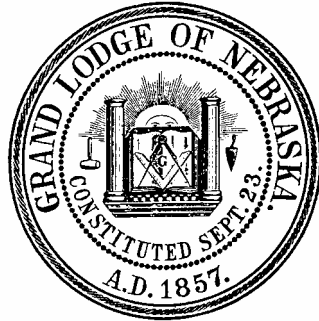


Grand Lodge of Nebraska



Enrollment Program

Updated August 2008

Mentoring Manual

FOREWORD

This manual was nearly complete when we were given a copy of the 1966 reprint of a Grand Lodge pamphlet entitled Handbook for Masonic Education Committee. The program was designed much like the program that follows, a meeting with the Candidate and his wife before the EA Degree, and subsequent meetings after each Degree. The program was in addition to the "long proficiency" used at the time. Each meeting consisted of five lectures to be memorized and delivered by the Masonic Education Committee from the Lodge.

The similarity in the topics to be discussed was striking. The lecture format was different than that which we had contemplated, but the material itself was nearly identical. All of which goes to prove that this problem, educating and inspiring candidates, has been with us for a very long time. Much of the material was very well written and well thought out and has now been incorporated into this manual.

The author of much of this current manual was initiated, passed and raised in 1973, seven years after the publication of the Handbook. Sadly, none of this work was presented. The Handbook consisted of twenty lectures, which would have explained much of what was committed, with some difficulty, to rote memory. It had, however, completely fallen into disuse in the seven intervening years. We now find ourselves, thirty years later, addressing the same problem, seeking ways to educate and inspire our candidates to seek Masonic Light, in order to establish a firm connection to the Lodge.

A part of the introductory material to the final series of lectures is particularly illustrative:

It is deplorable that often a candidate is permitted to drop from sight immediately after he has received the Third Degree. This period is the most critical in his Masonic Career. If the Lodge can maintain close contact with him, give him guidance and encouragement until he has had time to form habits of interest and activity, he should develop into a working Mason; otherwise, he is likely to cease attending after two or three meetings, lapse into chronic indifference, or find his way to some concordant or dependant circle which he believes will prove more attractive...

That (Third) Degree itself is at once the climax of initiation in the Symbolic Lodge and the most profound degree in Masonry. The time for him to learn its meaning is while it remains fresh in his memory and warm in his heart.

Brethren, we have failed thirty years of candidates by neglecting our duty to provide this education and inspiration. In 1966, when the Handbook was printed, there were forty thousand Masons in Nebraska. Now there are less than fifteen thousand.

Probably less than three thousand attend meetings at all. We may not have another chance to consistently build fraternal bonds with our candidates, and we must do so.

This enrollment program represents the best effort of the Grand Lodge to provide a method to make that vital connection. Every candidate has the right to instruction, and each of us has the duty to provide it. Use this program. Enroll candidates in your Lodge. Educate them. Inspire them. Lead them to light. Only then will we move beyond Degree work and begin to make the Masons that will carry our brotherhood into the future.

Dean Skokan
Deputy Grand Master 2006

NEBRASKA GRAND LODGE ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

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NEBRASKA GRAND LODGE ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

The Grand Lodge Enrollment Program is designed to make a new Mason an active part of his Lodge. It should educate candidates and inspire new Masons to find a place in the Lodge and to seek opportunities to better themselves in Masonry. The Program is based upon the principle that a Lodge has five opportunities to transform a candidate to an active Mason: the meeting with the Visitation (Investigation) Committee, the three Degrees, and the meeting where he demonstrates proficiency. A significant number of our new brothers never attend another meeting. That is our problem and our fault. The Enrollment Program is designed to maximize those five opportunities by making those meetings more understandable, meaningful, and fulfilling. This is done, in part, by giving the candidate some idea, in advance, of what will happen to him during the degrees, and some understanding of the historical rationale behind our ritual. This purpose is also accomplished by a professional appearance, competent work, and genuine fellowship. Maintaining fellowship with a new brother after those five contacts, involving him in lodge meetings and activities is also extremely important and cannot be neglected.

Most candidates don't know what to expect from the degrees. They know little of Masonic symbolism or history. What they get is blindfolded, dressed in an ill-fitting costume, led around a room in front of a handful of men they don't know, and told about the building of an old temple. We have to change that. That change starts with the Visitation (Investigation) Committee. Your Lodge needs to use this initial meeting not just to check out a petitioner, but to educate a candidate and his lady about the organization, who we are, what we do, and why it is worthwhile to invest his time in our fraternity.

After his petition is accepted, he must be told what to expect at his initiation. If we don't tell him, he may have unrealistic expectations that we can't meet or no expectations at all, which means he will be surprised at every turn. Surprise, brethren, is not a learning tool. He should learn from his Entered Apprentice Degree that he is

never alone in Masonry, to keep the secrets of the order and a brother's secrets, and that the three tenets of Masonry are brotherly love, relief and truth.

In the Fellow Craft Degree, the new Mason should learn that the architectural underpinnings of our fraternity are symbolic. He should be taught that the building of King Solomon's Temple is an allegory for building character and that the further lessons of Masonry will be discovered only by reflection and study.

The Master's Degree should open the door of Masonry for the Candidate. He should be inspired to study our history and traditions and to learn to improve himself from them. He should also learn the importance of fellowship. The night one is made a Master Mason is an important event. He will likely remember many things about that night. He needs to be aware that the evening was not only special for him, but for all Masons - that everyone there not only shook his hand, but also genuinely welcomed him into the Lodge and into the brotherhood.

Most of all, the new Mason needs to learn that he is never alone in this brotherhood. In the fraternity he should find companionship in his interests, contacts for his family and social needs and networking for his professional development. He needs to learn that he is a brother, whose contributions, whatever they may be, are needed and appreciated. He must find friendship and fellowship in the Lodge, not once or twice, but every time he comes through the door. This enrollment is the job of every Mason, not just the mentors or the members of the visitation committee – all of us.

USING THIS PROGRAM

The enrollment program is really more of a process than a program. The first section of this manual consists of an explanation of each of the five crucial contacts as well as a recommended procedure for each meeting. Each of these sections contains a brief discussion of the purpose and goals for each meeting and an outline of discussion topics for the meeting. A lodge actively working the program will have several knowledgeable brothers involved. They should discuss current candidates regularly and talk about the parts of the program that are effective and those that are not. This program is not set in stone. It is designed as a guideline. Several of these ideas might work in your lodge, with your candidates. Others may not be effective. The program should start you thinking about effectively enrolling your candidates, making them a part of your lodge, by whatever process you chose.

THE MENTOR

Upon the acceptance of a Petition, the Master of the Lodge will assign a Mentor to the candidate. The Mentor is a teacher, advisor and friend who is responsible for providing the candidate with a solid foundation in the history, philosophy, symbolism, "secret work" and organizational structure of Freemasonry. He must guide the new Mason and help him understand his Masonic experiences while inspiring him to be an active part of his Lodge. The Mentor must commit to work with the candidate for at least six months, through the degrees and thereafter, involving him in all Masonic functions including Lodge meetings and activities.

Any Master Mason in good standing with a working knowledge of Masonry is a candidate to be a mentor. Probably the single most important qualification to be a mentor is the desire and willingness to be one combined with a commitment to follow through on the assignment. To the extent possible, a mentor should have compatible personality traits and similar interests as the candidate.

After a candidate is formally notified that his petition has been accepted, the Mentor should contact the candidate and work out a degree schedule. The Mentor needs to maintain contact with the candidate as he progresses through the degrees. The candidate and his lady should also be invited to any open Lodge functions. The Mentor should offer to invite any of the candidate's Masonic relatives or friends to the Degree Work. Before the Entered Apprentice Degree, the Mentor and the Candidate should meet at the Lodge for the Candidate Orientation lecture.

Each candidate should be assigned his own mentor, and a mentor should not be expected to work with more than one candidate at a time, except during the follow-up process. The mentor should be very familiar with the Standard Proficiency Manuals for each degree. This program is intended as a supplement to those manuals and not a replacement for them.

THE VISITATION (INVESTIGATION) COMMITTEE

The visitation committee is the initial contact between the Lodge and the Petitioner and is the first chance to make a good impression. It is important that the committee visit the Petitioner at his home. They should be accompanied by one of the petition signers who will introduce them to the candidate and his family. The Committee should be selected to be as similar in age and interests to the candidate as possible. At least one member of the committee should be well versed in Masonry. They should be appropriately dressed, in “church attire.”

The primary purpose of this visit is to form an opinion of the candidate’s potential as a Mason; however, the Committee should also generally explain the nature of Masonry to the candidate and his wife. It is important to involve the wife in the conversation. She will likely have questions and they should be directly answered. The committee should also leave contact information for themselves and members’ wives if questions arise later. The brochures, Who are the Masons and What do They Do and Welcome to a Mason’s Lady should be left for them. There are several other materials available from the Masonic Service Association and the Masonic Renewal Committee that can also be used. The Petitioner should be told that a unanimous ballot is required and that a Mentor will be assigned after his petition is accepted. The candidate should be advised that the Mentor will explain the initiation process and assist with required memory work throughout the degrees. The meeting should take no more than one-half hour. In addition to reporting on the fitness of the petitioner, the Committee should also report to the Master and the Lodge about this candidate’s outside interests and activities so that a compatible mentor can be selected and brothers with similar interests can be aware of some common ground. The Chairman of the committee should send a thank you note following the meeting.

Discussion Topics for the Mentor with the Petitioner

A. The nature of Masonry

Fraternal organization of men of good character and reputation

More than a social club

Not a religion

Not a secret society, but there are secrets

Primarily ways we recognize each other as Masons

Fellowship is an important part of the Lodge

B. Initiation and subsequent degrees

Three Degrees: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, Master Mason

Conferred in separate ceremonies

Mentor will be appointed to schedule these ceremonies and explain them

Mentor will also help with the memorization that is required to advance

through each degree

Master Mason is the highest degree in Masonry

C. Appendant Bodies

Scottish and York Rites

Shrine

Eastern Star

Youth Organizations: DeMolay, Job's Daughters, Rainbow

Others not active in Nebraska

All but DeMolay and Rainbow require a Masonic connection

- D. Family involvement
 - In Blue Lodge Activities and in Related Organizations
- E. Special Activities relating to this lodge
 - Sports teams, Philanthropies
- F. Benefits of Lodge membership
 - Fellowship and networking
 - Opportunities for leadership
- H. Materials available
 - Manuals for each Degree
 - Internet Resources
 - Lodge Library

CANDIDATE ORIENTATION

This first meeting is probably the most important contact between the Mentor and the candidate. Well started is half done, according to the old saying. Prior to the meeting, the Candidate should have received the booklet "A Word to the Candidate" available from the Grand Lodge Office. Ideally, it should be delivered with the notice of election, which should be in the form of a letter from the Secretary. The mentor should contact the candidate to set up the meeting. It should take place in the Lodge, at a time other than a meeting night, when the Lodge is not in use. Care should be taken that the Lodge is clean and orderly, and the Mentor and the candidate should have the opportunity to walk throughout the Lodge and talk privately. It is imperative that the candidate understands that Masonic initiation is not demeaning or hazing, but is a part of the historic ritual used for centuries. The Mentor should explain the standards of dress and deportment in the Lodge and impress upon the candidate that initiation is a solemn ritual and that it will be conducted as such. If your lodge has usual or customary standards of dress, they should be explained to the candidate. He will not feel comfortable if he is the only person present wearing/not wearing a tie, for example.

There should also be some discussion of the history of Masonry at this time as well. An explanation of the allegory of the building of Solomon's Temple, and the use of the Hiram Abif legend as symbols of important lessons in Masonry and in life may be mentioned but should not be fully explained.

The discussion of the Degree work should start in the reception room and the candidate can be told that he and a member of the Lodge will wait in the reception room while the lodge is convened. He should be advised that after the Lodge is opened, a committee of Lodge officers will come to the reception room to ask several questions concerning his willingness and motivations to join the fraternity. It is not necessary to recite the necessary and constitutional questions or furnish the satisfactory answers. The Mentor should then take the candidate to the preparation room and explain that he

will wait in the preparation room, again in the company of a brother, until a Lodge officer delivers the preparatory address. He should be shown the costume that he will wear, told that he will have to change his clothes and that the Lodge Stewards will assist him and prepare him to enter the Lodge. He should specifically be told that he must be blindfolded before entering the Lodge.

The candidate should be taken into the lodge room. The position of the Altar and the officer's stations should be explained to him. The Mentor should also explain that the furniture and equipment of the Lodge will only be displayed when the Lodge is formally opened. The Mentor will explain that the candidate will be questioned by the officers of the lodge concerning his qualifications to be a Mason and that most of the answers will be given for him, and that the person conducting him will prompt him if necessary. He should also be advised that he will be given the opportunity to pray as the ceremony starts and that he will be asked in whom he places his trust.

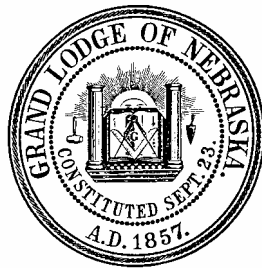
The Mentor should walk through the ceremony with the candidate, briefly explaining the perambulation, approaching the East, the obligation and the apron presentation. A precise recitation of the degree work is neither necessary nor desirable, but the candidate should have a clear idea of what will happen to him as a part of the initiation. Finally, the Mentor should explain that after the Degree he will receive a series of lectures which will help to explain the degree work. The Mentor, without reciting the lectures, should give the candidate some things to look for and some idea of the lessons to be learned.

Some brief discussion of the procedure of closing the lodge should also be given. The attitude of prayer should be demonstrated, and our use of the words "So mote it be" should be explained. The Mentor will also point out that the candidate will not be alone at any time during the preparation or the Degree, and that this is to begin to teach him the principles of brotherhood and fraternity. It is also proper to have a rudimentary discussion of Masonic secrecy and symbolism. An outline of suggested topics is included with these materials. The Mentor will also advise the candidate that he will

meet with him after the degree to discuss the Degree work, help with the proficiency and prepare for the Fellow Craft Degree.

A copy of “A Word to the Candidate” is included in this manual. The Mentor should be familiar with it in order to consistently answer any questions the candidate may have.

A Word to the Candidate About Freemasonry



Grand Lodge A.:F.: & A.:M.: of Nebraska

A Word to the Candidate About Freemasonry

A Serious Undertaking

You have been elected by unanimous ballot to receive the mysteries of Masonry. In your petition soliciting this honor, you made several significant statements.

You declared that:

1. You were not influenced by mercenary motives;
2. You were prompted by a desire for knowledge, and a sincere wish of being serviceable to your fellow creatures;
3. You would cheerfully conform to all the ancient, established usages and customs of the fraternity.

All this would indicate that you realize, somewhat, the importance of the engagements you are about to assume. You should approach Masonry with a receptive mind; and, as you progress through the three degrees, interpret for yourself, as far as possible, all that you hear and witness. Whatever proves difficult or obscure, let it be a challenge to you to search out the meaning; for you may be certain that it has its purpose, and that it concerns you no less than those things which were readily understood.

You should also approach Masonry clean in body, mind and heart, and with an eagerness to learn the significance of the institution; for, only in this state, can your preparation be worthy of what you are about to receive.

You also said that you had a favorable opinion of our Institution, a statement that we have accepted; but a few words concerning the Fraternity may help you to understand us better at the outset.

General Information Regarding Masonry

Freemasonry Defined

What is the definition of Freemasonry? In old England, it was defined as *“a system of morality, veiled in allegory (or a story) and illustrated by symbols.”* It is a course of moral instruction that uses both allegories and symbols to teach its lessons.

The modern definition is: *“Freemasonry is an organized society of men symbolically applying the principles of operative Masonry and architecture to the science and art of character building.”* In other words, we are trying to use the old methods to make you a better person.

Another definition, given by Joseph Fort Newton, is: *"Masonry is the activity of closely-united men who, employing symbolical forms, borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture work for the welfare of mankind, striving morally to ennoble themselves and others; and, thereby, to bring about a universal league of Mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale."*

The Purpose of Freemasonry

What is the purpose of Masonry? The basic purpose is to make "better men out of good men." We try to place emphasis on the individual man by strengthening his character, improving his moral and spiritual outlook and broadening his mental horizons. We try to impress upon the minds of our Members the principles of personal responsibility and righteousness, to give each Member an understanding of and feeling for Freemasonry's character, and we would like to have every Member put these lessons into practice in his daily life. This is how we try to build a better world – by building better men to work in their own communities. Freemasonry believes in universal peace made possible by teaching its doctrine through the Brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God.

Origin of Freemasonry

How did Freemasonry originate? We are not sure at what point in time our craft was born. We do know it goes far beyond written record, and we believe it was not always called Freemasonry. Some of the ancient mysteries of Egypt, Greece and the Orient influenced our ceremonies used today. These ceremonies were designed to test men and to admit only those who were worthy. Our ceremonies are somewhat the same, only of a less physical nature, and more of a spiritual form.

The Masonic Teaching

Masonry teaches man to practice charity and benevolence, to protect chastity, to respect the ties of blood and friendship, to adopt the principles and revere the ordinances of religion, to assist the feeble, guide the blind, raise up the downtrodden, shelter the orphan, guard the altar, support the government, inculcate morality, promote learning, love man, fear God, implore His mercy, and hope for happiness.

The Transition from Operative to Speculative Masonry

Operative Masonry can be traced back to the Middle Ages and beyond. Operative Masons, back then, formed groups with structures similar to ours today. They had officers and stations just like ours. Other men were admitted only after they had served a number of years of apprenticeship. This is where we get the first degree, the Entered Apprentice.

What is the difference between "Operative" and "Speculative" Masonry? Operative refers to the time in our history where Masons actually did the physical labor of building. They were the best at their craft, and they kept secret their methods of building. Speculative refers to the period of

time when men were accepted into the Craft without being physical builders but, rather, were spiritual builders.

Origin of Grand Lodge

What is a Grand Lodge? Modern, speculative Freemasonry, as we know it today, owes its structure to the Grand Lodge. The first Grand Lodge under our present system of Speculative Masonry was organized in London in 1717, and is now known as the United Grand Lodge of England. With the exception of a few Lodges, every regular Masonic Lodge today was granted a charter or warrant from a Grand Lodge. Every Grand Lodge has a certain jurisdiction or area to cover. In the United States, every state is governed by a Grand Lodge.

Titles of Grand Lodges A.:F.: & A.:M.: and F.: & A.:M.:

Titles of Grand Lodges in the United States also vary. Some are called A.:F.: & A.:M.:, which means Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons. The other most commonly used title is F.: & A.:M.:, or Free and Accepted Masons. The reason for this difference is that, back in England, when Grand Lodges first started, there was a rivalry between the Irish faction and the English faction – much like there is yet today. One faction adopted the Ancient title and the other did not. This carried over to the United States, and we still have both titles in existence. Some of the southern States do not call themselves Ancient. Two other titles exist in America. South Carolina calls themselves A.:F.:M.: – Ancient Free Masons. The District of Columbia calls themselves F.: A.: A.: M.: – Free and Accepted Masons. But, no matter what the title, all Lodges work toward the same end.

The Title of Free and Accepted

How did the words “*Free and Accepted*” originate? The ancient craftsmen were very skilled, and their craft was considered to be indispensable to the welfare of both church and state. For this reason, they were not placed under the same restrictions as other workers – they were “free” to do their work, travel, and live their lives in a manner which befitted their importance. Back in old England, this type of behavior was almost unheard of. Most workers were under bond to the owners of the land on which they worked. We believe this freedom for the Operative Mason dates back to the year 946 in York.

The word “accepted” also goes back to the time of the Operative Mason. During the latter years of the Middle Ages, there were few educated men outside the monasteries of the church. Naturally, men wanted to become Freemasons to get the advantages the craft had to offer. These men did not necessarily want to build buildings, they wanted to belong to the organization. These were “accepted” Masons, rather than Operative Masons. This practice probably originated when some of the people for whom craftsmen were working asked to be admitted, and the practice grew with time. This was a big boost to Masonry, because the secrets of building trades were becoming more widely known, architecture was changing, and our membership was declining. By becoming “speculative,” we grew rapidly. As time went on, there became more of the accepted members than there were operative members. Sometime in the eighteenth century, we

believe the accepted masons outnumbered the operative masons; and we became a speculative organization, rather than operative.

Is Freemasonry a Secret Society?

The answer is **NO**. A secret society is one that conceals its membership; has secret meeting places; and of which the public has no knowledge of its organization or its principles. This does not fit our society at all. We are not a secret society, but we are a society with secrets. Our secrets are very few in number, and deal with the esoteric (or memorized) parts of the ritual of our Degrees, the obligations, and modes of recognition. These esoteric parts have been handed down by word-of-mouth for centuries. Our purposes, ideals and principles may be learned by anyone who inquires. There are numerous books on these subjects that are available to the public. We sometimes have public notices in the newspapers, and our members are usually numbered among the more prominent citizens in the community.

From Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia, we learn that: *"There are, according to an old way of speech, certain 'mysteries of Masonry,' and each Mason knows what they are; one of the major mysteries among these is how, and oftentimes why, men of very large affairs, in high public office or at the head of great enterprises or institutions, find the time to give from one to three evenings a week to Freemasonry; make it their secondary vocation, and sometimes almost a profession; hold offices year after year in one Rite and Body after another, many of them becoming, and by dint of the hardest study, ritualists of an almost professional expertness."*

Is Freemasonry a Religion?

Again, **NO**. We do ask that you state that you believe and trust in God. We do not require that you belong to a church, although many Masons are very active in their churches. You have the right to belong to any church you want, and Freemasonry does not want to infringe on that right. You should not attempt to substitute the teachings of our Order, or membership in a Lodge, for your Church. Our Order seeks only to unite men for the purpose of brotherhood – not religion.

Catholicism and Masonry

Can a Catholic become a Mason? There is nothing in any of our doctrines that would prohibit a Catholic from becoming a Mason. There are many misunderstandings by the public, and by our own members, concerning this, and it has led to many false conclusions and created barriers where none exist, so far as Freemasonry is concerned. Some Catholic Popes have regarded Masonry with disfavor, and have issued edicts that condemned Freemasonry and prohibited membership to all Catholics. In spite of this, many prominent Catholics have become Masons. A good example is Danny Thomas. Our organization, generally, has given no official recognition to these edicts. We have chosen to follow a course of "silence and circumspection" since the first of these edicts was issued in 1738 by Pope Clement XII.

Atheism or Communism and Masonry

No atheist can become a Mason. You have to profess a faith in God, when applying, as a prerequisite for admission. Since Communism also denies the very existence of God, no Communist can become a Mason. We think there are Masons in Communist countries, and we think they meet secretly.

Subjects Not Proper for Discussion in Lodge

Religion and politics should not be discussed in Lodge. There are very good reasons not to discuss these subjects. 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 may follow his own convictions. Our objective is to unite men and 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 be discussed. These discussions should be kept within the bounds of propriety, and everyone should show a tolerance for the opinion of the other. Every Master wants harmony in his Lodge; and once a matter has been put to vote in the Lodge, and a decision 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, or in the name of Freemasonry, in exercising his rights – such as showing affiliation with any Lodge in his campaign advertising.

Qualifications of a Petitioner

First, he must be a man. Second, he must believe in a Supreme Being. Third, he must be of lawful age, or 18. Fourth, he must be able to read and write English.

Why is it Called Blue Lodge?

We are not sure where the name Blue Lodge originated. We think it is because blue is generally regarded to be the color of truth and fidelity, and these are the basic teachings of our Craft. Blue is also the color used to characterize friendship. Finally, blue has been used to trim and decorate Masonic aprons, collars and clothing down through the ages, and this is probably why we call it the “Blue Lodge.”

Preparation for Initiation

To get the greatest good from the ceremonies, a candidate should first prepare his mind for its reception. He should not be apprehensive. He should enter the Lodge with an attitude that will enable him to appreciate the serious and solemn ceremonies through which he will pass. 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 will be new and unusual to the candidate. They have been used, since ancient times, by allegory and symbolism. These methods have been used for over two centuries and have not changed very much since Masonry originated. Finally, he should learn that every Mason in the Lodge Room is his friend and Brother.

No Horseplay or Hazing

There is no place for horseplay or hazing during our ceremonies, and the candidate can be assured there will be none. The rituals are serious and solemn, and we are trying to teach spiritual lessons with great dignity. Anything which is told 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.

Duties and Privileges of Lodge Membership

In petitioning for the three degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry, you desired, presumably, to become a member of the order that you might enjoy the fraternal fellowship of the brethren, and that you might be serviceable to your fellow men. It will be helpful to you to have some conception of what lodge membership implies. This subject may, as yet, be explained only partially, although there is much that you can and should understand at the start of your journey.

You will become a member by receiving the three degrees. You will become entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership by proving your proficiency in each degree. By taking the obligations of the degrees, and by signing the bylaws, you enter into a contractual relationship with the lodge, wherein you bind yourself to perform certain duties, and the lodge binds itself to protect you in certain rights and privileges.

One of your first duties shall be loyalty to the Fraternity and your superior officers, and obedience to the laws. This is a fundamental requirement.

It shall be your duty to pay, regularly and promptly, such dues as your lodge may establish. No option is given. To observe this duty is a necessary condition of membership. It shall also be your duty, as your conscience will guide and your means permit, to do your share in maintaining the charities of the lodge, and to stand ready to lend a helping hand to a Brother Mason in distress.

Under the Nebraska code, if you are present at a communication of your lodge when a ballot is taken on a petition for initiation, affiliation, or reinstatement, you must vote, as no member can be excused from voting thereon. This is only another way of saying that the responsibility for deciding Masonic membership rests on each and every member. To cast a vote is not merely a right or privilege to be exercised by choice, but a duty.

It shall be your duty to attend the communications of your lodge, to join in its deliberations and decisions, and to assist in discharging its responsibilities. You are not required, nor even expected, to attend if attendance works an unnecessary hardship on yourself or your family.

As a member of a lodge, you will be eligible to any office in it, except that of Worshipful Master, to which no member may be elected unless he has previously served as an installed Warden.

You will have the right to join in public processions, a privilege carefully guarded and protected by our laws, since to join in these is to identify oneself with the Fraternity.

As a Master Mason in good standing, after you have passed your proficiency examination in the Third Degree, you will be entitled to additional rights and privileges which, in due time, will be explained to you.

In all communications of the lodge, you will have a voice in its discussions, and a vote on questions decided by the Lodge. Neither in Lodge, nor in Grand Lodge, is there taxation without representation; nor is any Masonic officer permitted to exercise arbitrary or unreasonable authority.

The Lodge and Grand Lodge give many services and extend many opportunities for entertainment, good fellowship, and educational advantages. As a Mason, you will have the privilege of enjoying these equally, with all your fellow members.

When among strangers, you will possess certain modes of recognition by which to prove yourself to another Mason and to exact similar proof from him, being thereby enabled to establish fraternal relations with men, who otherwise, "must have remained at a perpetual distance." To know that, wherever you may go, you will find Brothers ready to extend the hand of fellowship – men whom you have never met, but who already stand bound to you by the Mystic Tie – is one of the greatest of all the privileges of membership.

These duties, rights, and privileges of Masonic membership are not exhaustive. We have barely touched the fringe of a great theme; but it is our hope that, with such light as has been given you, you will go forward with a livelier, keener understanding of what Masonry can mean to you and of what you may mean to it.

The Concordant Orders

Three degrees – Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason – constitute the basic Masonic system known as Ancient Craft Masonry; or, as it is also called, Symbolic, or Speculative Masonry. Contrary to widespread, but erroneous, opinion, a member having attained the degree of Master Mason can go no "higher" in Masonry; that is, he can have conferred upon him no additional degrees which would set him apart from any other Master Mason insofar as status, rights, and privileges within his Lodge are concerned. These three degrees are conferred in a Lodge of Ancient Craft Masonry, or "Blue Lodge."

Other Masonic bodies in Nebraska are: York Rite, Scottish Rite, Order of the Eastern Star, Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, Red Cross of Constantine, National Federated Craft, Allied Masonic Degrees, National Sojourners, Past Grand Masters Association, and Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem. Masonic lodges also act as sponsors for youth groups consisting of Order of DeMolay, for boys; and Order of Rainbow and Order of Job's Daughters, for girls.

The Heart of the Masonic Family

Freemasonry is not just another fraternity or association of men banded together for social, political or economic advantages. Our foundation is built on a philosophy of friendship and brotherly love. We also make many worthwhile contributions to our society. We in Nebraska contribute toward the Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children in Fremont. This is a home for orphans, and for children with a bad home situation, etc. The children do not, necessarily, have to be affiliated with a Mason. The organization also has a Masonic Home for the Elderly in Plattsmouth. It is a nursing home available only to Masons or their female relatives.

Some of the better-known Masons are: George Washington, Paul Revere, Patrick Henry and Harry Truman.

Discussion Topics for the Mentor with the Candidate

A. History of Masonry

Public awareness in 1717, but origins are older than that

Oldest written record is the Regius Manuscript, dated 1390

Expansion of Guilds to non-operative masons

Knights Templar Theory may be discussed (?)

B. Qualifications

Belief in God

Religion or sect is unimportant

Male

Mental competence

Lawful age

Good reputation

C. Secrecy

Not a "Secret Society"

Lodges are well identified

Lodge activities are publicized

Rituals and modes of recognition are secret

Reasons for secrecy are historical in American context

Secrecy is necessary in some other parts of the world

D. Initiation

No horseplay

Not humiliating or demeaning

Rite of passage to insure that qualifications are met

Initiation ritual is largely unchanged since earliest days of Masonry

E. Temple Allegory

Ritual of Masonry is the legend of the building of Solomon's Temple

Degrees are representative of classes of workmen at the Temple

Entered Apprentice was the first step in Lodge membership

G. Walk through in Lodge room

Blindfold

Costume

Lectures overview

H. Lodge Operation

Attitude of Prayer – Cross of the Good Shepherd

So Mote it be

Usual Lodge attire

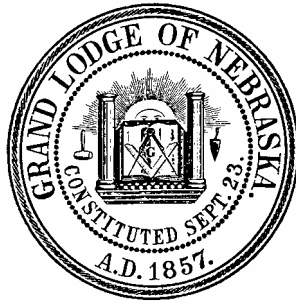
STANDARD PROFICIENCY

for the

ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

for

NEBRASKA LODGES



GRAND LODGE A.:F.: & A.:M.:

of

NEBRASKA

THE ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

Lodge Organization

A Lodge is composed of a certain number of Masons duly assembled, with the Holy Bible, a Square, a Compass, and a Charter or warrant empowering them to work and to confer the three degrees of Masonry and carry on such activities as are necessary for proper administration of the Lodge. In Nebraska, eight Master Masons, members of the lodge, constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

A Charter issued by a Grand Lodge confers authority for the existence of each lodge. You will later be shown the Charter of your own Lodge. It was issued to your Lodge by the Grand Lodge of Nebraska, Ancient, Free, and Accepted Masons. A Lodge may retain its Charter only as it obeys the laws of the Grand Lodge and works in accordance with the traditions and ancient usages and customs of the Masonic Fraternity.

Nebraska Masonic Lodges are known as A.:F.: & A.:M.:, that is “Ancient Free and Accepted Masons.” Some lodges are called F.: & A.:M.: or “Free and Accepted Masons.” While some of those descriptive adjectives are self-explanatory, the terms refer to the origins of the particular lodge.

Lodge Officers

Each Lodge generally has eleven and may have as many as thirteen officers. They are: the Worshipful Master, who is its' chief executive; Senior and Junior Wardens, who are the second and third in order of rank; Treasurer and Secretary, whose titles are self-explanatory; a Chaplain, Senior and Junior Deacons, Senior and Junior Stewards, and a Tyler. The Tyler always remains outside the door of the Lodge. A Lodge may, if it desires, have a Marshal and an Organist.

The first five officers are elected each year in November, by a secret written ballot. The Worshipful Master appoints the other officers.

The Meaning of the Term “Entered Apprentice”

You are now privileged to be known as an Entered Apprentice Mason. In prior times actual working Masons were referred to as operating Masons or Operative Masonry. In the days of Operative Masonry it was necessary to continually recruit new members to replace those lost through removal, accident, illness and death. To do this they used the apprenticeship system, which is still used today by some of the building trades. The word “apprentice” means “learner” or “beginner.”

In Operative Masonry, the apprentice was usually a young man of ten to fifteen years of age, who was required to be of sound body in order to do the heavy manual labor. He had to be of good habits, of obedient and willing nature, of good reputation, and well recommended by Masons already members of the Craft. When a young man was chosen, he was called into the Lodge, where all the members could assure themselves of his qualifications. If they voted to

receive him, he was given such instruction as was necessary, taught the history of the Craft, and placed under obligation to the Order. After some period of time, during which he demonstrated his fitness to master the craft and become an acceptable member, his name was “entered” on the books, and he was given a recognized place in the Craft organization.

As an Entered Apprentice Mason, you are a learner or a beginner in Masonry in what we now refer to as Speculative Masonry. You have taken the first step in the mastery of the art Speculative Masonry.

The Candidate's First Step

After taking the Entered Apprentice Degree, every candidate should have impressed upon his mind the three qualities that every Entered Apprentice should possess if he is to attain full benefit and enjoyment of Freemasonry. These are Obedience, Humility, and Industriousness.

The Entered Apprentice should obey those who are appointed to teach him, so he can learn what is required of him before progressing further. He must have a sense of humility, so he will not develop a belief that he knows more than those who are assigned to teach him. Finally, he must also develop a spirit of industry; because Freemasonry recommends that individuals who want to know more about Masonry spend time learning by reading and studying a wealth of available Masonic materials and publications.

The Candidate Must First Be Prepared in His Heart

As a man thinketh, so is he; but as he purposes in his heart, so will his life be. The heart is the center of man's affections and desires. If he is clean within, his life will reflect that condition – but the reverse is also true. We are concerned with the building of your character in your life. Working toward this goal must begin within your heart; for, if your heart is not ready, we cannot expect to make an impression on your mind. Therefore, each candidate who comes seeking light must be prepared in his heart.

Duly and Truly Prepared

Being duly and truly prepared refers to the wearing of special garments furnished by the Lodge, in order to emphasize our concern with man's internal qualities, rather than his worldly wealth and honors. By wearing the garments of humility, the candidate signifies the sincerity of his intentions.

Symbols of Masonry

Most of the great lessons of Freemasonry are imparted or taught by symbols carefully selected by our Masonic forefathers.

The Hoodwink

The first symbol is the Hoodwink. It is a symbol of darkness, where the uninitiated dwells. It is also a symbol of secrecy and is practiced for spiritual, rather than physical reasons.

The darkness of the Hoodwink is replaced by the light of understanding when the candidate begins to discover the mysteries of Freemasonry.

The Cable-Tow

The Cable-Tow is a symbol of the external restraints that are placed upon the life of man. It is also generally regarded to mean the scope of one's ability to perform his obligations to his Brethren.

The Entrance

The entrance into the Lodge includes everything that happens at the Inner Door and is intended to teach the significance of initiation as the symbolic birth of the candidate into the world of Masonry.

The Reception

The reception of the candidate into the Lodge room (this is where the Senior Deacon stops you just inside the door and tells you the significance of how and why he is receiving you into the Lodge) is intended to symbolize the fact that the obligations which he will assume are solemn, and that there is a penalty if these are violated. It also reminds man that his every act has a consequence, either in the form of a reward or a penalty. Man reapeth as he soweth.

The Holy Saints John

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 came from one at Jerusalem. By tradition also, every Mason hails from such a Lodge. By coming from this mythical Lodge, he proves that he hails from a “just and legally constituted Lodge.”

Form of a Lodge

The form of a Lodge is an oblong square, (a rectangle). It extends from East to West and between North and South. The East in a Masonic Lodge may not necessarily coincide with the actual point of the compass. The East in the Lodge is the station of the Worshipful Master – from which he dispenses light and instruction to all his Brethren. In some lodges, their physical structure and configuration may require that the “symbolic east” may not coincide with the

cardinal points of the compass. The other points, West, South, and North, are located in proper relation to the station of the Master.

The Rite of Perambulation

Perambulation 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 enables the Brethren to observe that the candidate is properly prepared. Perambulation is much older than initiation, even into Ancient Mysteries; for it goes back to the time of the caveman, who worshipped the sun and reproduced its light and heat with fire, on his own crude stone altars, around which he marched in humble adoration and worshipful imitation of the journey of the sun across the sky.

Perambulation should teach the Entered Apprentice that Freemasonry is a progressive science, and man may gather truth as he progresses. It also teaches that life is a progressive journey through which each must travel toward his ultimate destiny.

The Altar

The central piece of furniture in the Lodge is the altar and upon it rests the Three Great Lights in Masonry, the Holy Bible, the square and the compass. The altar is symbolic of many things. Its location in the center of the Lodge symbolizes the place which God has in Masonry, and which He should have in every person's life. It is also a symbol of worship and faith. The candidate approaches the altar in search of light and also assumes his obligations there. In the presence of God and his Brethren, he offers himself to the service of God, or 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. The principles for which the Three Great Lights stand should serve to guide everyone's thoughts and actions both in the Lodge and abroad in the world. The altar supporting the Three Great Lights should remind each Brother who stands before it that "faith supports life itself."

The Worshipful Master

The presiding officer of the Lodge is called the Worshipful Master. 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.

As noted herein, the Worshipful Master's station or office is in the East. In the world of nature, the sun rises in the East to shed light and luster on the earth. In 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 Lodge? The Master wears a hat, and the remainder of the Brethren remains uncovered, for several reasons. Keeping the head covered while others are

uncovered has long been a symbol of superior rank. Men usually uncover in the presence of those they deem to be of superior rank, as a mark of respect. Also, it is possible the Worshipful Master wears a hat because King Solomon wore a crown as a mark of dignity.

The Great Light of Freemasonry

The Great Light of Freemasonry is the Volume of the Sacred Law (no matter what religion), and it is an indispensable part of the furniture of a Lodge. The Grand Lodges of the United States use as the volume of Sacred Law, the Holy Bible on their altars. In other countries, the candidate who is not a Christian or a Jew is entitled to have his own sacred book substituted for the Bible. In some Lodges in other countries, the altars of Masonry have more than one Book of Sacred Law on them, and the candidate may choose the one on which he properly is to be obligated.

No Lodge may stand officially open unless the Holy Bible is opened upon its altar with the Square and Compass displayed thereon, indicating the Degree in which the Lodge is working. The open Bible signifies that we should regulate our conduct according to its teachings, because it is the rule and guide of our faith. The Square is a symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. To “act on the square” is to act honestly. The Compass is a symbol of restraint, of skill, and of knowledge. The Square and Compass are seen and recognized by the general public as the symbol of Freemasonry itself.

The Obligation

The Obligation is the heart of the Degree; for when it is assumed by the candidate, has solemnly bound himself to Freemasonry, and assumed certain duties that 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 its secrets that deal with its modes of recognition and symbolic instruction. The candidate should understand that the great truths that Masonry teaches are not secret, but the manner in which Freemasonry teaches these truths is considered secret.

Penalties for Violation of the Obligation

The penalties incurred for willful violation of your Masonic Obligation will not be of a physical nature. Those that you recite at the conclusion of your Obligation, in the Lodge room, are purely symbolic. This was explained in the preparatory address. The Mason who violates his Obligation will subject himself to Masonic discipline, which could include the loss of membership in the Lodge and the Fraternity, either by suspension or expulsion. He will also be subject to the scorn and contempt of all good Masons. The ancient, oral penalties already mentioned, are retained in our ritual to impress upon the mind of each Brother how serious a violation will be regarded by the members of the Fraternity. The Obligations were voluntarily assumed, and every means possible is used to impress the new Mason with the solemnity and the necessity for faithful performance of them.

The Apron

The Apron has been used since ancient times, and it has taken many forms among the various Crafts in the world. We usually associate this with Freemasonry, but it was used by more than the operative stonemason. The apprentice stonemason wore his apron with a bib held in place by a strap around his neck. This protected his clothing from damage by the large, rough stones that he handled. The Apron was also worn by certain officers of the Church of England as a badge of servitude. This, then, may testify to our understanding of the duty we have of service to our fellowman. The Apron also signifies that Freemasons are workers, rather than drones, builders, rather than obstructionists. Both the symbolic material – lambskin, and the color of the Apron – white, make it an emblem of innocence and purity. When the Apron is presented to the candidate, it is described as being “more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter....” These are the honored decorations of Ancient Rome and Medieval Europe, and the Apron is deemed worthy of only our carefully selected members.

The Rite of Destitution

Asking you to inspect yourself for metals that might be upon your person is also ancient and was practiced in the older initiations, in recognition of a belief that the planets had an attraction for certain metals. It was also believed that these planets also exerted certain influences over human beings. In the ancient ceremonies of initiation, all metals were left behind, so that disturbing planetary influences were not brought into the place of the initiation. This ancient rite is still used to teach the initiate that he is to bring nothing into the Lodge that would destroy its peace and harmony. As he is divested of worldly reminders, leaving them outside the Lodge, he is reminded that he must leave his passions and prejudices outside when he enters the Lodge. The lesson of relieving another Brother's distress is also taught by this means.

The Northeast Corner

The northeast corner is the traditional location of the cornerstone or foundation stone of a building. Both the stone and its location signify a beginning. The Entered Apprentice is placed at this point, midway between the darkness of the North and the brilliance of the East, to signify that he has begun his Masonic life. He has left the darkness of the North, which symbolizes lack of knowledge of the Masonic life, and is moving toward the light of knowledge that comes from the East. The Entered Apprentice has laid the foundation stone of his Masonic life, and must now build his character from the light of the teachings that come from the East.

The Working Tools

The Working Tools presented to the candidate are 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 moral of his human nature. By these symbolic tools, he also fits his own behavior to society.

The Charge

At the end of the ritualistic ceremony of initiation and instruction, the candidate is charged to perform his Masonic duties. The charge is an orally presented summation of instructions, which is delivered to him reciting these duties learned in the Degree and setting the stage for his expected conduct as a Mason.

The Lectures

There are a number of documents known to Masonic students as the Old, or Ancient, Charges of a Freemason. These documents contain the principles of ancient Masonic law and usage, both written and unwritten. In 1723, a Committee in England compiled these documents, and they are commonly called the Constitution of 1723. These documents lay down the rules for the conduct of the individual Mason, as well as the Lodge he attends. Since these are printed, they should be studied by new members. The Lectures attached to the Degree are intended to elaborate certain phases of the ritual, giving a broader explanation of the ritual, in order for the candidate to understand the ceremony better.

King Solomon's Temple

The frequent references to King Solomon's Temple, in this and other Degrees, lead to the false conclusion that he founded the Fraternity. Freemasonry is believed to have become an organized craft many years after the reign of Solomon. However, our ritual is based upon Masonic legends connected with both Solomon and Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem, which enriches the symbolism.

Questions and Answers

The series of questions and answers is intended:

- 1) To teach each candidate the language of Freemasonry;
- 2) to fix in his mind the teachings of the Degree;
- 3) to impress upon his consciousness the different points of the Obligation he has assumed; and,
- 4) to enable him to prove, to his satisfaction and that of his Brethren, that he is a Mason.

We highly recommend that each of you learn the questions and answers in each degree, in order that you might become teachers of other new Brethren.

The Origin of Our Ritual

Where and when did the ritual work originate? The origin of our Ritual cannot be traced much beyond the years of the 18th century or around 1700. The father of the English Ritual was, undoubtedly, William Preston. This Ritual has been refined and polished, without being basically changed in character, in the nearly three centuries since Preston first used it in London. Essentially, we have been using ritualistic work in Masonry since 1700, and it was started by William Preston. Prior to this, the Ritual of Freemasonry was a continuation of the practices and customs of the day-to-day work of the Operative Freemason. The emphasis gradually shifted from the practical to the moral and spiritual values as the Accepted Masons began to outnumber the Operative Brethren in the Lodges. In early Speculative Masonry, there may have been but one Degree and a Master's part. After a few years, three Degrees were used. Around 1813, the United Grand Lodge of England declared: "Ancient Craft Masonry consists of three degrees and no more"

The Language of Freemasonry

Why is the language of Freemasonry so different from that which we normally use? The candidates often ask this question. The Ritual of Freemasonry is a product of the early decades of the 18th century. It contains much of the language of that century, 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, you will discover that the thoughts and teachings imparted cannot be put in fewer words and still retain their meaning.

The Emblems of Masonry

The Entered Apprentice should study all the Emblems of the Degree, for each is important and should be thoroughly understood by him. For example, the lamb is usually an emblem of innocence. The emblem suggests truth to the mind. The twenty-four inch gauge is an emblem of the twenty-four hours of the day. A wise use of time is suggested by this emblem.

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 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, and listen to his instructions. If you wish to speak, arise and wait until the Master recognizes you; and, then, address remarks to him.

The Tyler

The Tyler guards the avenues approaching the Lodge. A Lodge is said to be duly tyled 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 is one who 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 is the one who would forge a good standing card, or finds one and masquerades as the owner.) If a Brother comes to Lodge late and wants in, the Tyler 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 Brother know in which Degree the Lodge is working.

The Lodge Prayer

No Lodge can be opened, or be closed, without prayer – which is offered by the Master or Chaplain. The prayer should be used so as to avoid offense or sectarianism in the Lodge. Masonry's tolerance of religious preference then generally makes no Christian reference, even though the vast majority of Masons are of the Christian faith. At the end of the prayer, each member responds with the words "So mote it be," which means "So may it ever be."

The Rights of an Entered Apprentice Mason

These are very limited, since he cannot vote or hold office. The Entered Apprentice is not entitled to organized Masonic charity, but it does not bar him from receiving assistance from a Mason as an individual. He is not entitled to receive a Masonic burial; nor can he, clothed as a Mason, attend the funeral of a Brother. The Entered Apprentice can attend a Lodge while an Entered Apprentice Degree is being performed. He is entitled to instruction, and is required to demonstrate his proficiency before being advanced to the Degree of Fellow Craft. He may not receive the Degrees of Craft Masonry elsewhere, without consent of the Lodge. In other words, if you move and want to continue your work, contact the Secretary here or the Secretary at the new location, to insure that proper procedures are followed. One is entitled to all privileges of Masonry only when he has completed all three degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry.

The Responsibilities of an Entered Apprentice Mason

These, also, are very few. He must (1) keep secret everything entrusted to him; (2) conduct himself with proper decorum; and (3) try to learn as much about Masonry as possible.

(At this time, the candidate should be taught the grip and word of an Entered Apprentice Mason, plus the due guard and sign, and be informed of what comes next in his advancement through the Lodge. This is also a time for the candidate to ask any other questions he wants relating to Masonry.)

QUESTIONS FOR THE ENTERED APPRENTICE

Please use whatever reference material you can find to answer the following questions. They are not intended to question your knowledge, but rather to reinforce the standards of Masonry.

*****Note that questions 5-10 are answered in the Candidates Manual*****

1. What number of Masons constitutes a quorum?

Eight

2. What organization issues a Charter to a Lodge?

A Grand Lodge

3. How many officers may a Lodge have?

Thirteen

4. What is the title we give the presiding officer of the lodge?

The Worshipful Master

5. What is the modern definition of Masonry?

Freemasonry is an organized society of men, symbolically applying the principles of operative Masonry and architecture to the science and art of character building.

6. What is Masonry's purpose?

To make better men out of good men.

7. When did Freemasonry originate?

The rituals of Freemasonry, although it may have been called something else, have their origins in ancient Egypt, Greece, and the Orient.

8. What is the difference between Operative and Speculative Masonry?

Operative Masons did the physical labor of building. Speculative Masons build spiritually, not physically.

9. What do “Free” and “Accepted” mean?

Operative Masons, because of their importance to the work of the church and state were not bound to the owner of the property on which they worked. They were free to do their work and travel. Accepted masons were men who wanted to belong to the organization for the benefits enjoyed by Masons, but who didn't physically construct buildings. The first Accepted Masons were likely men who employed Masons to construct buildings.

10. What is the difference between “Accepted” Masons and “Operative” Masons?

Operative Masons did the physical labor of building, Accepted Masons were men who were accepted as masons without doing the physical labor of building.

11. Why is Freemasonry not considered a secret society?

Our meeting places are not hidden, our membership is not secret, and our organization and its purposes are well known.

12. What is Masonry's policy on Catholics becoming Masons?

Our fraternity does not bar Catholics nor members of any faith.

13. Why can't an atheist become a Mason?

Since Masonic obligations are taken in the name of God, they would not bind an atheist

14. In order to sign a petition for entrance into Masonry, what are the four qualifications of a petitioner?

He must be a man, believe in God, of Lawful age (18), and he must be able to read and write English

15. How can a petitioner best prepare himself for initiation into Masonry?

16. What do we mean when we say a candidate must first be prepared in his heart?

The heart is the center of man's affections and desires. The building of character begins with the heart. In other words, the heart must be prepared in order to make an impression on the mind.

17. What do we mean when we say “duly and truly prepared?”
- The wearing of the clothing of humility, to emphasize the importance of man’s internal qualities.*
18. What is the symbolism of the Hoodwink?
- It is a symbol of darkness and secrecy.*
19. What is the symbolism of the Cable-Tow?
- It is the symbol of the external restraints on the life of man*
20. Why is the entrance to the Lodge so important to a candidate?
- It symbolizes the importance and solemnity of the obligation and the penalty of violation.*
21. Who are the Holy Saints John, and why does Masonry use these Saints?
- They are the Patron Saints of Freemasonry. They were chosen to prove heritage to the Lodge of the Holy saints John at Jerusalem.*
22. Give two reasons why candidates are perambulated around the altar.
- To allow the Brethren to observe that the candidate is properly prepared.*
23. Why are the Three Great Lights of Masonry placed in the center of the Lodge?
- It symbolizes the place which God has in Masonry, and which He should have in every person’s life.*
24. What does the open Bible signify in the Lodge?
- The open Bible signifies that we should regulate our conduct according to its teachings.*
25. What is the Square supposed to teach us?
- The square teaches morality, truthfulness and honesty.*
26. What is the Compass supposed to teach us?
- The Compass teaches restraint, skill and knowledge.*

27. Of what significance is the Obligation?

The Obligation binds the candidate to Freemasonry and its duties, and protects the Fraternity against someone revealing its secrets that deal with its modes of recognition and symbolic instruction.

28. Even though the physical penalties mentioned in the Obligation are symbolic, why are they retained in the ritual work?

The physical penalties are retained in our ritual to impress upon each Brother how seriously a violation would be regarded by all other Masons.

29. What is the Rite of Destitution supposed to teach us?

That a Mason should bring nothing into the Lodge which would destroy peace and Harmony. It also illustrates the lesson of relieving another Brother's distress.

30. Why is the Entered Apprentice placed in the Northeast corner of the Lodge?

Because it is the traditional location of the cornerstone or starting point of a building, and the beginning of a man's Masonic life.

31. Of what use is the Speculative Mason to make of the symbolic working tools of the Degrees?

They represent the moral habits by which man shapes and reshapes his character, to fit his behavior to society.

32. Why are the Lectures used in the Degree work?

They are intended to give a broader explanation of the ritual, in order for the candidate to understand the ceremony better.

33. Who originated our ritual work as we know it today, and approximately when did it start?

Our ritual was originated in England by William Preston and originated around 1700.

34. Define "cowan."

35. Define "eavesdropper."

36. What are two rights of an Entered Apprentice Mason?

He is entitled to attend a Lodge when open in the Entered Apprentice Degree, and he is entitled to instruction.

37. What are the three responsibilities of an Entered Apprentice Mason?

He must keep the secrets entrusted to him; conduct himself with proper decorum, and learn as much about Masonry as possible.

There is a wealth of reference and reading materials available on the subject of Masonry or Freemasonry. (Synonymous terms) The Grand Lodge of Nebraska has much material and can provide lists of ready reference.

Web sites also abound on Masonic information. A Note of caution – anyone can post information on the Net – until your knowledge increases, contemplate much of what you read carefully and talk to others.

ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

(To be conducted in open Lodge)

A: Gv m a sgn.

Q: *(Gives it.)*

A: Xs tht an allsn?

Q: It hs, t + pnltly % my oblgtm.

A: Gv m a tkn. *(Given.)* I hl.

Q: I cncl.

A: Vht d u cncl?

Q: Al + scrts % Ans in Ansnry excpt it b frm hm
or thm t whm thy % rght blng.

A: Vht is tht?

Q: + grp % an E P A.

A: Xs it a nm?

Q: It hs.

A: Vll u gv it t m?

Q: I dd nt s rcv it, nthr cn I s imprt it.

A: Xw wll u dsps % it tht I my cm in psssn % it?

Q: I wll lttr @ syllbl it wth a br.

A: Lttr @ bgn.

Q: Vgn u.

A: Ny, + wrd is yurs. U bgn.

Q: *(Begins — word given.)*

FOLLOWING THE ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

Immediately after the EA Degree, the Mentor should congratulate the candidate on his progress and answer any questions he may have. Some time that evening, an appointment should be scheduled to work through the EA Proficiency Manual. The candidate should be encouraged to read the Manual before the meeting with the Mentor. The meeting can take place at the Lodge or at the Mentor's home, assuming private discussions can be accomplished there. This meeting or, if necessary, meetings will probably take more than an hour. Using the Proficiency Manual as an outline, the Mentor should engage the candidate in a conversation in his own words about the topics listed in the manual.

It is important to understand that much of the language used in the ritual is strange to the candidate. Explain that our ritual is very old and that some of the language used is very old as well. Use the term "Worshipful" as an example. The Candidate is probably used to the traditional method of education, and is likely unfamiliar with education presented by symbols and allegory. He has hopefully realized that the Masonic method of teaching is unlike that of the schools. Instead of employing teachers and textbooks and lessons, instead of expounding its teachings directly, Freemasonry uses ritual, symbolism and allegory. This method is not as easy to follow as the "schoolhouse" method, but has these advantages: it makes a Mason study and learn for himself, forces him to find his own truth, and compels him to take the initiative himself, so that the very act of learning is of educational value. Explain to him that Masonic lessons are often concealed in its symbols, in part, because it was not always safe to be a Mason, indeed, it is not safe to be a Mason in some parts of today's world. The Masonic meaning of Truth as light, and the symbolism of the hoodwink are good discussion examples.

Tell the candidate that any interpretations of Masonic teachings can only suggest what he will find by his own efforts. There can be no one source or definition of Masonic truth, because that is something each man must discover himself. The

candidate should also be advised that there are many books on the subject of Freemasonry, as well as a great deal of information on the Internet. If the Lodge has a library, it should be shown to the candidate. The Mentor should encourage the candidate to research any questions independently of the degree work, however, caution should be advised because there are many opinions on such matters. The depth of these discussions will depend on the candidate's review of the Manual and his interest in the historical aspects of our fraternity.

Particular attention should be paid to the discussion of the EA degree on pages 6 through 14 of the Manual. This gives the Mentor the opportunity to go back through the degree with the candidate, explaining the significance of the ritual. This is also an opportunity to remind the candidate that he was never alone during the degree and to point out that a man is never alone in Masonry. This is the beginning of understanding Masonic fellowship.

The candidate should be encouraged to fill out the answers to the questions on pages 15 – 18 of the manual for his own education. The mentor should spend some time going through the proficiency examination with the candidate, making sure he can read the ciphered text. Explain to the candidate that he will have to demonstrate that proficiency before advancing to the Fellow Craft Degree, and explain how that will be done in your lodge.

Remember that today's students are not usually required to memorize anything. The candidate needs to be told that memorization is a learned skill, not a gift. Anyone can, with diligence, learn the work. There are several commonly used tools to aid that process; a brief summary of some of them is included at the end of this section of the manual. Work through these with the candidate and let him know that the Mentor will practice the examination as necessary with the candidate before demonstrating proficiency in the Lodge. Recognizing that this is his first memorization task, it is the Mentor's duty to help him to get this short piece of work committed to memory. This is not the time to be satisfied with less than the best he can do.

Finally, an overview of the Fellow Craft Degree should be given to the candidate. He should be aware that he will again change into a similar costume, and that he will again be blindfolded. The Mentor should also advise him that the second lecture of this degree is particularly impressive and instructive.

MEMORY TOOLS

Ten things that help when trying to remember something:

1. Pay attention – most people do not remember things because they did not pay attention in the first place. If you want to remember something in particular, look at it closely, feel how the phrase sounds, and give it your undivided attention for a few moments.
2. Repeat things – and say them out loud. This will help focus your attention and give your brain more time to capture the information
3. Ensure you understand the idea properly – ask yourself questions, test your understanding by paraphrasing the idea, or try explaining it to an imaginary or real person. If you understand it, you are more likely to remember it
4. Provide context – set the thing you're trying to remember in context, by thinking about where you are when you're thinking about it, what other management theorists say on the same point, why someone is behaving in that way.
5. Be emotional – a set of emotions linked to a concept will help you retain that idea, as it provides further context for the brain to associate the idea with something else.
6. Reduce stress – stress inhibits your body from remembering things, so if you can reduce your stress levels, you are more able to retain information.
7. Breathing deeply will both help to reduce your stress levels, and provide extra oxygen to help your brain work more effectively.
8. Do not try to remember too many things at once. Your brain can only take in so many things at a time, and you need to have breaks between learning sessions.
9. Believe that you can remember whatever you're trying to learn. A positive attitude has been proven to increase mental ability and the retention of information.
10. Use the tips for generally improving your memory and adopt some of the mnemonic techniques described below.

Mnemonics

Mnemonics are aides to memory – techniques that you can learn to use which will help you retain information. The idea is that the brain will remember because it has another stimulus associated with what you are trying to remember.

Some of them are more useful for some of us than others. It depends on your learning style and what stimuli you respond to.

1. Loci method – associate what you need to remember with a set of objects in a familiar location and move from one object to another in your mind's eye to trigger remembering each item. You can also use this method by remembering different rooms in a building and associating each room with an item to be remembered.
2. The peg word system is good for remembering numbers– think of objects which can be associated with each number and then think of a scenario which can put the objects into order. It can be helpful if you describe the scenario out loud and visualize it in your head.
3. An acronym is a word made from the first letter of each thing you need to remember. This technique is very useful for remembering secure computer passwords
4. Acrostics link between a letter in the word to be remembered and a phrase.
5. Stories – if you have a number of things to remember, make up a story which relates each object to one another. The story can be as silly as you like, but needs a single story line to work well.
6. Songs – if you can make up a song or rhyme to remember things this can work well, particularly in a small group of people who enjoy being a bit silly.
7. Write things down – many people find that making notes or drawing mindmaps helps them remember, even if they never look at the notes again.
8. Draw pictures to remind you of certain things. This technique is great for people who have a more visual learning style. The pictures can be purely symbol and no drawing skill is required, it just provides another stimulation for your mind to fasten on to.
9. Use particular movements associated with different words to remember them. This works well with a chain of movements all linked together.
10. Put information into discrete chunks, so that you are not overwhelmed by what you have to remember. About 5 items in each chunk is probably the most you can easily remember at one time.

All of these techniques prove easier with practice, and the act of practicing itself improves your memory skills. Repetition can of itself can help remember, so say things out loud several times, or make several copies of the notes before the exam. Using several techniques at once can also provide reinforcing stimuli to remember.

Discussion Topics for the Mentor with the Candidate

(The following outline basically contains the same topics as the EA manual with some changes in the order of discussion. There are prior versions of the EA Manual that may be in use in some Lodges. Only the current version (December 2004 Revision) should be used. The mentor should lead the discussion in any order he is comfortable with.)

- A. Meaning of Entered Apprentice
- B. Responsibilities of an Entered Apprentice
- C. Rights of an Entered Apprentice
- D. Origin of Ritual
 - Ritual Costume
 - Hoodwink
 - Reception
 - Belief in Supreme Being
 - Perambulation
 - Obligation
 - Penalties for violation
 - Apron
 - Destitution
 - Working Tools
 - Lectures
 - Charge
- E. Lodge Organization
 - Charter
 - Great Lights - Holy Bible, Square and Compass

Officers (elected and appointed)

Form of a Lodge

Jewels (Moveable and Immovable)

Rough Ashlar and Perfect Ashlar

F. Questions From EA Manual

G. Practice Proficiency Examination

H. Preparation for Fellow Craft Degree

Costume and Hoodwink

2nd Lecture

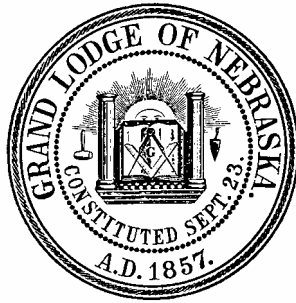
STANDARD PROFICIENCY

for the

FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

for

NEBRASKA LODGES



GRAND LODGE A.:F.: & A.:M.:

of

NEBRASKA

THE FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

Symbolism of the Degree

In the Degree of Fellow Craft, we try to emphasize the dignity and worth of the individual. Man should be an instrument of God, often referred to in Masonry as the Supreme Architect of the Universe. As such, each Mason is a workman whose duty is to invent, create, and achieve; and by doing so, express his own genius and individuality.

All Lodges are designed to encourage the development of individual genius and to allow man to become as great as he wants to be if he works hard. A primary principle of this form of government is that the state should not interfere with the individual's freedom any more than is necessary to preserve government by the state, but still give the individual freedom to flourish.

The Degree of Fellow Craft symbolizes man in the prime years of his life. He is shown as an adult who is ready to accept the responsibility of life, not only for himself, but also for his family and all of society. When the Mason assumes the duties and privileges of a Fellow Craft, he is taught that he is responsible for his own destiny and is also to be a responsible citizen of the state.

The themes of this Degree are education and achievement. The more a man learns through pursuit of knowledge, the more he is enabled to achieve.

Evolution from Operative to Speculative

It is not possible to accurately pinpoint the time when the Masonic Fraternity evolved from an organization of Operative Masons to that of Speculative Masons. The change was gradual and probably stretched over a period of many years. Some scholars believe the process began in the 1600's, while the origins of current ritual and the formation of the Grand Lodge of England occurred in the 1700's, and that process may have begun with the acceptance of patrons into the Operative Lodges, as was mentioned in the Entered Apprentice Degree.

Others, who were not interested in becoming operative stonemasons, then followed the same path as those early patrons. Those who were admitted by consent of the Operative Masons became "Accepted Masons." Membership was sought after because of the spiritual, social, and cultural advantages available, and has been felt to be a factor, which enabled the Craft to grow rapidly in the number of members.

The decline of Gothic architecture and the reduced demands for great building projects had greatly lowered the number of skilled Operative Craftsmen needed to carry on the construction during this time. Had we not become Speculative Masons, our Craft may have faced decline and perhaps extinction. Many of the institutions of that day did pass into oblivion; but by becoming Speculative the Craft was enabled to experience growth and continuation of existence. This growth can be largely attributed to the formation of the Grand Lodge of England, at the meeting

of the four old Lodges of England, who held a meeting in the Goose and Gridiron Tavern in 1717, at which meeting a Mason by the name of Anthony Sayer was elected Grand Master.

From that beginning, Masonry spread over much of the world, and so began the formation of other Grand Lodges.

The Basic Teachings of the Second Degree

The Fellow Craft degree symbolizes the years of manhood and responsibility during life on earth. During these years, he obtains knowledge and learns to apply this knowledge to the building of his character, and improving the society in which he lives.

The father of our Masonic Rituals, William Preston, conceived Masonry to be used to educate man in the liberal arts and sciences. In the Ritual of the Degree, a Fellow Craft is urged to advance his education in these fields. By using the method of Initiation, Masonry helps one understand the symbolic importance of these liberal arts and sciences.

The Preparation

The changes in the form of attire worn from that of an Entered Apprentice Mason to a Fellow Craft Mason were explained in the ceremony. Gaining admission is similar to the First Degree, with the addition of a pass, which is given for him by his conductor. We are trying to teach that knowledge and energy are freely given toward gaining the privileges of Freemasonry, and that by the aid of others we are able to advance.

The Reception

You were received into the Lodge on the angle of the square. The square should be a rule and guide to your future actions with mankind.

The Cable-Tow

This is a symbol of control for the individual. To many the Cable-Tow is symbolic of the umbilical cord that is necessary to begin life but which is severed when love and care replace it and the individual grows on his own. Thus, in our ceremonies, the Cable-Tow is removed when the need for physical control is no longer needed.

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 that was assumed to be about three miles. In Nebraska, the length of the cable tow may be described as being 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.

The Obligation

The Obligation is the heart of each Masonic Degree and its solemnity must be impressed upon every candidate. In addition to the vow of secrecy in the First Degree, the Fellow Craft Obligation has other important points that bind each Brother.

Each Mason pledges obedience, assistance, and the protection of one another to all others, binding them by a tie, which should last their lifetime. The penalties have the same significance as those invoked in the First Degree, and are symbolic rather than physical, as previously explained.

The Working Tools

The Square is a symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. The direction of the two sides of the Square form an angle of 90 degrees, 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.

When we part upon the Square, we leave one another to 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 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 of a man. Each person is endowed with a worth and dignity which is spiritual and should not be subject to man-made distinctions.

The quality practiced in 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 heights, 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 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 would 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 own conduct and the conduct of his Brothers by standards set forth in our Masonic ritual and not the standards 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.

The Jewels

The attentive ear, the instructive tongue, and the faithful breast, remind the Craftsman that the time-honored method of instruction is by word of mouth. The secrets of Freemasonry are always deposited in the hearts of faithful Brethren. These Jewels should signify the necessity to learn to utilize good Masonic instruction and develop a devotion to the teachings of our Craft.

The Wages

Corn, Wine, and Oil are symbolic wages that are earned by the Fellow Craft who completes his task and comes to 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. Wine is symbolic of refreshment, health, spirituality, and peace. Oil represents joy, gladness and happiness. Taken together, Corn, Wine, and Oil represent the rewards of living a good life.

The Pillars in the Passage to the Middle Chamber

There are two pillars placed before the entrance to King Solomon's Temple, which are symbolically represented within every Lodge of Fellow Craft Masonry. No one can determine the origin of this practice, but it has been said that the Pillars of Hercules inspired the columns.

These pillars bear the names Boaz and Jachin, and are symbols of strength and establishment and by implication, symbols of 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 Globes on the Columns

These globes represent the celestial sphere and the terrestrial sphere, and are symbols of universality. The shape of the globes lets us know that this is a modern addition to Masonic Ritual because our forbearers thought the earth was flat and the heavens a sphere revolving around it.

The Winding Stairs

This represents the progress of an inquiring mind, toiling and laboring toward intellectual cultivation and study. This is the road to Divine Truth. The Winding Stairs, by their very shape, are also symbols of courage and faith.

The Winding Stairs lead us to an unknown life. For some, there will be a Middle Chamber filled with the reward of fame and fortune. For others it will be filled with frustration, pain, and discouragement. The "Angel of Death" could stand on the next step of any traveler. Yet, we climb because we have faith, and because we are filled with courage. We believe that the

winding stairs of life lead to our destiny, and that the wages to be earned by the Fellow Craft are worth the risk.

Corn, Wine, and Oil are symbolic wages. A Fellow Craft's wages are truth, or gaining knowledge of truth as is appropriate for him. While winding up the stairs, the Fellow Craft learns a series of lessons and several of the great doctrines of Masonic symbolism that he is ever to be in search of truth, but may never find it or fully understand truth.

For the wise, there is also the lesson that the knowledge of the nature of God, and man's relations to God, is Divine Truth, and can never be fully acquired in this life.

The Symbolism of Numbers

The symbolism of numbers is first presented to the new Mason in the Stair lecture. The total number of steps is fifteen, which is a significant symbol, and is thus explained:

1. The first three steps teach us that we are dependent upon God, and that we must harmonize our will with His, building our own spiritual temple according to the Divine Plan.
2. The second group of five steps teaches the use of order in architecture, and that this order must be applied to our own spiritual temple.
3. The final seven steps symbolize the crowning glory of man, the development of both mind and spirit, and the acquisition of the courage and faith which causes each person who possesses these virtues to climb to the summit and attain the rewards that await those who labor and faint not. These are the symbolic wages of a worthy Fellow Craft.

Admission to the Middle Chamber

The passage to the Middle Chamber represents man's journey from ignorance to enlightenment. His wages as a Fellow Craft are received in the Middle Chamber. The wages of corn, wine and oil, are additionally a symbol of the Divine Truth.

The candidate is aided by his guide in finding the doors to knowledge represented by the outer and inner doors, or entrances. To enter one of these, he needs a pass. To go through the other, he must have a word. Help is given him in each instance, but such assistance is limited. This signifies that man must acquire knowledge chiefly through his own effort, though he is often dependent upon others for some help. Emphasis should be placed upon the amount of effort put forth by the candidate, for without effort, he cannot reap the reward that he seeks.

The Middle Chamber

In modern Freemasonry, the Middle Chamber is the symbolic place of reward. This was thought of as the place where the Fellow Craft met to receive wages for their labors on the Temple of Solomon.

They assembled on the evening of the sixth day of the week, and those who were entitled to the wages of a Fellow Craft were invested with certain mysterious signs, tokens, and a word, which enabled them to pass the inner and outer guards, and to enter the Middle Chamber. If they did not have the proper identification, they did not gain admission into the Middle Chamber or receive wages.

King Solomon's Temple

Freemasonry, it generally believed did not originate in the Temple of Jerusalem, but our rituals are enriched by reference to this magnificent structure. For a full description of the Temple, you should read the accounts found in the First Book of Kings, Chapters 5 to 8, and the record of another writer found in the Second Book of Chronicles, beginning in the second chapter.

The Letter G

The letter G is a symbol of Geometry and also, of Deity. By the letter G, we are reminded that our every act is done in the sight of God, and that Divine Providence is over all of our lives. Man is reminded that God is in all nature and in every man. Our life and all its blessings come from God in an orderly fashion. These are disrupted only by the vileness of man when he does something contrary to the divine will.

The letter G is most often placed in the center of the Masonic emblems worn by Masons in the U.S., but typically the letter G is not found in emblems used by Masons in England and other nations.

The Emblems of a Fellow Craft

These include the Plumb, Square, and Level; Corn, Wine, and Oil; the Pillars in the Porch; the Winding Stairs; the five human senses; the seven Liberal Arts and Sciences; and the Letter G. The Fellow Craft should become very familiar with them, for they epitomize the lessons of this Degree. To really understand their significance, you must study them until the lesson learned is engraved upon your heart.

The Rights of a Fellow Craft

You have the right to sit in a Lodge when opened in the Fellow Craft Degree. You may visit another Lodge opened in the Fellow Craft Degree. You have the right to be instructed and examined. When you are examined and found to be proficient and worthy, you have the right to advancement.

The Responsibilities of a Fellow Craft

The responsibilities of a Fellow Craft are found in words of the obligation, and you should review these and the obligation of the Entered Apprentice Degree.

Finally, you are reminded that you are to acquire knowledge and apply that knowledge to your duties in life, so that you can fill your place in society with satisfaction and honor.

(This is the time for the candidate to ask questions, and for him to be taught the pass, token of the pass, true grip and word of a Fellow Craft Mason, plus the due guard and sign.)

QUESTIONS FOR THE FELLOW CRAFT MASON

1. What are we trying to emphasize in the Fellow Craft Degree?

The dignity and worth of the individual

2. The Fellow Craft Degree symbolizes man in what period of his life?

The Degree symbolizes man in the prime years of life.

3. Approximately in what historical time period is it held that we changed to Speculative rather than Operative Masons?

During the seventeenth century (1600-1700)

4. When and where was the first Grand Lodge formed?

London, England, at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern in 1717

5. What does the Level symbolize?

The level is the symbol of Equality

6. What does the Plumb symbolize?

(Manual) uprightness of Conduct (Ritual) Rectitude of Conduct

7. What are the Jewels of the Fellow Craft and what do they signify?

The Attentive Ear, the instructive tongue and the faithful breast.

8. What do Corn, Wine and Oil represent?

The wages of a Fellow Craft, taken together they represent the rewards of living a good life.

9. What are the names of the two pillars at the beginning of the flight of Winding Stairs?

Jachin & Boaz

10. What do the Winding Stairs as a whole represent?

The Stairs represent the progress of an inquiring mind. They also symbolize courage and faith.

11. What do the first three steps represent?

That we are Dependent upon God and that we must harmonize our will with his.

12. What do the next five steps represent?

They teach the use of order in architecture and the necessity of order in our own lives.

13. What do the final seven steps represent?

The crowning glory of man, the development of mind and spirit and the acquisition of courage and faith

14. What are we trying to teach on the journey to the Middle Chamber?

The passage represents man's journey from ignorance to enlightenment, and that each man must find his own way to knowledge.

15. What is the Middle Chamber?

The symbolic place of reward.

16. Why do we use the letter "G"?

To remind us that every act is done in the sight of God

17. What are the four rights of a Fellow Craft Mason?

You may sit in Lodge when opened in the Fellow Craft Degree, You may visit another Lodge when open in the Fellow Craft Degree, You have a right to instruction, and after proving proficiency you have a right to advance

18. What are the responsibilities of a Fellow Craft Mason?

To keep the secrets of the Fraternity, to abide by the rules and regulations of the lodge, to answer and obey all signs and summons from the lodge, to help aid and assist worthy Fellow Craft Masons, and not to cheat, wrong or defraud a lodge of Fellow Craft Masons or a Brother Fellow Craft Mason.

19. What are the responsibilities of a Fellow Craft Mason?

FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

(to Be Conducted In Open Lodge)

- A- Hv u any sgs blng to ts dg.
B- I hv
A- Gv m a sg. *(Gvn.)* Hs tt an alsn.
B- It hs – to † pty % my ob.
A- Gv me a tkn. *(Gvn.)* Wt is tt.
B- †ps gp % a FC _____
A- Hs it a nm.
B- It hs.
A- Gv it t m.
B- S—
A- Wt ds it dnste.
B- Pty.
A- Hw is it rpstd.
B- By a shf o wt hg nr a wtr fd.
A- Wl u b o o fm.
B-Fm.
A- F wt @ to wt.
B- Fm † ps gp % a FC _____ to †tr
gp % t sm.
A- Ps. Wt i tt.
B- † tr gp o a Fc _____
A- Hs it a nm.
B- It hs.
A- Wl u gv i t m.
B- I dd nt so rev it ntr cn I so impt it.
A- Hw wl u dsps % it tt I my cm in pos % i.
B- I wl l @ slb it wth a br.
A- L @ bg.
B- Bg u.
A- Ny, † wd is urs, u bg.
B- *(W d letd. @ slbd.)*

FOLLOWING THE FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

The arrangements for this meeting should again be made the night that the candidate receives the Fellow Craft Degree. This meeting may also take place any place that private discussions can be accomplished. A good starting point would be a recap of the degree work. Remind the candidate of the differences in the costume and the arrangement of the altar. Point out to him that the questions asked of him were slightly different, in that, in this degree, his advancement depended upon his own efforts – he was required to demonstrate proficiency before being admitted. A discussion of the long and short form proficiencies may take place and could lead to an invitation to learn one of the ritual parts or lectures.

The differences in the obligation should also be discussed. Point out that an Entered Apprentice was primarily bound to secrecy, while a Fellow Craft is sworn to obey the rules of his Lodge and the Grand Lodge, to assist brother Fellow Crafts, and to deal honestly and fairly with Fellow Craft Lodges and Brothers. It would also be prudent to point out again that the penalties for violation of the obligation are symbolic.

This is a good point at which to begin a discussion of the use of symbolism in Masonry. The Candidate should be told that, in ancient times, Masonry used symbolism and allegory to teach moral truth. It was not always safe to be a Mason. Indeed, it is not safe to be a Mason in some places today, though, thankfully, they are few. Masonic teachings are veiled to require a new member to discover these principles, with guidance from his Mentor. Numbers, for example, have several meanings. The recurring number three often refers to the three stages of life, youth manhood and old age. The first three stairs in the winding staircase allude to the three degrees of ancient craft Masonry and the principal officers of the Lodge. There is a brief discussion of the symbolism of numbers in the Fellow Craft manual.

It is also appropriate to continue the discussion of the allegory of the building of King Solomon's Temple. The Candidate should be told that today's Freemasonry did

not originate among the workmen at the temple. Rather, this history is used to enrich our ritual. Refer the candidate to the biblical discussions in first Kings chapters 5 through 8 and Second Chronicles beginning in the second chapter. The candidate should be led to the conclusion that Masonry seeks to emulate the harmony, which existed among the workmen, documented in the scriptures.

Discussion Topics for the Mentor with the Candidate

(The following outline basically contains the same topics as the FC manual [2006 Revision] with some changes in the order of discussion. There are prior versions of the FC Manual that may be in use in some Lodges. The Candidate should be provided the current manual for his work. The Mentor should lead the discussion in any order he is comfortable with.

- A. Symbolism of the Degree
 - Reasons for symbolic teachings
 - Symbolism of Numbers
 - Winding stairs
- B. Basic teachings of the Degree
 - The stages of life
 - Importance of education
- C. Obligation of the Degree
 - Differences from Entered Apprentice Obligation
- D. Temple Allegory
- E. Middle Chamber
 - Letter G
 - Wages of a Fellow craft
 - Rewards of Masonry
- F. Rights of a Fellow Craft
- G. Duties of a Fellow Craft
- H. Preparation for Masters Degree
 - Costume

Hoodwink

Obligation

Avoid discussion of Second Section

I. Proficiency Practice

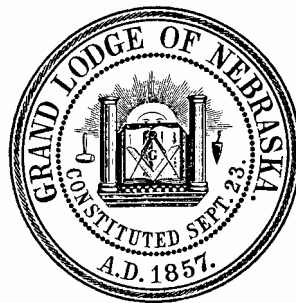
STANDARD PROFICIENCY

for the

MASTER MASON DEGREE

for

NEBRASKA LODGES



GRAND LODGE A.:F.: & A.:M.:

of

NEBRASKA

THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

The Sublime Degree

The Master Mason Degree is called this not only for the solemnity of the ceremonies, but also for the profound lesson of wisdom it teaches. This Degree symbolizes the great lessons of the resurrection of the body and the 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 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, that he might be in the midst of his people, Israel. The Hebrew law of cleanliness was strictly enforced and nothing earthy or unclean was permitted to enter the Temple. When you attain the Sublime Degree of a 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. The lesson emphasized is that of a belief in 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, these 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.

We hope that these lessons and meanings will lead to new and undiscovered inspirations each time you study them.

The Significance of the Degree

The significance can best be understood when we compare it to the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft 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 as we advance in age we are getting closer and closer to death and to immortality. Further, that we have responsibilities and standards for the conduct of our lives expected of us by God, the Supreme Architect of the Universe. Resurrection and immortality are both significant lessons in this Degree.

Preparation

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 him 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, and that you should practice these in your daily life.

Obligation

The Obligation is the heart of the Degree. By taking the Obligation, the candidate attains the degree of Master Mason and with the degree, obtains the privileges, the rights, and the benefits, of the Masonic institution. You must be familiar with and understand the Obligation if you are to abide by it.

Clandestine Lodge and Clandestine Mason

A Clandestine Lodge is one that has not been issued a proper charter from a regular and duly recognized Grand Lodge. One who belongs to such an unrecognized or improperly formed lodge is a clandestine mason.

Black Freemasonry

It is generally held that a lodge of black men, commenced in Boston in 1775, when a black man by the name of Prince Hall, and fourteen other black men, were made Masons in Military Lodge No. 441, operating under a charter from the Grand Lodge of Ireland. Nine years later, in 1784, Prince Hall applied to the Grand Lodge of England for a charter. From this request, a chartered Lodge called African Lodge No. 429 was formed. Masonic history finds that seven years later, in 1791, the Lodge assumed Grand Lodge powers, and called itself the Prince Hall Grand Lodge. Prince Hall died nine years later, in early 1800, and the Lodge became dormant. Masonic History finds that Prince Hall Masonry was later revived by some of the original members.

Most Prince Hall Grand Lodges are now generally been recognized by white lodges and it appears evident that nearly universal acceptance and recognition will be experienced in the future. The Nebraska Grand Lodge was one of the first Grand Lodges to grant recognition to Prince Hall Masonry. In February of 1990, the Grand Lodge of Nebraska A.:F.: & A.:M.: and Prince Hall Grand Lodge F.: & A.:M.: of Nebraska extended full recognition to each other. The Prince Hall Grand Lodge requires the same qualifications of a man as we do, and they perform essentially the same ritual work. While Prince Hall Masonic Lodges appear to not generally admit white members, Masonic Lodges chartered in most Grand Lodges do admit black members. A number of Nebraska Masonic Lodges have member who are black. In Nebraska the Grand Lodge of Nebraska and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge hold joint social events, generally annually and enjoy opportunities to engage in Masonic activities regularly. Prince Hall Masonry also enjoys participation in its appendant Masonic bodies, in similar manner to the Grand Lodge of Nebraska.

Masonic Definition of Dotage, Fool, Libertine and Profane

Dotage is a condition associated with old age, and is marked by juvenile desires, loss of memory, and failure of judgment. Being old does not bar someone from membership but we require that he be mentally alert and mentally healthy. A Fool is a mature man without good sense. Legally he is of age, but mentally he is retarded. Libertine implies a freethinker, nonconformist, or someone who subscribes to no higher authority than his own thinking. Today, we think of a libertine as someone who is sexually promiscuous, but this is not what we mean in our Degree work. Profane means someone who is “not a Mason.” This 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. The word has no reference to profanity, as we would normally associate it.

Women

The question of not allowing women to become Masons has arisen on occasion. When we were an Operative craft, the buildings were built by Operative Masons, who hired men who could carry large, heavy objects. Thus, it was a requirement that only men could become Operative Masons. This has continued as an ongoing tradition in our current form of speculative Masonry through the years. Freemasonry is very simply stated a fraternity of men. Masonic ritual, Masonic law and Masonic tradition make no provision for the admission of women—it remains a men’s fraternity.

Signs, Tokens, and Words

Signs, tokens (hand grips) and words are very important because they provide modes of recognition of masons in each of the three degrees. Also, each Sign, Token, and Word has a symbolic meaning which serves to enrich the mind and improve our lives as Masons. You must know how to properly execute all the Signs, and tokens (grips) and passwords in order to properly show your respect for the dignity of this part of the ceremonies and to gain admission into a lodge.

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 this Degree. The Master Mason is to use the Trowel to cement ties between Masons and to spread Brotherly Love.

The Legend of Hiram

Hiram Abif, the skilled artificer, was the son of a widow of the Tribe of Naphtali. The earlier accounts of Hiram are recorded in the First Book of Kings, Chapter 7, Verses 13 and 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, Chapter 2, Verses 13 and 14. The word Abif means “his father” or “my father,” and the name is translated to “Hiram, my father.” He was regarded as the father of all his workmen on the Temple. By using Hiram Abif we are taught the magnificent lessons of fidelity.

The Three Grand Masters

The three mentioned often in our rituals concerning the building of the Temple are: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abif. In early times, it was thought that Deity was regarded as three persons working together to get things done. 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. By knowing the meaning of these names and references to their offices, you will better understand what the ritual means. All of us are forever reaching outward and upward, looking for further knowledge of God and our relationship with Him, which is Divine Truth.

King Solomon's Temple

This magnificent structure 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 B.C., and finished eight years later, around 1004 B.C. It was about 480 years after the people of Israel came out of Egypt as a band of refugees. The people lost their sense of spiritual direction and destiny, so their Temple was destroyed in the year 586 B.C., 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 dwelled with man in those days, and this should be a fundamental human thought today. Some people of that day claim this was the most perfect building ever erected by man. Whether it was or not was 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 be aware of the fact that we are a symbolic Temple and that we 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, and our work on these temples should not be inferior.

Solomon, King of Israel

Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba. He was born about 997 B.C. 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 the Biblical accounts, he assisted Solomon by supplying certain materials for the construction of the Temple; and in return received a gift from Solomon of ten cities.

Hiram Abif

Hiram Abif was the son of a man of Tyre, and his mother was one of the daughters of the Tribe of Dan. He was sent by King Hiram to assist King Solomon in building the Temple. He was a very well-known person, which is attested to in the Second Book of Chronicles, which tells us of his skill in the arts and crafts during that period.

To Travel in Foreign Countries

The ultimate goal of our ancient Operative Brothers was to become Masters so they might possess secrets and knowledge which 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 new 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. 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; and some of us feel the urge strongly enough to study Masonry diligently, 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, in order to find Lodges everywhere open to you. By studying the writings of Freemasonry, you will find pleasant traveling. The many subjects of Masonic study and writings include history, philosophy, symbolism, architecture, mathematics and all the sciences set out in each of the degrees, with special emphasis on the content of the lectures of the Fellow Craft Degree, and many other topics, opening the door of knowledge to countless treasures, which each of you must discover for yourself. Knowledge, understanding and tolerance are some of the rewards benefiting each Master Mason who travels in foreign countries—that is experiences study and conversation with other Masons and is exposed to subjects he may not otherwise come in contact with but for Freemasonry.

The Wages of a Master Mason

Our ancient, Operative Brethren performed manual labor and received wages which would contribute to their physical welfare. These nominal wages were Corn, Wine, and Oil. The wages of a Speculative Mason must come from within, as he is concerned with the moral, rather than the physical labor. The intangibles of love, friendship, respect, opportunity, happy labor, and association, are the wages of a Master who earns them. Not all do earn them; and that is why the Senior Warden, in the opening of the Lodge, declares: “to pay the Craft their wages, if aught be due...”

The Three Ruffians

There are many symbolic explanations for the appearance of these three in our ritualistic work. Their attempt to obtain the secrets not rightfully theirs, and the dire consequences of their acts, are symbolic of many things. Trying to obtain knowledge of Divine Truth by some means other than as a reward for faithful service, makes the culprit both a thief and a murderer. Each of us is reminded that rewards must be earned, rather than obtained by violence. The Ruffians are also symbols of the “passions” of yourself which you have “come here to subdue.” There is another symbolism that can be applied to today's world. When man is enslaved, the first of his privileges to be denied or curtailed is that of free speech and unrestricted communications with his fellowman. This is shown by the blow across the throat by the first Ruffian, Jubala. Man's affection is the next area attacked; for those who control a people also force the families to comply with their orders. This is shown by the blow across the chest by the second Ruffian, Jubalo. Finally, man's reason is attacked; because your enemies will always seek to destroy your mind as the final step to enslavement. This is shown by the blow to the forehead by Jubalum.

Low Twelve

In ancient symbolism, the number twelve denotes completion. We are not sure whether this sign arose from the twelve signs of the Zodiac, or the twelve edges of the cube, which is the most stable geometric figure. The number twelve did denote fulfillment of a deed, and was therefore, an emblem of human life. High Twelve denoted noon, with the sun at its highest; while Low Twelve denoted midnight, the blackest of the night. Thirteen, which is an evil omen, follows twelve, just as death follows life; therefore, the solemn stroke of twelve marked the completion of life and the coming of death. Masonically then, Low Twelve is a symbol of death.

The Five Points of Fellowship

These five points are symbolized by the Pentalpha, or five-pointed star. In the center of the five-pointed star, two clasped hands are usually displayed. The entire symbol signifies to the Mason that both fidelity and readiness to aid each other are to be found in the Order. Thus the star becomes the symbol of true brotherhood.

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 one of the titles of King Solomon. This was the literal meaning. The symbolic meaning of the name does not necessarily refer to Jesus of Nazareth, but some could interpret it so. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah also describes a mediator of some of the ancient religions. There is no definite meaning to any Mason. He is left to his own description, and that is one of the reasons Masonry has had followers from all religions, over the centuries.

The Lost Word

In reality, we are not searching for a particular word. What we are searching for is Divine Truth, which should be the ultimate goal of all men and Masons. In the Gospel of John, there is a familiar passage: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John was not telling anything new, for this concept was familiar to the Jewish people of that day. Announcing that Jesus had the Word was new. Having the power of speech is perhaps the noblest attribute of man, because he can communicate his thoughts to his fellows. As far as we know, no other animal has such power of communication and reason. Thus, the Word has been carried down over the ages as synonymous with every manifestation of divine power and truth. The Masonic search for the Word symbolizes the search for truth, more particularly, Divine 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, of speech, and of action. In Freemasonry, we do not have the true Word, but rather, a substitute. Thus, we are reminded that in this life, we may approach an approximation of truth; but probably will never attain it in perfection. We always will be searching, but will not receive it until we pass on to a higher state of existence.

The Setting Maul

This was a wooden instrument, used by Operative Masons in the building of Solomon's Temple, to set polished stone firmly into the 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 that abounds in Palestine. 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.

The Raising of a Candidate

Most people do not understand what being “raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason” means. Symbolically, it represents resurrection after death, and our Masonic faith in the immortality of the soul. This Degree is the sublime climax of Symbolic Freemasonry. If you learn only that living, dying, and raising of a Master, is a drama designed to teach the virtues of fidelity and fortitude, you have received only partial light and have seen nothing but a drama with a moral. This Degree seeks to answer the age-old question put forth by Job “If a man die, shall he live again?”

Many publications and books are available on the subject of Masonry. One available book entitled: “Introduction to Freemasonry” describes some of the lessons and purposes of the Degree; and the following are some of the included discussion and lessons:

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 that old age, by the wisdom of which we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent life, and die in the hope of a glorious immortality.

It 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. It teaches the power, and the powerlessness of evil. For those of us who are happy, believing in the resurrection of the physical body, then the Degree assures us of all we wish.

The ceremony is physical, but one of inner life; the home of the spirit where each man thinks the secret thoughts he tells no one.

The All-Seeing Eye

This is a very old symbol of Deity. In Psalm 121, it says “He that keepeth Israel shall neither sleep nor slumber.” Thus, the idea that God watches over man is symbolized by the All-Seeing Eye to demonstrate that God is ever-present and ever watchful. Every Freemason should keep in mind that the things we do before man, and the things we do in secret, will be recorded by the All-Seeing Eye, and will bear witness for or against us at Judgment time.

THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF FREEMASONRY

The Rights of a Master Mason

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

1) Masonic Relief

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 Mason receiving such a request has the right to determine the worthiness of the request and whether such aid would be appropriate or can be granted without material effect to his own family or needs. Simply being a Mason does not bring with it a right to use other persons or lodges and take advantage of circumstances.

Relief is a voluntary function of both the Lodge and the individual Mason. The Brother requesting the relief has no vested interest in the assets of a Lodge or claim upon any individual Master Mason. If the Lodge's financial condition will not allow it to help, he can apply to the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge for help. Relief procedures for genuine need exist in most Grand Lodge jurisdictions.

Eligibility for Masonic Relief is determined by individual lodges and/or the Grand Lodge. Masonry is not a mutual relief society—it is a men's fraternity with strong ties between brother Masons. If one needs counsel or other forms of assistance, physical and mental one tends to seek out friends and “brothers”. Masons form many genuine friendships with other Masons and it generally follows that you look to your friends and family in times of distress and need.

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.

If you happen to become destitute while in a strange city, you can apply for assistance to a local Board of Relief, or through the Masonic Relief Association of the United States and Canada. They will contact your local Lodge and explain the situation to one of your lodge Officers. The more common view is that if you are in a strange location, need help or counsel and a caring helpful person, you can seek out a brother Mason, who can be counted on to guide you in the right direction for assistance with your immediate needs or plight.

2) 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 admission into another Lodge, you will want to learn the memory work in each Degree, and carry your paid-up dues card with you at all times.

You can gain approval to visit a communication (meeting) in a Masonic Lodge other than a lodge of which you are a member, by two ways. First, by undergoing “strict trial or due

examination,” or second, by being vouched for by a Brother of the Lodge you are visiting. If you have “sat” in a lodge of the same degree being opened in the lodge you are visiting, then a brother who has “sat” (attended) with you in lodge in that or a higher degree may vouch for you as being a Mason and qualified to attend such lodge.

Undergoing examination usually consists of showing your dues card; then the Worshipful Master appoints a Committee to examine you. After the examination the Committee will vouch for you in open Lodge. Generally you will also be asked to take the “Tyler’s Oath” as confirmation of your being a Mason.

3) The Masonic Memorial for a Deceased Master Mason

Masonic Memorial ceremonies may be conducted only at the request of an appropriate and authorized member of a deceased Mason's immediate family. The choice belongs to the family, not to the Lodge. A Masonic Memorial ceremony can be held in the church or at graveside. Particular care should be taken to be sure the family, church and clergy are comfortable with and understand the nature of the Masonic Memorial. A Masonic Memorial ceremony is not a substitute for an appropriate religious service, it is intended as a Masonic tribute to the deceased Mason. A memorial may also be performed if the body has been cremated.

The Responsibilities of a Master Mason

The constant responsibility of a Master Mason is conduct his life so as preserve and maintain his own proper reputation as well as “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 his family as well as honor to the Masonic Fraternity.

1) Lodge Attendance

Today, Lodges do not have a minimum attendance requirement as ancient Lodges did; nor is there a penalty for not attending as there once was. However, every Master Mason has a moral obligation to be loyal to the Lodge which gave him Masonic light and all the benefits which come with it. This should be your inducement to attend Lodge as often as possible and to join in the fellowship which makes up Freemasonry. Participation is essential to Masonic growth.

2) The Responsibility of Balloting

Only Members of the Lodge voting have a right to ballot. No member present can be excused from balloting on any question before the Lodge, except by a vote of the Lodge, and only when good cause is shown. No Member will be permitted to retire from the Lodge to avoid casting his ballot.

Balloting on candidates for admission is by the ballot box containing white balls and black cubes. White balls are the affirmative, or favorable ballot; and the black cube is the negative, or unfavorable, ballot.

If you do not know of anything unfavorable against the petitioner then you are encouraged to accept the recommendation of the Investigating Committee and cast a favorable ballot. However, if you know of some reason to indicate the petitioner is unworthy, it is your right and your obligation to cast a black cube to protect the Lodge from undesirable members. As the ballot box is passed, 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, and 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.

3) The Responsibility to Examine Visitors

This responsibility belongs to the Lodge itself, and is delegated by the Worshipful Master to a committee of Brethren 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.

4) The Responsibility of Vouchers on Petitioners

Before endorsing the petition of anyone for initiation, 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, yourself, 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.

5) The Responsibility to Investigate Petitioners

This responsibility belongs to every member of the Lodge, and should not be taken lightly, if your own Lodge is to be protected against undesirable members. The Investigating Committee is a recent addition of Freemasonry, but this does not relieve you of the responsibility to scrutinize those who seek to enter the Lodge.

Serving on the Investigating Committee should be regarded as a mark of special trust by those selected. 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.

6) The Financial Responsibilities of a Mason

These are twofold. First in the area of mandatory support, or Lodge dues. Second in the area of voluntary support, or of the Masonic Home and distressed, worthy Brothers. By paying dues, the Brother carries his share of the expense imposed by the Lodge. In voluntary 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 summons by the Grand Lodge. He must “show cause” why he should not be suspended from membership.

Not being able to pay dues can be handled without embarrassment. No Lodge desires to suspend a Brother who is unable to continue payment of dues if this is due to circumstances beyond his control. In most cases, the other Brethren in the Lodge know nothing about his situation.

A distressed Brother should inform the Worshipful 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. It is felt that a Brother who finds himself unable to pay his dues has an obligation to make his situation known to the Worshipful Master or Secretary.

Lodge Membership

You become a member after being raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. Termination may result from essentially three ways, in one of four ways – suspension for non-payment of dues, expulsion, or 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. This is sometimes done when one Lodge raises you to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason; then you move to another area, and want to start in the chairs in the new Lodge. You must be a member of a Lodge in order to become an Officer of that Lodge. Each Lodge Secretary has access to instructions for proper handling of the process and documentation.

You can be suspended for nonpayment of dues or “unmasonic conduct.” If suspended for nonpayment of dues, you can apply for reinstatement through your lodge secretary.

If suspended for “unmasonic conduct” procedures are available if qualified to petition for reinstatement through proper procedures and channels.

Entering or Retiring From a Lodge

First, courtesy to the Lodge encourages one to arrive before Lodge opens to join in the fellowship. If circumstances will not allow timely arrival, you should inform the Tyler, who will make the alarm and inform the Junior Deacon that the Brother is properly clothed and vouched

for, and desires to enter. The Tyler should also let you know which degree is being worked on that night.

If the Lodge is in the process of opening, the Tyler should knock three times on the door, and the Junior Deacon should knock once on the door, to let those outside know that the Lodge is not yet open, and that they are to wait a few minutes. When the Master gives his permission to enter, you should approach the Altar; salute the Master, using the signs for the Degree in which they are open; and then be seated. In some Lodges, the Master turns control of the door over to the Senior Warden after Lodge is opened; in which case, you would salute the West with the proper sign.

Deportment 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; after being recognized make your remarks, then sit. You should observe rules of propriety and refrain from mentioning personalities or disturbing the peace and harmony of the Lodge.

Religion, partisan politics, and any subject which might disrupt the peace and harmony of the Lodge, should not be discussed in the Lodge. Voting is usually performed by a show of raising the right hand. When petitions are balloted on, the ballot box is used. At the annual meeting for election of officers in November, a written ballot is required.

The Officers of a Lodge

The Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary and Treasurer are elected by the membership each November. The Worshipful Master appoints the Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Chaplain, Tyler, Senior and Junior Stewards. Any member of the Lodge may hold any of the elective offices to which the members of the Lodge see fit to elect him. In order to serve as Master, you must have served as Junior or Senior Warden.

Masonic Law

Every Lodge is governed by the Grand Lodge in its jurisdiction, and must adhere to the Rules and Regulations of the Grand Lodge. These Rules and Regulations are discussed at every Grand Lodge meeting, and amendments or alterations are made if passed by the required vote.

Masonic Offenses

Offenses against a Lodge and criminal charges typically constitutes a Masonic offense? Those offenses enumerated in the Grand Lodge of Nebraska By-Laws include:

- (a) All acts prohibited by the laws of the land, and involving moral turpitude.

- (b) Attempting to give the aid of Freemasonry in organized or individual form, to any lottery or gift enterprise, or the sale, purchase, or drawing of lottery tickets, except that subordinate lodges may conduct raffles pursuant to the Nebraska Small Lottery and Raffle Act, Sections 9-501 to 9-513, R.R.S. Nebraska, with the prior written approval of the Grand Master.
- (c) Using the phraseology or emblems of Freemasonry for advertising or other commercial purposes.
- (d) Attempting, from captious or unworthy motives, to arrest the legitimate work of the Lodge.
- (e) Expressing the opinion that a particular brother cast a black ball.
- (f) Disobedience of a Masonic summons.
- (g) Making application to or joining, any lodge, society, or institution that shall provide as a condition precedent that one shall be a Master Mason in good standing, or shall have taken the degrees of Entered Apprentice Mason, Fellow Craft Mason, and Master Mason, provided that this inhibition shall not apply to York or Scottish Rite bodies, the Order of the Eastern Star, the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, Red Cross of Constantine, National Federated Craft, Allied Masonic Degrees, the National Sojourners, the Past Grand Masters Association, the Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem, the York Rite Sovereign College of North America, High Twelve International, Inc., Masonic Societas Rosicruciana in Civitataibus Foederatus, or to organizations which do not require taking of any obligation and which do not have any secret ritual or ceremony.
- (h) The dispensing, sale or consumption of any intoxicating liquors, including wine and beer, except in an official Masonic ceremony, in any portion of a dedicated lodge building where Masonic activities are held during a tyled meeting of any lodge or appendant body.
- (i) The storage or keeping of any intoxicating liquors, including wine and beer in any portion of a dedicated lodge building where youth meetings or activities are regularly held or conducted.

Willful failure to comply with any of these requirements is a Masonic offense, and you would be subject to disciplinary action, which may include being expelled from the Masonic Fraternity. There are specific procedures for a Masonic trial and specific appeal procedures.

The Grand Lodge

The Grand Lodge is the supreme governing body in the Nebraska Masonic jurisdiction of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. The Grand lodge is properly said to derive its power from the Craft itself. The Grand Lodge is comprised of the Master and Wardens and Secretary of each

subordinate lodge, together with the Grand Lodge Officers and Past Grand Masters and Past Grand Wardens. Since members of each subordinate lodge elect the Masters, Wardens and Secretaries of the individual Lodges; and they in turn, serve as the voting representatives of the Grand Lodge, the supreme body (or Grand Lodge) in fact does derive its power from the Craft.

The function of the Grand Lodge is that of a supreme legislative, judicial, and executive body when it is in session.

The Grand Lodge is legislative in making the laws governing the subordinate Lodges and every Mason in its jurisdiction. It is judicial by sitting in judgment on all appeals made to it.

Finally, the Grand Lodge is executive in that it determines the policies of the Craft and sees that they are executed. When Grand Lodge is not in session, the Grand Master exercises Executive authority for the Grand Lodge, together with the exercise of certain essential judicial authority.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Masonic Presidents

At least fourteen United States Presidents have been Masons. These include: George Washington, James Monroe, Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, James Buchanan, Andrew Johnson, James A. Garfield, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, Warren G. Harding, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Gerald Ford.

Also thirteen of the thirty-nine signers of the Constitution were Masons.

Masonic Jewelry

Masonic jewelry worn by the Brethren in the form of rings and lapel emblems, is chiefly an American custom. Any Mason may use the square and compass emblem, in the form of jewelry, for personal adornment, as there is no law that forbids their use. Some people feel the jewelry should be worn with the points of the compass aimed toward the heart, symbolizing fidelity. Others prefer to wear it the other way. Either way is correct.

Schools of Instruction

Schools of Instruction are held each year throughout the jurisdiction of Nebraska. The Grand Custodian, together with Deputy Custodians commissioned under authority of the Grand Lodge work with through a local Lodge in each Degree and other nearby Lodges participating at such schools in review and presentation of Masonic ceremonies. The purpose is to maintain a learning and review process and to maintain a high level of proficiency and consistency in the Masonic work and ritual.

Recommended Reading

There are many books on Masonry and Masonic subjects from which you can learn more about Masonry. Many reference materials and published books are available from your Lodge Secretary, and there are many available from the Grand Lodge in Lincoln. It is recommended that each Mason continue his Masonic education through participation in lodge meeting, as well as by reading and conversing with knowledgeable Masons. Internet sites also abound in Masonic information and links to a wide variety of sites. Keep in mind that as in all subjects, the Internet may not necessarily be an authoritative source of information. As is true for any subject, there are those who seek to discredit most any organization, so if questions arise as to content, discuss your thoughts and views with knowledgeable Masons.

APPENDANT ORGANIZATIONS, ORDERS AND RITES RELATED TO FREEMASONRY

This page names a number of related or appendant Masonic bodies which a Master Mason may petition or apply for membership. Appendant Masonic Bodies make readily available brochures and other forms of information that describe in detail their organization, basis for membership, charitable endeavors and other related information. This section is intended only to introduce key appendant Masonic organizations.

You may be familiar with the York Rite of Masonry, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Masonry, and the Shrine, formally known as the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. While these organizations are sometimes referred to as “higher Degrees” of Masonry, arguably a Mason cannot attain a “higher” Degree than that of a Master Mason. It should be emphasized that appendant Masonic bodies provide great opportunity to expand Masonic knowledge, to enjoy fellowship with other Masons, and to expand opportunities for charitable efforts. Both the York Rite and the Scottish Rite offer a number of degrees. For example a Scottish Rite Mason is referred to as a 32nd Degree Mason and some Scottish Rite Masons may be conferred the 33rd Degree.

The York Rite and Scottish Rite are additional Degrees, imparting further knowledge about Masonry. They are another great steppingstone in the building your own Temple or store hold of Masonic knowledge and manner of conduct. You must be a Master Mason to qualify for either Rite or to qualify for membership in the Shrine.

The Scottish Rite ritual and ceremonies are conferred at area Scottish Rite Centers. York Rite bodies meet in Masonic Centers throughout the state and there are three Shrine Centers in Nebraska. Both York Rite and Scottish Rite work, parallel with the work of the Masonic Fraternity is tied closely to biblical history and teachings.

Shriners are perhaps the most visible part of the family of Masonry in part because of their participation in parades, but more importantly for their charitable or philanthropic work in the form of the highly publicized and well known the work of the 22 Shriners’ hospitals providing

orthopedic and burns treatment for children. Research is also an extensive effort of the Shriners' hospitals.

Other groups and organizations related to the Masonic Fraternity include:

Order of the Eastern Star – Eligibility for membership to the Star is available to both men and women and includes that of being a Master Mason or in the case of women, being appropriately related to a Master Mason.

DeMolay – An organization for the young men, based on the history and tradition of Jac DeMolay.

Job's Daughters – Girls and young women are eligible to join Jobs Daughters. Young women and girls with a qualifying relative who is a Master Mason may petition for membership.

Rainbow for Girls – Girls and young women may submit membership petitions. A Master Mason Relative is not a requirement for membership. Adult leadership must be that of a Master Mason or his female relative.

All these form the family of Masonry and all work toward, essentially, the same goals for the people involved.

QUESTIONS FOR THE MASTER MASON

1. What does this Degree symbolize for man?

The lessons of resurrection of the body and immortality of the soul.

2. What does the Lodge represent in this Degree?

The Lodge becomes a representation of the Sanctom Sanctorum of Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem.

3. To what do the symbols in this Degree refer?

The spiritual part of man's life.

4. There are three things that the candidate is reminded of by his preparation for initiation into the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. Name them:

a Humility

b Obligations become more extensive as one advances

c Assistance of a friend or brother is required to obtain ones desires

5. Of what are you reminded by your reception at the door?

The lessons of Masonry must be implanted in your heart if they are to have a part of your daily life.

6. Explain the importance of the Obligation.

The Obligation is the heart of the Degree, Assuming the obligation makes a man a mason and confers the privileges of Masonry

7. Explain clandestine lodges and clandestine masons.

A clandestine lodge does not have a charter from a recognized grand lodge, a clandestine mason is a member of such a lodge

8. Define dotage?

A loss of faculties and judgment due to age

9. What is a libertine?
A freethinker or nonconformist who recognizes no higher authority
10. What is the Masonic definition of “profane?”
One who is not a Mason
11. Why are Signs, Tokens, and Words important to Masons?
They provide modes of Recognition
12. Who was Hiram Abif?
A widow’s son of the tribe of Naphtali who worked on Solomon’s Temple
13. What do we mean by “Foreign Countries” in Masonry?
A symbolic place, it is not meant to refer to a specific geographical location.
14. If a Mason lives according to the teachings and obligations of the Lodge, what are his wages?
Love, friendship, respect, opportunity, happy labor, and association
15. What are we trying to teach by the use of the Three Ruffians?
Among the many symbolic lessons – Rewards must be earned.
16. What is the Masonic definition of “Low Twelve?”
Low Twelve is a symbol of death.
17. Define the symbolism of the Five Points of Fellowship.
It is symbolized by the 5-pointed star, the symbol of true brotherhood.
18. Who is the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah?”
There is no definite meaning, allowing Masons to make their own description – not linking Masonry to a particular religion.
19. What are we searching for when we look for “The Lost Word?”
Divine Truth

20. Why do we use the Setting Maul in our work?

It is a symbol of destruction

21. Why do we use the Sprig of Acacia?

It symbolizes both immortality and innocence

22. What are we symbolically trying to teach when we “Raise to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason?”

The symbolic lesson of resurrection after death and the Masonic faith in the immortality of the soul

23. Define “The All-Seeing Eye.”

It is an ancient symbol of Deity

24. What are the Rights of a Master Mason?

Masonic Relief, Masonic visitation and Masonic Burial

25. What are the Responsibilities of a Master Mason?

To preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied

26. Balloting

a. Who can vote in Lodge?

Members of the Lodge

b. Must you vote on every issue brought to a vote when you are attending Lodge?

Yes

c. Can you leave Lodge prior to casting your ballot?

Not to avoid casting your ballot

d. When would you ever use a black cube in balloting?

To cast a negative or unfavorable vote

27. Are you allowed to ask another Brother how he voted or have someone ask how you voted?

No

28. Why do we examine visiting Brethren if we have not sat in open Lodge with them or if no one will vouch for them?

To satisfy the Lodge that the visitor is a Master Mason

29. What are the duties of the Investigating Committee in reference to new candidates?

To protect the Lodge against undesirable members

30. What are the financial responsibilities of a Master Mason?

Payment of Dues and Support of Distressed worthy brothers

31. There are three circumstances under which membership in the Lodge is terminated. Name and define them below.

a. Suspension- for non-payment of dues or un-Masonic conduct

b. Expulsion – for commission of a Masonic offense

c. Death

32. What is the procedure you must follow if you arrive at Lodge while it is in the process of opening, or is already opened?

Inform the Tyler who will make the alarm at the door at an appropriate time the Junior Deacon will admit you.

33. After your entrance into the Lodge what is the procedure?

Approach the Altar (or the West if advised that the Sr. Warden has charge of the door) give the due guard and sign of the Degree the Lodge is open in.

34. How do we normally signify our vote on matters brought before the regular meetings?

By raising the right hand.

35. When do we use the written ballot?

When electing Officers

36. Name the elected offices.

Worshipful Master, Sr. and Jr. Wardens, Treasurer and Secretary

37. Name the appointed offices.

Sr. and Jr. Deacons, Chaplain, Tyler, Sr. and Jr. Stewards

38. Who appoints the Officers in their appointed positions?

The Worshipful Master

39. Before a Mason can become a Worshipful Master, he must have served as either one of two Officers. Name them.

Sr. or Jr. Warden

40. We are governed by Masonic Law handed down to us by what body?

The Grand Lodge

41. What are the eight possible Masonic Offenses?

- a. *All acts prohibited by the laws of the land, and involving moral turpitude.*
- b. *Attempting to give the aid of Freemasonry in organized or individual form, to any lottery or gift enterprise, or the sale, purchase, or drawing of lottery tickets, except that subordinate lodges may conduct raffles pursuant to the Nebraska Small Lottery and Raffle Act, Sections 9-501 to 9-513, R.R.S. Nebraska, with the prior written approval of the Grand Master.*
- c. *Using the phraseology or emblems of Freemasonry for advertising or other commercial purposes.*
- d. *Attempting, from captious or unworthy motives, to arrest the legitimate work of the Lodge.*
- e. *Expressing the opinion that a particular brother cast a black ball.*
- f. *Disobedience of a Masonic summons.*
- g. *Making application to or joining, any lodge, society, or institution that shall provide as a condition precedent that one shall be a Master Mason in good standing, or shall have taken the degrees of Entered Apprentice Mason, Fellow Craft Mason, and Master Mason, provided that this inhibition shall not apply to York or Scottish Rite bodies, the Order of the Eastern Star, the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, Red Cross of Constantine, National Federated Craft, Allied Masonic Degrees, the National Sojourners, the Past Grand Masters Association, the Order*

of the White Shrine of Jerusalem, the York Rite Sovereign College of North America, High Twelve International, Inc., Masonic Societas Rosicruciana in Civitataibus Foederatus, or to organizations which do not require taking of any obligation and which do not have any secret ritual or ceremony.

- (h) The dispensing, sale or consumption of any intoxicating liquors, including wine and beer, except in an official Masonic ceremony, in any portion of a dedicated lodge building where Masonic activities are held during a tyled meeting of any lodge or appendant body.*
- (i) The storage or keeping of any intoxicating liquors, including wine and beer in any portion of a dedicated lodge building where youth meetings or activities are regularly held or conducted.*

42. The Grand Lodge is composed of members of individual lodges across the State. What are the duties of the Grand Lodge?

It is the Supreme legislative, judicial, and executive body of the Masonic order in its jurisdiction.

MASTER MASON DEGREE
PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION

(To be conducted in open Lodge)

- A - Hv u ny §s blg t ths •
 B - I hv, svl.
 A - Gv m a §.
 B - (*Gvs pnl §.*)
 A - Hs tt an alsn.
 B - It hs t † pn % m ob, @ wh ou
 anc brn rtd t † gr % ou G M H A ty
 fd thr hs plcd in ts pos (*gv dg.*) to
 gd thr nstrls fm † dsagle eflva tt ars
 fm † gr.
 A - Gv m a tkn.
 B - (*Gvs p-g.*)
 A - ___ t i tt.
 B - Th p g % a _____.
 A - Hs i a nm.
 B - It hs.
 A - Gv i t m.
 B - (*Gvs it.*)
 A - ___ h ws T C.
 B - Th fst kn artfer or cung wrkmn in mts.
 A - ___ l u b o or f.
 B - F.
 A - Fm-wt @ t wt.
 B - Fm † p g % a _____ t † strng g %
 a _____ or L p.
 A - Ps. (*Dn.*) ___ t is tt.
 B - Th stg g % a _____ o L p.
 A - Hs i a nm.
 B - It hs.
 A - ___ l u gv i t m.
 B - I wl if u wl plc usl i ppr ps to recv it.
 A - ___ t is tt ps.
 B - F to f, k t k, b t b, h t h, c t c or m t e.
 A - Adv @ gv it. (*Gvn.*) † wd is rt.

FOLLOWING THE MASTER'S DEGREE

The fact that the new Mason has now received the highest degree of Masonry should be impressed upon him. While other Masonic work and other Masonic bodies are now open to him, they are not higher degrees, or elevations above Blue Lodge Masonry. He must understand that the Blue Lodge, his Lodge, is at the heart of his Masonic experience.

The signs, tokens and words should be again given to the brother and it should be explained that these are needed to gain admission to any Lodge. The Tyler's Oath in the Cipher should be reviewed with the brother as the preferred method of demonstrating Masonic membership.

In addition to a continuing discussion of the allegory of the temple of Solomon, the legend of Hiram Abif should be included. The Candidate should be told that Hiram Abif was a real person, mentioned in the scripture and well known in his time; while he was not a Freemason in the modern sense. The Masonic legend of his life and death lays the groundwork for the principles of today's Freemasonry. The symbolism of the degree should be discussed at this point

The Masters obligation should be reviewed with the brother. He should understand that he has obliged himself to follow these Masonic principles and that a failure to do so will subject him to real penalties of suspension or expulsion. There is an excellent section in the Master's Manual on the meaning of the obligation, and the Mentor should spend some time in working through this with the brother. It would also be prudent to remind him that the penalties in the obligation are symbolic. This should lead to a general discussion of Masonic Offenses and Masonic Law.

The Master's Proficiency examination should be practiced, and the candidate should be told that his rights to hold office, to display Masonic emblems, and to affiliate with appendant bodies are not fully vested until he completes the proficiency exam.

The Mentor and the Master should also begin to plan the follow through procedure in the last section of this manual that will bring the new brother into the Lodge. This plan should be in place before the brother demonstrates Master's Proficiency.

Discussion Topics for the Mentor with the Candidate

The usual list of discussion topics is not included in this section. The MM manual that follows contains a lengthy series of questions that should be discussed with the brother and will provide an excellent foundation for further study.

FOLLOWING THROUGH

While follow through may not be a formal part of the Mentoring aspects of this enrollment program, it is probably more important than anything invested in the new Mason so far. Without a significant effort to maintain contact with a new brother, and helping him to find his place in your lodge, the program will have very limited success. Neil Neddemeyer, PGM of Minnesota, has done extensive statistical analysis of the membership decline in his state, and has come to the conclusion that unless a Lodge establishes a bond with a candidate within six months of approving his petition, that brother will likely be SNPD in two years. After that six-month period, fraternal bonds are very difficult to establish.

After the Master's proficiency exam, the Mentor, petition signers, and anyone else with a relationship to the new brother should have a discussion about how to get this man involved in the lodge. The nature of that involvement should depend on the new brother's interests. If he has shown some ritual abilities, he should be asked to learn a part. Perhaps he can cook, organize or help with fundraisers, or give investment or financial advice. Find something that he is comfortable doing and ask for his help. He needs to feel that he has something to contribute and that his contributions are important. That is why he joined.

You taught him, at every stage of this process, that a man is never alone in Masonry. You now have to live that lesson. From the minute he enters the lodge hall, his Mentor, his petitions signers, someone – (everyone) must insure that he is not left out or ignored. You will likely lose him the first time that happens and may never get a second chance to involve him in your lodge. Until he is comfortable on his own, and that time will vary from brother to brother, the Lodge must provide a social network for him. In reality, every Lodge should be doing this for every brother anyway, but new brothers require some special attention.

The new brother must be brought to the next degree performed at your lodge, whether he has a part in it or not. Trust me, the work is easier to remember without the blindfold. If your lodge has none planned, take him to observe work at another lodge. It is crucial that he see the work to gain an appreciation for it, and an appreciation for the work is a keystone to our fraternity.

An effort should also be made to introduce him to other Masonic organizations. Take him to any friendship nights at the Rites or Shrine Center. Invite him to visit a neighboring lodge with you. The spring and fall outings at the Omaha Scottish Rite Valley are an excellent example. He should not be pressured to join at such events, however. It should be viewed as an opportunity to see Masonry at its best, not to twist his arm. He and his wife may be interested in Star, or his children in the youth organizations. Make these contacts for him, without pressuring him for petitions. He needs to see that Masonry is bigger than his lodge and that there are many men of different interests involved. Help him to find his area of interest and to increase his level of involvement in the Masonic family.

Follow through is vital. A good follow through can cover other weaknesses in the enrollment process. Conversely, a poor follow through weakens the best enrollment. Because the whole lodge should be involved in this process, the Master should personally be aware of the integration of the new member. Because the Mentor is likely the member with whom the new brother has had the most Masonic contact, the Mentor should be very involved in this process. The Mentor should not be assigned another candidate until this process is well underway.

Unlike the other sections of this manual, there are no discussion guidelines for this topic. Based on the new brother's interests, the Master and Mentor should formulate a checklist of activities that will encourage the new brother's involvement and stimulate his interest in Masonry. The items should be assigned to as many brothers in the Lodge as possible in order to broaden the new brother's Masonic contacts. This checklist will vary greatly from brother to brother, depending on his interests and abilities, and should include Masonic and Non-Masonic activities.