God's mercy, we may live again.

THE LECTURE

SYMBOLISM

The Third Degree the Master Mason Degree is the pinnacle of Freemasonry. True, there are Degrees with higher numbers that are offered by bodies affiliated with Freemasonry, but none can exist without Master Mason Lodges. Membership in any affiliated body is dependent on maintaining your Symbolic or Masonic Lodge membership.

As a Master Mason, you are eligible to visit any Lodge in the world, if that Lodge's Grand Lodge is recognized by your Grand Lodge. Through such visitations, you will find friends and Brothers in all your travels. Note that in many areas of the world visitation is by invitation only. When traveling outside of the United States, informative inquiry may be made through the office of the Grand Secretary.

What you have sought through Masonry is light. As we have said, when you seek light, you are trying to discover truth. As in the first two Degrees, you wore the Cable Tow. However, in this Degree, it symbolized how strongly you are now united with the Craft and the Craft with you. Your ties, Obligations, duties and responsibilities have increased considerably with your being raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason. These will remain with you the rest of your life. In the Master Mason Degree, as well as the Entered Apprentice and Fellowcraft Degrees you received lessons that are to be stored in your Temple for all times to be used now and throughout your life.

The symbols you learned in the first two Degrees concern themselves with the tools and emblems of architecture for you to use in laying your foundation for the lessons and symbols concerning your soul. Spiritually, you are now reaching full manhood.

In the First Degree, you received a warning. In the Second Degree, instructions in the manner that you should deal with your fellow man. In the Third Degree, you are asked to reflect on man's moral and spiritual nature.



The Compasses take on a much deeper meaning. They begin at a point, draw a circle and return to the beginning point. They symbolize the beginning, span and end of your life on Earth. More importantly, the Compasses suggest the continuation of your existence the immortality of your soul and eternity with the Supreme Architect of the Universe.

Your journey was longer. It gave you the opportunity to contemplate your Creator to reflect on the days of your youth and what you have accomplished in your manhood to this time. If you haven't been as productive as you should, you still have the opportunity to please God before your spirit returns to Him. Again, you have the opportunity to decide whether you truly desire to devote your life to God, your family and your fellow man.

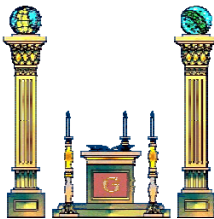
Symbolically, you spent seven years in learning that worldly attractions, money and other material things are not important in life. You then spent five more years, symbolically, in self-education, to square, level and plumb your spiritual Temple.

Time, patience and perseverance will accomplish all things, you are told. These are three of the virtues stressed in all leadership training courses. But scientific management was unknown when the rituals of Freemasonry were developed.

These virtues are symbolically represented by a monument of a beautiful virgin, weeping over a broken column.

The monument symbolizes immortality. Many of man's virtues are contained within the pages of the book on the broken column, which should more accurately have been pictured as a scroll, as books were unknown in King Solomon's time.

THE ALTAR



The Altar is located in the center of every Masonic Lodge room. It is a symbol of the perfection for which Masons strive in their Masonic life. Upon the Altar we place the Three Great Lights of Masonry, the Holy Bible, the square and compasses. It is upon this Altar and the Holy Bible that you have been obligated and bound to the Fraternity.

POT OF INCENSE

You were told the Pot of Incense was the emblem of a pure heart. Of the five senses mentioned in the Fellowcraft Degree, smell is most closely associated with emotion. Smells remind us of experience, some pleasant, some not. The smell of flowers, wood smoke around a campfire or odors in a doctor's office they carry emotional memories for all.

The Pot which holds the incense is Symbolic of sacrifice. it means giving up selfishness and working for others. There must be a constant examination of one's self; no man should ever be content to stand still and he must never be satisfied with his accomplishments.

THE BEE HIVE

The Bee Hive is the symbol of industry. It tells us that we should never be content to be idle, especially when we can help our fellow man by exerting a little effort.

THE TILER'S SWORD

The Tiler's sword is symbolic of a need in the days when this instrument was the principal means of offense or defense. It may have been used during the days of the Operative Masons to protect the secrets of the Master Builder from the cowan (an ignorant Mason, one who laid stones without mortar, one who had not served the required time of apprenticeship; today an uninitiated man who poses as a Freemason). The

sword has become the symbol of the Tiler's authority to protect the Lodge from impostors.

To us, as Speculative Masons, the sword should serve as a reminder of moral lessons. It should admonish us to:

- Set a guard over our thoughts;
- A watch at our lips;
- And post a sentinel over our actions, thereby preventing the approach of any unworthy thought or deed to our hearts, and preserving our conscience void of offense toward God and man.

THE BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS

The Book of Constitutions, or the Masonic Law, is not a symbol of secrecy. It contains the laws of Masonry. It is published for all to read. It is considered so important that every Worshipful Master, at his installation, is charged to search this book at all times. It is the symbol of Masonic Law. We should fear less the cowan than the uninformed Mason. He has learned just enough to cause Masonry irreparable harm. He knows so little about the Craft that he believes everything about it is secret. Actually, there are few things that are secret. All that we have covered in these lectures is not secret. It is written out for all to read. You can tell all of what we are now telling you.

Too often good men never petition a Lodge because the member with whom they discussed Freemasonry could, or would, not tell them anything. You, by virtue of these lectures, are more highly informed and educated in Masonic teachings and principles than most of your Brethren. If you still feel unable to discreetly discuss the Craft, then when asked about the Fraternity, you should immediately contact one of your better informed Brethren.

THE ALL-SEEING EYE

The all-seeing eye has been the symbol of Deity from the beginning of religion. From many ages has come the knowledge that the Supreme Architect of the Universe sees all, knows all and controls all things. It is little wonder that the early ritualists associated this symbol with control of the sun, moon, stars and comets. It reminds man that God is powerful, yet just, merciful and loving.

THE 47TH PROBLEM OF EUCLID

This symbol was brought to Freemasonry for two reasons:

- It was most important to Operative Masons
- To extol and illustrate some of the virtues of Pythagoras.

Euclid's 47th Problem was absolutely necessary for the cathedral builders, as it reads: "In every right triangle, the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides." It is the root theorem of Geometry and the foundation of mathematics.

To some extent, Masonic Lodges of today are patterned after the Brotherhood Pythagoras founded. The philosophy he taught in the 6th century BC is much the same as Freemasons follow today. Pythagoras:

- Found the use of music to have therapeutic value.
- Was the first to conceive the Earth as a sphere revolving in space.
- Was the first to consider women equal to men, and admitted both to his school on equal terms.
- Was the first to teach by parable and symbols.

What does the 47th Problem of Euclid symbolize? Perseverance the search for Truth. The need for more and more knowledge!

THE HOUR GLASS AND THE SCYTHE

The Hour Glass is an emblem of human life. As you learned in the Entered Apprentice Degree, each day should be divided into portions to be used wisely, for every second wasted is lost forever and can never be recovered.

The Scythe is an emblem of Time. The ritual speaks of cutting "the brittle thread of life and the devouring scythe of time." But in spite of those words, hope is held out.

By using time in our youth and manhood wisely to acquire knowledge, our reward will be great. We will achieve immortality. So the Scythe becomes also the symbol of Learning and Immortality.

FREEMASONRY'S GREAT LESSONS

You actively participated in one of the greatest dramas of all time. You were an active participant so these lessons would be deeply implanted, never to be lost. You represented a historical Biblical character. What transpired though, was a legend, a drama and an allegory. It depicted man's search for Truth, for Courage, for Prudence and for his Immortal Soul.

The philosophy of Freemasonry is closely connected to the past. It has preserved, fortunately, the wisdom it took centuries for man to acquire. Masonry, through its symbolism, has kept this wisdom alive.

In Masonic legend, the Master Workman lived and died to instill in the hearts, minds and souls of Freemasons symbolic lessons of life. These include, but aren't limited to, the following:

- Perseverance.
- Mankind.
- Courage.
- Patience.
- Fortitude.
- The Immortality of Man.

The Master Workman's enemies came from the workers he trusted. So do most of man's adversaries. He will usually guard himself against attacks from those he believes he must fear, but has no reason to protect himself from those he loves and trusts.

As The Master Workman prayed daily for guidance from God before drawing his designs, so must we. Through the Supreme Architect of the Universe, we acquire the self-image we must have if we are to be successful. Until a man learns how to pray for himself, he cannot hope to learn the Supreme Masonic Secret. It is through prayer and through living, that this secret will come to life. In putting into practice the Brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God, he will develop his character and personality in the image of the Supreme Architect of the Universe. **This is the greatest lesson taught though the Legend of the Third Degree!**

The legend of the Third Degree also teaches all Freemasons that to betray a trust is a fate worse than death itself. It reminds man that he should live each day prepared to die, and die as a man prepared to live forever.

But each man must find his own sprig of acacia. Each must set his own goals and draw his own designs to achieve those goals. It is comforting to know, however, that he can call on his Brethren for assistance and advice.

- They can give him a sense of direction.
- They can give him moral support and enthusiastic backing.
- They can give him ideas with which to work.

But no one can make another's decisions. The final course is one he must set for Himself.

LANDMARKS

In our Grand Lodge Constitution we read, "the Grand Lodge of Maryland is the supreme Masonic power and authority in Maryland, possessing all the attributes sovereignty and government legislative, executive and judicial limited only by a strict adherence to the ancient landmarks of the Craft."

The Masonic concept of a Landmark is one of a fundamental law that no body of men or Masons may repeal. Anything that can be adopted can be repealed. If a Grand Lodge has power to adopt, it has power to repeal. It is the very fact that they are unalterable which makes the Landmarks similar to moral principles or scientific laws that cannot be changed or altered by any body of men.

As you develop in Masonry, you will begin to understand our Landmarks better.

THE TWENTY-FIVE LANDMARKS OF FREEMASONRY

- I. The modes of recognition.
- II. The division of Symbolic Masonry into three Degrees.
- III. The legend of the Third Degree.
- IV. The government of the Fraternity by a presiding officer called a Grand Master, who is elected from the body of the Craft.
- V. The prerogative of the Grand Master to preside over every assembly of the Craft, wheresoever and whensoever held.
- VI. The prerogative of the Grand Master to grant dispensations for conferring Degrees at irregular times.
- VII. The prerogative of the Grand Master to grant dispensations for opening and holding Lodges.
- VIII. The prerogative of the Grand Master to make Masons at sight.
- IX. The necessity for Masons to congregate in Lodges.
- X. The government of every Lodge by a Master and two Wardens.
- XI. The necessity that every Lodge, when congregated, should be duly tiled.
- XII. The right of every Mason to be represented in all general meetings of the Craft, and to instruct his representatives.
- XIII. The right of every Mason to appeal from the decision of his Brethren in Lodge convened to the Grand Lodge or General Assembly of Masons.
- XIV. The right of every Mason to visit and sit in every regular Lodge.
- XV. That no visitor, not known to some Brother present as a Mason, can enter a Lodge without undergoing an examination.
- XVI. That no Lodge can interfere in the business or labor of another Lodge.
- XVII. That every Freemason is amenable to the laws and regulations of the Masonic jurisdiction in which he resides.
- XVIII. That every candidate for initiation must be a man, free born and of lawful age.
- XIX. That every Mason must believe in the existence of God as the Grand Architect of the Universe.
- XX. That every Mason must believe in a resurrection to a future life.
- XXI. That a book of the law of God must constitute an indispensable part of the furniture of the Lodge.
- XXII. That all men in the sight of God are equal, and meet in the Lodge on one common level.
- XXIII. That Freemasonry is a secret society, in possession of secrets that cannot be divulged.
- XXIV. That Freemasonry consists of a speculative science founded on an operative art. That the Landmarks of Masonry can never be changed. These constitute the Landmarks, or, as they have sometimes been called, "the body of Masonry," in which it is not in the power of any man, or body of men, to make the least innovation.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Rights of a Master Mason

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

Masonic Relief may be applied for by any Brother, either to his own Lodge or to an individual Master Mason. In every case, the individual has the right to determine the worthiness of the request and decide whether such aid can be granted without material injury to his own family.

Masonic Visitation: Visitation of other Lodges is a right you acquire when you can prove yourself to be a Mason in good standing, and if no member of the Lodge you are visiting objects. In order to gain entrance into another Lodge, you should memorize the signs, words and tokens, and carry your paid-up dues card with you at all times.

You can gain visitation rights to another Lodge by two methods: by undergoing a "strict trial or due examination," or by being "vouched for" by a Brother of the Lodge you are visiting. Undergoing examination usually consists of showing your dues card and meeting with a committee that has been appointed by the Worshipful Master.

The Right of Burial: Masonic Funeral ceremonies are conducted only at the request of some member of a deceased Mason's immediate family. The choice belongs to the family, not to the Lodge. These ceremonies can be given in the house of worship, funeral home or at the graveside. It is incumbent on every Mason to attend the services for a deceased Brother, whenever it is possible to do so.

A Mason's privileges must be described in principle and in spirit rather than in detail because they vary and depend on local conditions. He has the right of a voice in his Lodge, to vote and to hold office as well as to serve on committees. He also has the privilege of giving Masonic service, one of the principal sources of joy in Masonic life. A Lodge may do many things that are neither required nor prohibited. It may hold social affairs, give special entertainment, may have a library all according to the wishes of its members.

Beyond all these specific rights, duties and privileges lies a more general region in which all are mingled together -the whole domain of Masonry's teachings, her rituals and symbols, her history, her ideas of jurisprudence, her philosophy, her literature and the whole Royal Art. It is the right of a Master Mason to be taught that Art and to have it in all its fullness.

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 out 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 that will bring credit to himself and honor to the Fraternity.

Lodge Attendance: There is no minimum attendance requirement, nor is there a penalty for not attending, **However, every Master Mason has a moral Obligation to be loyal to the Lodge which gave him Masonic light and all the benefits which are associated with it. You should attend Lodge as often as possible and join in the fellowship that makes up Freemasonry.**

The Responsibility of Balloting: Only Master Mason members of the Lodge have a right to ballot. No member present and entitled to ballot shall be excused from that duty. No Member will be permitted to retire from the Lodge to avoid casting his ballot.

If you do not know of anything unfavorable against a petitioner, then you should accept the word of the Investigating Committee and cast a favorable ballot. However, if you have information to indicate the petitioner is unworthy, do not hesitate to use the black cube to protect the Lodge from undesirable members.

As you are casting your ballot, examine your own motives, and hope that the ballot you are about to cast will do justice to the candidate, to Freemasonry and to yourself. Only by doing so will we be able to continue building a membership of worthy Brothers. If in doubt, vote in favor of the Lodge and Freemasonry. The Right to Secrecy of the Ballot is guaranteed by Masonic Law. Custom allows each member to have perfect freedom in balloting on petitioners. No Brother should disclose how he voted, and no Brother shall inquire into how another Brother voted on a particular candidate.

The Responsibility to Examine Visitors: This responsibility belongs to the Lodge itself, and is delegated by the Worshipful Master to a committee of Brothers who are to satisfy themselves that the visitor is a Master Mason in good standing, and a member of a regular Lodge. The Worshipful Master may call upon any member of the Lodge to serve on the Examining Committee.

The Responsibility of Signing Petitions: Before endorsing the petition of anyone for membership, 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 must 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.

The Financial Responsibilities of a Mason: These are twofold, paying dues and voluntary support of a distressed Brother.

First, there is the area of mandatory support, or Lodge dues. By paying dues the Brother carries his share of the expense imposed by the Lodge. Any member failing to pay his dues for a period of more than two years is subject to suspension from membership. Not being able to pay dues can be handled without embarrassment. A distressed

Brother should inform the Worshipful Master, or the Secretary, of his situation. One of these officers will take care of the situation in a manner that no record is shown on the books, and no debt is accumulated. This is not Masonic Charity, rather Brotherly Love. No Lodge desires to suspend a Brother who is unable to continue payment of dues if this is the result of circumstances beyond his control. In most cases, the other Brethren in the Lodge know nothing about his situation.

Second, there is the area of voluntary support, such as distressed worthy Brothers. Regarding voluntary support, a Mason must determine the extent of his participation, measuring the need against his ability.

Lodge Membership: You become a member after being raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. Termination is accomplished in one of four ways:

- Demit.
- Suspension.
- Expulsion.
- Death.

You can apply for a demit (or transfer to another Lodge) if you are currently a paid-up member and in good standing. You can also hold plural memberships in more than one Lodge. Sometimes this is done when one Lodge raises you to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason and you move to another area where you want to "start in the chairs" (be an officer) in the new Lodge. You must be a member of a Lodge in order to become an officer of that Lodge. You can be suspended for nonpayment of dues or "Un-Masonic conduct." If suspended for nonpayment of dues, you can apply for reinstatement at any time by paying the dues for the year or years of nonpayment, plus the current year. Beyond six months, a Lodge vote is required for reinstatement.

DEPARTMENT WHILE IN LODGE

Your deportment while the Lodge is open is governed by good taste. 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 proper sign, make your remarks to the Worshipful Master, then sit down. You should observe rules of propriety and refrain from mentioning personalities or disturbing the peace and harmony of the Lodge. Discussion of religion or partisan politics may disrupt the peace and harmony of the Lodge and should not be brought up in the Lodge.

Two methods of voting are used in Maryland Masonic Lodges.

1. The uplifted right hand, which is used to express your assent to or dissent from a motion, as you desire.
2. Ballots. Ballots are of two kinds:
 - Written, for election of officers.

- Secret: White balls and black cubes; for petitions for the Degrees, for affiliation or for proficiency examination and in Masonic trials. The white balls are affirmative, or favorable ballot. The black cube is the negative, or unfavorable ballot.

MASONRY AT THE STATE LEVEL

WHAT IS A GRAND LODGE?

The Grand Lodge is the governing body of Freemasonry in the State. It is comprised of the Grand Lodge Officers and the Masters, Wardens and Past Masters of each Lodge. The Grand Lodge Office is currently housed in Freemasons Hall on the grounds of Bonnie Blink in Cockeysville and is open Monday through Friday during normal business hours to serve the Masons of Maryland.

At the Grand Lodge level, our Craft is organized similarly to a local Lodge. That is, there is a corps of officers comprised of the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Senior and Junior Grand Wardens, Grand Secretary, Grand Treasurer, Grand Chaplain, Senior and Junior Grand Deacons, Senior and Junior Grand Stewards, Grand Marshal, Grand Tiler, Grand Sword Bearer, Grand Standard Bearer, Grand Pursivant, Grand Lecturer, and Grand Organist. By tradition in Maryland, the line of progression to Grand Master starts by election to Deputy Grand Master.

The six senior Grand Lodge Officers (the first six listed above) are elected and installed annually. The other officers are appointed, each for a one-year term. The Grand Master is invested with powers which are constrained only by the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Maryland and by the Ancient Landmarks of the Craft. However, the very awareness of such power will ever make the generous mind cautious and gentle in its exercise of those powers. To rule well has been the fortune of few, the new Grand Master is told, yet it is an honorable ambition and we believe attainable. It is not by iron will or strong arm that obedience and order, the prime requisites of good government, are attainable, but by holding the key to the hearts of men.

As a man, the Grand Master should be of proven integrity, of irreproachable morals, free from the domain of hasty temper and ill governed passions, of good repute in the world and practicing, as an example to the Craft, the cardinal virtues of temperance, fortitude, prudence and justice.

He should be loyal to the government of his country. He should be familiar with the Landmarks of Freemasonry and insist on strict adherence to them.

He should be well versed in the laws, language and literature of the Craft.

He should be ever mindful that, though elevated for the time being above his fellows, he was elevated by them and that he is more sacredly bound by the Craftsman's Obligations.

He should cultivate everywhere and at all times the golden tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

WHY SHOULD I WANT TO CONTACT THE GRAND LODGE?

Contact your local Lodge or the Grand Lodge in the event of a serious tragedy or the death of a Brother Mason. Masons desire and are bound by their teachings to offer and give assistance, including memorial services in cooperation with those provided by religious bodies. If you have any question about the Grand Lodge or the Craft in general, ask and the answers will be provided.

CONCLUSION

In closing, we offer the following suggestion for your consideration, which can be of great value as you ponder the teachings of Masonry. Learn as much as you can about the Fraternity now; study the ritual, ask questions of your more informed Brothers, read a book or two on the Craft and especially study the Charges of the Degrees found elsewhere in this book.

In summary: Freemasonry in all her height and length and breadth and richness is now yours to use and to enjoy.

The Master Mason Degree Charge

Your zeal for the Institution of Masonry, the progress you have made in the mystery, and your conformity to our regulations have pointed you out as a proper object of our favor and esteem.

You are now bound by duty, honor and gratitude, to be faithful to your trust; to support the dignity of your character on every occasion; and to enforce, by precept and example, obedience to the tenets of the Fraternity. In the character of a Master Mason you are authorized to correct the errors and irregularities of your uninformed Brethren, and to guard them against a breach of fidelity. To preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied, must be your constant care; and for this purpose it is your province to recommend to your inferiors, obedience and submission; to your equals, courtesy and affability; to your superiors, kindness and condescension. Universal benevolence you are always to inculcate, and by the regularity of your own behavior, afford the best example for the conduct of others less informed.

The ancient landmarks of the Institution, entrusted to your care, you are carefully to preserve; and never suffer them to be infringed, or countenance a deviation from the established usages and customs of the Fraternity. Your virtue, honor, and reputation are concerned in supporting with dignity the character you now bear. Let no motive, therefore, make you swerve from your duty, violate your vows or betray your trust; but be true and faithful, and imitate the example of that celebrated artist whom you have this evening represented. Thus you will render yourself deserving of the honor which we have conferred, and merit the confidence that we have reposed.

TILER'S OATH

I, repeat name, do hereby and hereon solemnly swear, that I have been regularly Initiated as an E.A., passed to the Degree of F.C. and raised to the sublime Degree of Master Mason. I am now a member of Lodge, No under the jurisdiction of

I do not stand suspended or expelled from any regular Lodge and know of no just cause why I should be so dealt with. (KISS THE BIBLE)

MASTER MASON TEST QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Master Mason Degree called Sublime?
2. In the Third Degree what does the Lodge represent?
3. What is the significance of the Master Mason Degree?
4. How were you received in the Lodge and what was its meaning?
5. What is a Clandestine Lodge and a Clandestine Mason?
6. Why are Signs, Tokens and Words important in Masonry?
7. What is the most important working tool of a Master Mason and what is its Masonic use?
8. Who were the three original Grand Masters?
9. When and where was the Temple constructed?
10. Who was responsible for building the Temple and why was it built?
11. What was the ultimate goal of our Operative Brothers?
12. What is Low Twelve and what does it represent?
13. What was the significance of the Sprig of Acacia?
14. What is the symbolism of being raised?
15. What is always placed upon the Altar?
16. Of what is the Bee Hive a symbol?
17. What moral lesson is represented by the Tiler's Sword?
18. What are some of Freemasonry's Great Lessons?
19. What does the legend of The Master Workman teach us?
20. What are some of the generally recognized Landmarks of our Order?
21. What are the rights of a Master Mason?
22. What are the responsibilities of a Master Mason?

23. How do you address the Master in a Lodge?
24. How may one vote in Lodge?
25. What is the Grand Lodge?
26. Who composes the Grand Lodge of Maryland?
27. How should the presiding officer of a Lodge (Grand Lodge) always be addressed?