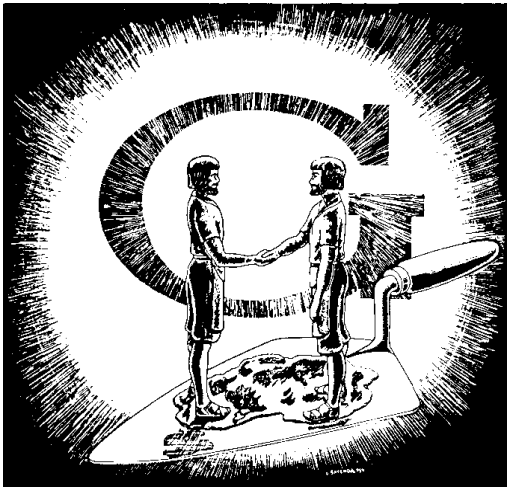


# CHAPTER XVII

## The Master Mason Degree

### Introduction



HAVING BEEN initiated into Masonry and passed to the second degree, and having made satisfactory progress, the candidate is ready to be raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. The ceremony of his admission reminds him that he is about to be instructed in the most essential points of the Craft. In the opening the recital of the 12th Chapter of Ecclesiastes alerts the candidate that he is about to be confronted by a dimension of life not mentioned in the previous degrees.

It is a sobering experience for any man to realize that his days on earth are numbered. Death is a fact which most people try to evade. They stop their ears and close their eyes to the evidence that is always nearby. They apply all manner of cosmetics to give a dead body the semblance of life. They pretend that death is not real and engage in all manner of activity to keep themselves from confronting the fact, but they cannot fool themselves forever. It is forever appointed unto man once to die. There is no escape. This is the truth with which the candidate is confronted in his Master Mason Degree.

The Grand Architect of the Universe measures out the days to us. The knowledge that they are limited makes them precious. We value them and see the importance of filling them with what is worth while. In his book, *Peace of Mind*, Joshua Loth Liebman writes: “The presence of death makes more meaningful all of the values of life . . . A never-ending existence would be without heights or depths, without crescendo or diminuendo, without challenge or achievement . . . Nature does not have the power to create such marvelously sensitive organisms as we human beings are, and at the same time arrange for the durability in us of stone or mountain . . . We cannot expect to purchase the fragile beauty of love and consciousness without the suffering of transiency and decay” (Chapter XVII – *The Five Points of Fellowship*). The shortness of time is an eternal admonition to redeem the time. The seriousness of death leads to the consecration of life.

The Degree is called Sublime for two reasons: (1) it symbolizes the great lesson of the immortality of the soul and (2) it teaches a profound lesson of

wisdom – the importance of being faithful to your trust, even at the expense of your life, and that you must die in order to attain the ultimate reward of your fidelity; namely, the immortality of the soul. The hope for the latter is dependent upon our performance of the work given us by the Supreme Architect of the Universe.

The symbols of this degree are interpreted in terms of the life of man, its inherent tragedy, and its ultimate triumph if we lead virtuous lives. This degree is strongly spiritual in nature.

### **The Preparation**

You will remember that your preparation in the anteroom was a combination of that for the first two degrees. This preparation reminds a man to be humble and to seek the assistance of a friend or Brother to achieve his desires.

### **The Admission and Reception**

Once again, you came of your own free-will, were found worthy and well-qualified and properly prepared. You must have been judged proficient in the preceding degrees and a pass was provided for you.

You were received on both points of the compasses extending from your naked left to right breasts which were to remind you that the lessons of Freemasonry must be contained within the breast if they are to become a part of your way of life and they include friendship, morality, and brotherly love.

### **The Lodge Room**

The Lodge room represents the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or Holy of Holies, of King Solomon's Temple.

### ***Ecclesiastes 12: 1-7***

Masons are particularly familiar with the first part of *Ecclesiastes 12*. It is one of the classic passages in the English language and one of the noblest poems in any literature. Every Mason has been impressed by the majestic and sonorous words and by the theme that is timeless. Chapter 11, verses 9 and 10 form a preface to this poem. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things

God will bring thee into judgement. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.” Here the theme of Chapter 12 is anticipated. It is advice to a young man to enjoy his youth, but to remember that it is entrusted to him by God, and that he is answerable to God for the way he uses it. Old age with all its infirmities will inevitably come. Seize the opportunities of youth before they leave, as leave they will. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (here is a reminder that “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow”); “While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened” (youth lives in the sunlight, and even at night the moon and the stars give rumination; but these blessings are not forever; darkness comes to the elderly), “nor the clouds return after the rain” (youth is a time of refreshing showers, but as one grows older the clouds gather). With striking imagery and startling analogy the writer describes old age. “In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble” (the hands and arms shake), “and the strong men shall bow themselves” (the legs become bent), “and the grinders cease because they are few” (with age the teeth fall out), “and those that look out of the windows be darkened” (the eyesight fails). “And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low” (with old age comes loss of hearing, and the outside world becomes cut off), “and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird” (the old man awakens with the birds), “and all the daughters of music shall be brought low” (the quavering voice will be without tune); “Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high” (heights are terrifying), “and fears shall be in the way” (walking in the street is terrifying), “and the almond tree shall flourish” (the hair becomes as white as almond blossoms), “and the grasshopper shall be a burden” (the withered old man drags himself along), “and desire shall fail” (he has no appetite): “because man goeth to his long home” (death is near), “and the mourners go about the streets” (the professional mourners stand around waiting to be hired): “Or ever the silver cord be loosed” (before the cord of life snaps), “or the golden bowl be broken” (before the cup of life becomes cracked and the contents drain away), “or the pitcher be broken at the fountain” (death comes to some in the midst of their work), “or the wheel broken at the cistern” (the heart fails and man is a fragile mechanism which falls into disuse). The writer admonishes us to make good use of the days we have here before inevitable death arrives. “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was” (earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust): “and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (the spirit of man returns to his long home to be with his Creator).

The surrounding darkness of the lodge room and the presence of the emblems of mortality continue to emphasize the ever present threat of death,

but the word of Ecclesiastes has hinted at a new dimension: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it”. Here the candidate is reminded of a dimension of life which the eye of reason cannot penetrate.

Every Master Mason will acknowledge that the recitation of *Ecclesiastes 12* in the third degree is an impressive part of Masonic ceremony. It may be surprising to some to learn that there were serious reservations about the book of Ecclesiastes being included in the Bible. Some called it an heretical book. It was obnoxious to the orthodox because of the scant references to Deity. After long controversy the deciding factor for its inclusion in the canon of sacred books was the tradition that it had been written by King Solomon. Like the book of *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes* contains much good advice, but in addition to many practical admonitions it is an honest review of man’s condition. There is nothing naively optimistic in the book. In places it is unpleasantly realistic. More than once the writer describes man’s efforts to find meaning in life as “chasing the wind”. But the effort must nevertheless be made. Fully aware of widespread vanity he never recommends abdicating responsibility. His testimony is plain. “The quiet words of a wise man are better than the shout of a king of fools.” Every situation in life may become an occasion of significance if we make proper use of it. The wise man recognizes these occasions and responds to them. “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven” (3:1).

### **Your Approach to the Altar**

Your approach to the altar was by three steps, the first two similar to those for the preceding degrees; your feet forming the angle of a perfect square.

After assenting to an obligation, you were caused to kneel on both naked knees, both hands resting on the Volume of the Sacred Law, Square and Compasses.

### **The Master Mason’s Obligation and the Five Points of Fellowship**

This act of consecration is contained in the Master Mason’s Obligation. The candidate dedicates himself to those duties which every Mason owes to his brethren. Later, the various parts of the body are used as symbols to illustrate the lessons of brotherly love, in which are encompassed all the duties man owes to his brother. These are known to Masons as the Five Points of Fellowship. Their original place was in the Fellowcraft Degree but in the

course of time they were given their present position to emphasize the duty and beauty of fellowship.

The desire for fellowship is primitive and powerful. At one time membership in a tribe was essential for protection. There is an amusing story in an essay by the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer. It is really a parable of life. "A number of porcupines huddled together on a cold day for warmth but as they began to prick one another with their quills, they were obliged to disperse. However, the cold drove them together again, when the same thing happened. At last, after many turns of huddling and dispersing they discovered that they would be best off by remaining at a little distance from one another. In the same way the need of society drives the human porcupines together only to be mutually repelled by the many prickly and disagreeable qualities of their natures. The moderate distance which they at last discover to be the only tolerable condition of intercourse is the code of politeness and fine manners, and those who transgress it are roughly told to keep their distance. By this arrangement the mutual need of warmth is only moderately satisfied, but then people do not get pricked" (from *Studies in Pessimism*).

The human story is the story of the breaking down and building up of human associations; for, while people find it difficult to live together in harmony, they find it even more difficult to live apart. Out of the warmth of human contact there has come the ability to speak and to write; to appreciate the good, the beautiful, and the true; to delve into the realms of philosophy and science; to scale the heights of art and religion. Fellowship may begin as a matter of human necessity but it can become the source of human grandeur. During the ceremonies of all three degrees, and especially in the Master Mason Degree, the candidate is made aware that harmonious fellowship is the salient purpose of the fraternity. Seldom do we find the various elements of fellowship demonstrated so effectively as they are exemplified for every Master Mason in the Obligation and ceremonies of the third degree. Here is the central theme of Masonry summed up concisely, and communicated symbolically by reference to various parts of the body. The elements of genuine fellowship are without number, but they are later classified for every Master Mason under five headings, known throughout the fraternity as the Five Points of Fellowship.

In this obligation to abide by the Golden Rule, there are several words that need explanation:

**Nonage** refers to a man not yet of legal age, **Dotage** is a condition associated with old age wherein he no longer is in full possession of his mental faculties, **A fool** refers to a man without good judgment. He can be of legal age but unable to make prudent decisions for his own good. **The profane** refers to

someone not a Mason – it derives from the Latin “pro” meaning before, and “fanum”, meaning the temple. Hence, someone profane is one who is “outside the temple” or uninitiated.

**Clandestine** refers to a man belonging to a lodge that is not recognized by a duly constituted Grand Lodge. Clandestine lodges are considered to be irregular and not eligible for visitation or Masonic communication.

### **Signs, Tokens and Words**

The Signs, Tokens and Words of all three degrees are particularly important in Freemasonry because they not only provide modes of recognition, but they each have a symbolic meaning which help to illustrate and recall the lessons they accompany.

You should know how to properly give these in order to show your respect and preserve the dignity of the ceremonies as well as to enable yourself to visit other lodges.

### **The Working Tools**

The working tools of a Master Mason are all of the implements of Masonry indiscriminately, but more especially the trowel.

We are taught to use the trowel to spread the cement of Brotherly Love and affection to unite us into one common society of friends and Brothers among whom no contention should ever exist unless it is that of who can best agree.

The Compasses are the chief instrument made use of in the formation of all architectural plans and designs. The circle which they trace has an inside and an outside, and serves to remind the speculative Mason of the limits of good and evil as defined for our instruction by the Most High. They instruct us further to circumscribe our passions and limit our desires, to observe the line of perfect moderation between too much and too little, and to keep within due bounds with all mankind.

All of the Working Tools of the Master Mason thus help us to recall that the Supreme Being has revealed his will to man, and that we are to bear His laws in mind, and act in accordance with them. For wherever we are and whatever we do, His all-seeing eye beholds us. In the end He will surely punish vice and reward virtue.

## **Dramatization of the Legend**

Following the presentation of the Working Tools, the candidate is returned to the preparation room and changes into his normal clothes. He is then returned to the lodge room and given a jewel as a Junior Warden of the Lodge. The Master then invites him to approach the altar and kneel, where he is again hoodwinked. He has been reminded of the imminence of death and the need to pray for himself.

With the aid of his conductor, the candidate then participates in a dramatization of the legend. He is given the role of the chief architect to remind him that he too may travel over flowery meads and through pleasant groves but there will be hidden foes to obstruct his progress. Life is not all calm and sunshine. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards" (*Job 5:7*). In the same mood the Psalmist reminds us, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (*Psalms 90:10*).

## **The Conclusion of the Traditional History**

In the concluding section of the ritual of the Master Mason Degree, we return to the traditional history of Hiram Abif. We will search in vain for evidence of the events recounted in this legend, but this does not detract from the lessons it is designed to teach.

In summary, there is a description of the consternation among the workmen on the Temple when the chief architect failed to appear. They were apprehensive that some catastrophe had befallen their master, and they communicated with King Solomon. He ordered a muster of all the workmen, which resulted in the discovery that three were absent. On the same day twelve others came forward and confessed their implication in a conspiracy to extort the secrets from Hiram Abif. They told too how they had withdrawn from the plot. Search parties were organized and dispatched in various directions. One party made no discovery of importance after several days of searching, and returned to Jerusalem. A second party came to a spot where the earth was disturbed and on examination found the body of the Grand Master indecently interred. This discovery was made known to King Solomon, who arranged for the body to be brought to Jerusalem and interred in a sepulchre suitable for the high rank of his former chief architect. The legend recounts that a third search party came to a cavern, where they found three men who answered to the description of the missing workmen. These ruffians were charged with the murder of the Grand Master and sentenced to that

death which the heinousness of their crime so justly merited. From this concluding section in the story of Hiram Abif the candidate is reminded that the virtuous man is rewarded, not alone by the Most High, but in the respect with which he is memorialized by his brethren. The candidate is reminded too that the vicious man receives his just desserts.

Thus from the pathetic story of the faithful craftsman we derive these important lessons. Life is short and uncertain. Use it wisely. We have hope of a future life. Hold fast to that hope. We have obligations to the dead as well as to the living. Fulfill them. Betrayal of a trust must never be tolerated. We are thus taught to bear in mind, and to act according to the laws of the Divine Creator, so that when we are summoned from this sublunary abode, we may ascend to the Grand Lodge above, where the world's Great Architect lives and reigns for ever and ever.

We have noted that the Five Points of Fellowship form the basis of the Master Mason's Obligation. They are exemplified at the conclusion of the dramatization of the legend of Hiram Abif, and are associated with the disinterment. When the body of the Grand Master was discovered indecently interred King Solomon ordered its removal to a sepulchre within the temple precincts, and gave instructions that every detail of the sad task be carefully noted. The death of his chief architect meant the loss of many of the secrets known only to this skilled leader. Every care was to be taken to preserve any clue that might lead to the recovery of the secrets. Several attempts were made to raise the dead body. It was accomplished at last by a firm grasp of the Hand, a Foot placed against the Foot to get anchorage. Slowly the body was lifted from the grave as Knee touched Knee, Breast touched Breast, and a Hand was placed on the Back to give it support. Thus the body was raised and taken to the Temple to be reinterred. The manner of the raising emphasizes the basic lesson that the Five Points of Fellowship are fundamental in every task, whether among the living or with the dead. Indeed, the faithful adherence to these principles makes such a difference that it can be described as life restored. The truth is dramatized as the candidate is raised from his figurative death to rejoin his brethren. The manner of this disinterment and its dramatization in the ceremony of the degree has led to a naive acceptance by some Masonic writers that the legend of Hiram Abif is derived from the mystery cults which tell of the return of great heroes from the dead. By this interpretation Hiram Abif resembles Osiris, who was killed and then resuscitated. Some writers have even likened the event to the death and resurrection of Christ. The dignity of Masonry is not enhanced by these attempts to relate its teaching to the mystery cults, or to claim for its legendary leader the experience of a physical resurrection. Hiram Abif is killed and he stays dead. His raising is a disinterment, not a resurrection. There is no suggestion of necromancy, and no claim is made that a word was uttered by



the dead chief architect. His secrets died with him, but the memory of his faithfulness, his skill, and his courage remain to inspire all who learn this magnificent legend. Our Masonic traditions are derived from the experience of operative craftsmen and not from the speculation of esoteric magicians. We must refrain from exploiting the legend of Hiram Abif to the point of reducing the credibility of our Craft. Our legendary Grand Master was suitably reinterred and the story is told very simply. Without further comment the newly raised candidate is reminded of the practical implications of the whole degree as he is raised on the Five points of Fellowship.

### **The Five Points of Fellowship**

**The first Point** is related to the hand and reminds us of the common manner of greeting, especially in Europe and America. "Hand to hand, I greet you as a brother." It would be interesting to discover the origin of the handclasp as a form of greeting. We cannot overestimate the significance of the human hand in the bodily organism. In biblical times it was regarded as the organ of mediation and transference. Consecrations, ordinations, healing, and blessings are communicated by the imposition of hands. Hands are clasped in token of a contract and also as a pledge of friendship. "Are you with me heart and soul, as I am with you?" asks Jehu in *2 Kings 10:15*. When the son of Rechab answers, "I am", Jehu responds, "Then if you are, give me your hand". This exchange between a couple of nomads in ancient times has its parallel in a phrase used commonly in our day. When an agreement is reached or a common understanding is discovered, the expression is used, "Let's shake on it". Again the hand is the symbol of mediation and transference.

Certainly the clasp of the hand indicates an absence of malice. It shows the absence of any harmful weapon that a hand might conceal and demonstrates a trust without which fellowship is impossible. It would be difficult to exaggerate how much a handclasp may mean to one. Whether it be light or strong it communicates and provides the encouragement to fellowship of which it may be only an introduction.

**The second Point** is related to the first and reminds us of our duty to stand with our brethren or to accompany them for their good as well as for our own. It is commonly held that man's principal needs are food, clothing, and shelter, but there is a fourth without which the other three are meaningless. This is companionship, which is to be distinguished from the broader concept of fellowship. It may be regarded as a segment of fellowship. It is dramatized for Masons in the second of the Five Points of Fellowship the expression "cheek to cheek or mouth to ear" conveys the idea that we stand together. Some of

us have had periods of loneliness which help us to appreciate the tragedy of being unattached. When a man becomes a Mason he knows that he is not alone. Standing with his brethren he is saved from the pangs of desolation. This blessing requires us to remember always, for our good and the good of others, that we stand together “cheek to cheek or mouth to ear.”

The expression means also that we walk together. There is peril in walking alone even in crowded cities. In every age and in every place there are villains who lie in wait to pounce upon the solitary traveler. But there are villains within too from whom the loner needs protection. We can become prisoners of self-reflection in need of liberation into the world where people and values exist. Walking “cheek to cheek” with a brother gives this liberation. Francis Bacon once wrote: “Without friends the world is but a wilderness. There is no man that imparteth his joys to his friends but he joyeth the more, and no man that imparteth his grief to his friend but he grieveth the less”. A little child who lived a long way from her school expressed the same philosophy when she remarked, “It is not so far to go when you have a friend to walk with you”. This companionship is a significant segment of the fellowship which is central in our Masonic philosophy.

**The third of the Five Points** of Fellowship. is related to the Knee and emphasizes our need for reverence. In a letter written to his friend Walt Whitman about one hundred years ago, Mark Twain expressed the self-confidence of many a modern man. After listing many of man’s technical achievements and inventions, he wrote: “Yes, you have indeed seen much—but tarry for a while, for the greatest is yet to come. Wait thirty years and then look out over the earth! You shall see marvels upon marvels added to those whose nativity you have witnessed: and conspicuous above them you shall see their formidable result—man at almost his full stature at last”. There is indeed a greatness in man. We stand amazed before his achievements. If Mark Twain saw advances in his day, what would he say if he were living in this age of nuclear power and man made satellites? Can we believe that man is at his full stature when his achievements result in a threat of exterminating every vestige of organic life? We have a good opinion of ourselves and it is well that we should have—not because of what we have accomplished but because the Grand Architect of the Universe has fashioned us and placed the stamp of his divinity upon us. The third segment of fellowship in our Masonic philosophy is related to the knee bowed in reverence. Behind man and all his achievements is the work of a divine Creator before whom we can only ask, “When I consider Thy heavens, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man?”

William Blake made a drawing of a very small boy at the foot of a long ladder stretching from earth to the moon. With hands uplifted, he cries, “I want,

I want". He hungers for bread to feed his body, but even more for food for his soul. It is this longing that makes us worshipping people, and worship is a basic ingredient in human fellowship. It is no accident that Gothic architecture became the characteristic form in the construction of places of worship. If you stand close to such a structure, the form of the very panels in the door invites you to look upward. As you stand back, you see that the shape of the door is a like invitation. When you stand far enough away you realize that the whole structure is aspiration expressed in stone and that it reminds us that life has its vertical dimension as well as its horizontal. A genuine fellowship among human beings is not possible if we stress our own accomplishments, but only as we acknowledge our dependence upon a power greater than ourselves. Paul Tillich summarized this in his definition of religion as the recognition of the unconditioned. Such recognition binds us into a fellowship and the accepted symbol in our Masonic teaching is the knee bent in reverence as we pray for our brethren and for ourselves.

**The fourth of the Five Points** of Fellowship is related to the breast and reminds us of man's need of a friend and brother to whom he can entrust his secrets. The breast is regarded as the repository of a man's heart and soul. Here a man's inner self is securely insulated from all the other selves around him. Every person needs a measure of privacy which shuts out the world and enables him to engage in the discipline of self-communion. He has an inner being, a private self, to which he must be true. He must be his own man. But too much privacy may lead to morbid and exaggerated introspection. He may even begin talking to himself — which psychiatrists would regard as a dangerous symptom.

Besides privacy, a human being needs sociability. He must keep himself open to others so that he may enjoy a measure of communion with them. But this too has its danger. His individuality may become dissolved in the unconsciousness of mere community life. His heart is exposed for all to see, and his inner self becomes absorbed in the mass. As there is danger in too much privacy, so there is danger in too much sociability. A proper balance between repression and expression has to be found. Man needs some half-way place where he is neither completely "bottled up" nor wastefully poured out.

The fourth Point in the Masonic analysis of fellowship provides the remedy. A man opens his heart, not to the whole world, but to a brother and friend in the confidence that what is said will be kept inviolable. Confidentiality is the qualification to which he is bound in the Obligation of the Master Mason Degree. He cannot hope to encourage genuine fellowship unless there is trust that not a word of what is being told will be repeated. The pressure of breast against breast assures him that his inner self is not forfeited, nor has he cut

himself off from full communion with his fellow men. To experience fellowship on this level is a precious privilege and to betray it, shocking villainy.

**The fifth and last of the Five Points** of Fellowship dramatized in the Master Mason Degree is symbolized by the back. This portion of the body is associated in our minds with bearing burdens, lending support to those in need, and remaining staunch under all circumstances. The strength of a man's back is regarded as the measure of his independence, his self-reliance, his initiative, and his personal responsibility. To be told that one is a man with backbone elicits a sense of pride in all of us that we are not leaning on others but carrying our share of life's burden. No one is immune to such pride, but neither is he exempt from additional burdens which the chances and changes of life may bring. An infinite variety of trials and tribulations, such as anxiety and sorrow, personal infirmity and family difficulty, is imposed upon people, and may become too great a burden even for the man with a strong back. Self-reliance and independence become undermined.

The concluding Point in the analysis of fellowship is no devaluation of the quality of independence. The Volume of the Sacred Law makes it clear that "every man shall bear his own burden". The word translated "burden" means a "soldier's pack". Every soldier knows that he is expected to carry his own pack. He must not push it off on someone else's back. But in the same sacred volume there is the instruction to "bear ye one another's burdens". This is no invitation to forfeit our independence, but rather an invitation to add a new dimension to life. To our sense of independence of others, we must add the awareness of our interdependence with others. No man must stagger on alone until he sinks under the load that life places upon him, when the shoulder of a brother might ease it for him. This is the meaning of the hand on the back, it symbolizes the support we owe to a brother, when he is threatened by the variety of burdens that may be laid upon him. In particular, we must protect his reputation from idle gossip or malicious slander, especially when he is absent and cannot defend himself. This calls for loyalty, courage, and discretion of a very high order, and epitomizes the spirit of fellowship required of every Master Mason. Thus the various parts of the body, the hand, the cheek, the knee, the breast, and the back become valid symbols to assist us in understanding the various qualities of fellowship in our Masonic fraternity.

### **The Legend of Hiram Abif**

After being raised, the candidate is given a review of the legend and the dramatization through which he has passed.

## **The Three Grand Masters**

We are told that Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif were our first three Grand Masters. The secrets known only to these Three Grand Masters symbolizes Divine Truth which was known only to Deity and was not communicated to man until he had completed his own spiritual temple.

### **Solomon, King of Israel**

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

### **Hiram, King of Tyre**

He was a friend of King David and continued to be a friend and an ally of King Solomon. He helped Solomon by supplying certain materials for the construction of the Temple and received a gift of ten cities in return.

### **Hiram Abif**

There has been much speculation in the attempt to identify this master builder who is known to Masons as Hiram Abif. There is some interesting evidence in biblical history, but not as much as many Masons usually assume. The form of the name is unusual, and betrays its origin unmistakably. It comes from the first English translation of the Bible, made by Myles Coverdale in 1535, and is found in *2 Chronicles 4:16*. Here the King James Version reads "Hiram his father" (Hebrew, *Huram abiw*). This is the same man mentioned in *2 Chronicles 2:13*, where he is called "Hiram my father" (*Huram abi*), and in *1 Kings 7:13 and 40*, where he is called simply "Hiram". The meaning of his surname or title is disputed. In the biblical account he was the skilled metal founder who among other things cast the two great pillars for the Temple. To claim him as Solomon's principal architect is an innovation of Masonry, apparently not introduced until about 1700. Most of the circumstances related in the narrative of Hiram Abif are mythical rather than historical. They are inventions conveying philosophical truth rather than records of historical fact. They are important to us not for any information they may provide, but for the lessons of life and death which we may learn from them.

According to the Masonic version of the story, when Solomon, King of

Israel was about to erect a Temple to the Glory of God, he requested the assistance of Hiram, King of Tyre. Besides materials, he needed the services of an expert craftsman to superintend the project. A skillful workman named Hiram was selected and brought to Jerusalem. He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali (or, less likely, of Dan) and a man especially skilled in the decorative arts. He was welcomed by Solomon and entrusted with the responsibility of superintending the workmen and charged with all the architectural decorations and interior embellishments of the building.

In the execution of his duties Hiram Abif displayed great skill, and in all his relations with the workmen he was eminently fair. He was punctual and painstaking. A tradition recounted by the Masonic teacher Dr. George Oliver (1782-1867) informs us of his faithfulness. "It was the duty of Hiram Abif to superintend the workmen, and the reports of his officers were always examined with the most scrupulous exactness. At the opening of the day, when the sun was rising in the east, it was his constant custom, before the commencement of labor, to go into the Temple, and offer up his prayers to Jehovah for a blessing on the work; and in like manner when the sun was setting in the west, and after the labors of the day were closed, and the workmen had left the Temple, he returned his thanks to the Grand Architect of the Universe for the harmonious protection of the day" (from Mackey's *Encyclopedia*, under the architect's name).

According to the legend, Hiram Abif labored faithfully for seven years, and when the Temple was almost completed he was brutally murdered. The manner of his death is recorded in detail in the ritual of the Master Mason Degree. It is sufficient to state here that, though threatened by the demands of atrocious characters, Hiram Abif declared that he would rather suffer death than betray the sacred trust reposed in him. Under repeated demands he remained firm and unshaken. After a fatal blow he sank to the dust where he lay bleeding and lifeless. In order to conceal their crime the ruffians took the body and buried it indecently in a shallow grave.

### **The Lion of the Tribe of Judah**

The lion is a symbol of strength and royalty. It was the sign of the tribe of Judah and, therefore, of the royal House of King David and his successors. Fortunately, there is no definition given in Masonry, and a Mason is free to put his own interpretation on this reference, thereby permitting men of all religions to embrace Freemasonry.

## **The Three Ruffians**

The three ruffians are symbolic of those challenges which all of us face as we go through life, many of them life threatening and most unexpected. Many of these challenges are to our faith and our deep commitment to duty. May we be as steadfast to our trusts as the symbolic Hiram was to his!

## **Low Twelve**

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

## **The Temple of Solomon**

The location of the Temple was on Mt. Moriah near the place where Abraham was about to offer up his son, Isaac. It was also here that the hand of the Destroying Angel was stayed after David had repented, and the site was purchased by David while he was still King. The incident is described in *II Samuel, Chapter 24, Verses 15 - 25 and I Chronicles, Chapter 21, Verses 14–30*.

The purpose of the Temple was to provide a dwelling place for God in the midst of His people, Israel. It was thought that God dwelt with man in those days, and so that thought continues today. The Temple was begun around 1012 BC and finished eight years later. It was some 480 years after the people of Israel came out of bondage in Egypt; however, the people later lost their sense of spiritual direction and destiny resulting in the destruction of the Temple in 586 BC by Nebuchadnezzar.

The symbol of the Temple for us is that man himself is a living Temple where God resides. We should strive toward the same type of perfection in our own Temple as that sought for in the Temple at Jerusalem. Freemasonry tries to help each of its members build a more stately mansion within themselves where God can reside.

## **The Lost Word**

The Word represents Divine Truth – we are not searching for a particular word, we are searching for that ultimate goal of all Masons.

# The Lecture

## The Signs, Tokens and Words

The lecture begins with a review of the due-guard, sign, pass-grip, Grand Hailing Sign, and strong grip of a Master Mason and then a review of those grips used at the raising of the body of our Grand Master, Hiram Abif.

## The Three Pillars

The three Grand Masonic Pillars are called wisdom, strength and beauty.

**Wisdom** – Solomon is considered to be the wisest of all of the wise men of the past. Therefore, the Worshipful Master in the East of the Lodge represents Solomon and symbolizes wisdom. Wisdom comes only from knowledge, which in turn comes from experience and study. Many men and Masons become knowledgeable, but few acquire wisdom.

**Strength** – Strength is essential to preserve wisdom and beauty. There is a passive strength of character which is contained within the heart, mind and soul of every man. The ability to master one's self is called strength of purpose. The foundation of your spiritual building is based upon your character, which must be strong in order to endure.

**Beauty** – Beauty is symbolized by the Corinthian column, which is considered to be the most beautiful of the ancient orders of architecture. However, beauty to a Mason is that of mind, character and spirit; beauty of the wonderful works of nature; beauty of love. These are matters not of the material world and include the glory of unselfishness and idealism.

The Worshipful Master is the symbol of Wisdom in the Lodge; the Senior Warden is the pillar of strength in the Lodge because he supports the Master, just as Hiram, King of Tyre, supported King Solomon; the Junior Warden represents the pillar of beauty as the counterpart of Hiram Abif.

## The Temple

The Temple was supported by fourteen hundred fifty-three columns, two thousand, nine hundred and six pilasters, all hewn from the finest Parian Marble. In ancient times, the marble from the island of Paros was used



extensively for sculpturing because of its quality.

We are told that there were employed in the building of the Temple three Grand Masters, three thousand three hundred Masters, eighty thousand Fellowcrafts, a levy out of Israel consisting of thirty thousand who wrought in the quarries one month in three, in addition to Entered Apprentices and bearers of burden. We can only imagine the magnitude of the organizational structure involved to keep all of these workmen efficiently employed.

### **The Master's Carpet**

The only reference to the Master's Carpet occurs here in the Master Mason degree and then only in passing in alluding to the Three Steps usually displayed on the carpet. This is a hold-over from the days before slide projectors when the lectures were given with the aid of drawings or scenes woven into a tapestry or carpet.

The three steps allude to the three stages of human life: youth, manhood, and age, and Masonically refer to the first three degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason.

### **The Pot of Incense**

We were told that the Pot of Incense was an emblem of a pure heart. Of the five senses mentioned in the Fellowcraft Degree, smell is most closely associated with emotions – smells remind us of both good and bad experiences.

The Pot, which holds the incense, is symbolic of sacrifice. It means giving up selfish desires to work for others. No man should ever be satisfied with his accomplishments, but continue to strive to be better.

### **The Beehive**

The beehive is the symbol of industry – we should never be content to be idle, particularly when we can help our fellowman by exerting a little effort.

### **The Tyler's Sword**

The sword has become the symbol of the Tyler's authority to protect the

Lodge from imposters and eavesdroppers. It clearly derives from the era when the sword was the principal means of offense and defense.

### **The Book of Constitutions**

The Book of Constitutions contains the laws of Freemasonry which are not secret but rather published for all to read. Why then are we told that it is guarded by the Tyler's sword? The lecture tells us that this is a symbol to remind us to be ever watchful and guarded in our thoughts, words and actions; in other words, as Masons we represent the Fraternity and we should be particularly careful not to bring a bad name to Freemasonry by anything that we say or do.

### **The Sword Pointing to a Naked Heart**

This is to remind us that justice will sooner or later overtake us, and although we can hide our thoughts and actions from our fellow man, we cannot hide them from God.

### **The All-Seeing Eye**

For the above reason, the all-seeing eye has been the symbol of Deity for as long as we can remember. Man's view of the Supreme Architect of the Universe is that of one who sees all, knows all and can or does control all.

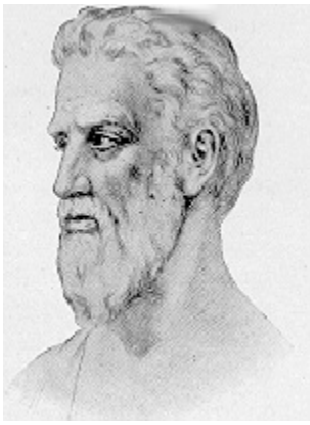
### **The Anchor and the Ark**

These are explained as being emblems of a well-grounded hope and a well-spent life. The Divine Ark carries us through this life, filled as the latter is with troubles; and an anchor awaits us to safely moor us in a peaceful harbor.

### **The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid**

From the lecture in our third degree we find the following:

"The 47<sup>th</sup> Problem of Euclid was an invention of our ancient friend and brother, the great Pythagoras, who in his travels through Asia, Africa, and Europe, was initiated into several orders of priesthood, and raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason.



“This wise philosopher enriched his mind abundantly in a general knowledge of things, and more especially in geometry or Masonry. On this subject he drew out many problems and theorems, and among the most distinguished he erected this, which in the joy of his heart he called Eureka, signifying in the Greek language, I have found it, and upon the discovery of which he is said to have sacrificed a hecatomb, which was a hundred head of oxen. It teaches Masons to be general lovers of the arts and sciences.”

There are many legendary accounts of Pythagoras, but little is positively known. Most of the accounts we have were written centuries after his death and are not to be relied upon as historically accurate. He is said to have traveled extensively through Asia, Africa and Europe. He was a Greek, born in Samos about 575 B.C. and removed his residence to Crotona in southern Italy about 529 B.C., where there were several Greek colonies. He is said to have left home because of his opposition to the political party in power there at the time, of which the leader was the tyrant Polycrates. At his new residence he founded a school of philosophy in which he taught the principles of politics, religion, and ethics. His main purpose was to teach the principles of the ideal state, and he therefore emphasized the political virtues. He told his followers that they should always act for the good of the state, and that their own interests should be sacrificed for the good of the whole community. To accomplish this purpose they must learn to subdue their passions and improve themselves in the moral virtues. (Sound familiar?) The harmony of mathematics was to him a symbol of the harmony of the soul which they were to strive to attain. He taught respect for the authority of the state and his brotherhood was a training school for citizenship. His ideals were put to the test of practical living, for no theory was of value unless it bore fruit in action and enabled its adherents to become better men and citizens. His followers were to strive to build themselves into a perfect character and as a means to that end, they were to cultivate the virtues of friendship, morality and brotherly love. Thus we see from the close similarity between his society and Freemasonry why he is called “our ancient friend and brother.”

His followers formed themselves into a community in which they lived together as one family, eating at a common table and wearing the same kind of clothes. They studied the seven liberal arts and sciences, particularly mathematics, and applied themselves to the craft trades. The study of geometry led them to ponder upon the uniformity and regularity of the universe, which in turn led to the conception of a Great First Cause. Members of this society had to pass through a ceremony of initiation in which they were taught “first to hear, then to know.” It was probably a form of the great popular

religious revival which took place in Greece at this time.

Pythagoras himself left no writings, and we know of his teachings only through the writings of his followers. The statement that he was the inventor of the 47<sup>th</sup> problem of Euclid has been denied by many students of the subject. It has been claimed that this proposition was known to the Egyptians long before the time of Pythagoras, and that he learned it from them and carried it to Europe and Asia. We have no proof either way. Vitruvius, a celebrated Roman architect of the time of Augustus Caesar, attributes the discovery of this proposition to Pythagoras. Plutarch quotes Apollodorus, a Greek painter of the fifth century B.C. as authority for the statement that Pythagorus sacrificed an ox on the discovery of this demonstration, but asserts that his proof was different from that given by Euclid. In fact, so many writers, both ancient and modern, have attributed this proposition to Pythagoras that it is commonly called by his name: "The Theorem of Pythagoras."

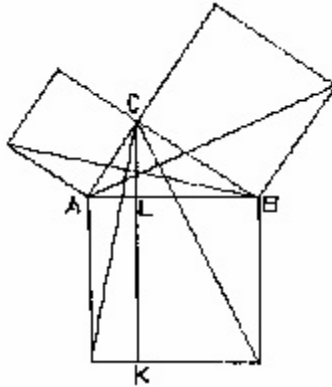
"On the other hand, the properties of the triangle whose sides are respectively 3, 4 and 5 were certainly known to the Egyptians and were made the basis of all their measurement standards. We find evidence for this in their important buildings, many erected before the time of Pythagoras. In an old Egyptian manuscript, recently discovered at Kahun and supposed to belong to the time of the Twelfth Dynasty, we find the following equations:

$1^2 + (3/4)^2 = (1 \frac{1}{4})^2$  ;  $8^2 + 6^2 = 10^2$  ;  $2^2 + (1 \frac{1}{2})^2 = (2 \frac{1}{2})^2$  ;  
 $16^2 + 12^2 = 20^2$  ; all of which are forms of the 3-4-5 triangle. The ancient Babylonians and Chinese also knew the properties of this triangle. It is quite possible that this accounts for the discrepancy in the statement of Plutarch that Pythagoras discovered the demonstration of the general proposition, but that the particular case in which the lengths of the sides are 3, 4 and 5 was known earlier to the Egyptians. Plutarch also thought that the case in which the base and perpendicular are equal (as in the sides of a square) was likewise known to the Egyptians. If both of these cases were known to the Egyptians, it would be natural for one to believe that the general case was known, but that is apparently not the case.

Pythagoras set himself the task of finding a general proof for all cases. We are told that he succeeded, but his method is not known to us. It is known that he understood the principle of proportional sides in similar triangles, and many students of the subject think he used this principle in his demonstration. If this was the case, it was applicable only to commensurate quantities since the validity of the proportional method as applied to incommensurable lines was not proven until long after his time.

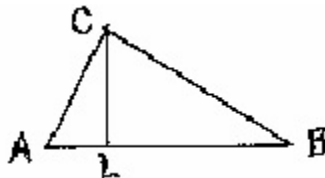
It is of interest to note that Euclid could not use the method of proportional lines, because he needed to use the proposition before he developed the

theory of proportion. Therefore, he invented the geometrical proof often shown in our slides and lectures:



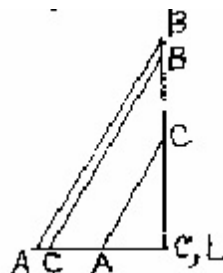
The author of these pages will leave the geometrical proof to the reader to ponder (to see if you remember your high school geometry) and will now proceed to discuss what was probably Pythagoras' proof based upon proportional triangles. If true, Pythagoras used only the lines AC, CB, AB, and CL, but Euclid used the entire figure, and proved that the square on AC equals the rectangle AK and that the square on BC equals the rectangle BK. Then in as much as the sum of the two rectangles equals the square on AB, he obtained the same result as Pythagoras.

Let us now look only at the triangle ACB above, wherein Pythagoras presumably drew the line CL, perpendicular to the hypotenuse AB:



The proportional method of Pythagorus suggests the steps that he used in his proof:

Triangles ACL, CLB and ACB are similar triangles as can be seen by redrawing the picture with the triangles superimposed as below:



Using the concept of proportions we can write (referring to the original triangle) that the ratios of the lengths  $AL/AC = CL/CB$ ,  $AL/AC = CB/AB$  and  $CL/CB = AC/AB$ . Using these proportions, we can write  $(AC)^2 = AC \times AC = (AL \times CB/CL) \times AC = AL \times (CB/CL) \times AC$   
 $= AL \times (AB/AC) \times AC = AL \times AB$ .

Likewise, using the ratios  $BL/BC = CL/AC = CB/AB$ , we can write  $(CB)^2 = CB \times CB = BL \times AB = LB \times AB$ .

Combining these two equations,

$(AC)^2 + (CB)^2 = AL \times AB + LB \times AB = (AL + LB) \times AB = AB \times AB = (AB)^2$   
which proves the proposition.

While it is undoubtedly not true that Pythagoras was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason as stated in our Monitors, yet there is so much resemblance between his teachings and that of Freemasonry that we can understand how the error might have occurred.

The Monitor also states that Pythagoras celebrated his triumph in the discovery of this proposition by sacrificing a hecatomb (one hundred oxen). We can see how this may have been an outgrowth of the statement attributed to Apollodorus above. Ovid denies it and Hegel laughs at it, saying "It was a feast of spiritual cognition, at the expense of the oxen." The strongest argument against it, however, is the fact that Pythagoras taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls and forbade animal slaughter. However, when we consider that among many of the ancients the sacrifice of a number of oxen was their method of expressing their gratitude for a great triumph, we can understand how the tradition arose, and accept the fact of joy without caring for the truth of the sacrifice.

The importance of this proposition is that on this theorem almost all geometrical measurements depend, which cannot be directly obtained, including many in modern astronomy.

### **The Hour Glass**

The Hour-Glass is an emblem of human life. Behold how swiftly the sands run! We should use each minute wisely. We are taught in the Entered Apprentice Degree to divide each day into portions.

### **The Scythe**

The Scythe is an emblem of time. Our ritual speaks of "that all devouring Scythe of time" and cutting "the brittle thread of life." Yet hope is held out to us.

## **The Setting Maul, Spade and Coffin**

The Setting Maul is an emblem of the casualties or diseases by which our own existence may be terminated. The Spade may shortly dig our grave and the Coffin may shortly contain our remains – these are all emblems of mortality.

### **The Sprig of Acacia**

But the Acacia or evergreen, reminds us that we have an immortal part which survives the grave.

### **Forefancy Your Deathbed**

The mature man becomes more and more preoccupied with death. This stems from the frequent experiences throughout his life when he has been confronted with the fact. As he grows older he becomes more acutely aware of death through the passing of his contemporaries. He wonders who among his friends will be the next to go, without any thought that he himself may be the victim. Sigmund Freud believed that “it is impossible to imagine our own death”. Whether this is so or not may be debated, but we know that it is at the death of friends and loved ones that man has searched for an answer to the enigma of life and death. He cannot think of his friends as forever dead. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* Charles Dickens has reminded us of this fact. He wrote: “In the Destroyer’s steps there spring up bright creations that defy his power, and his dark paths become a way of light to Heaven”. His memory of his friends encourages man to assume a continuity of their lives somewhere.

Whether from lack of courage, or from fear of being considered morbid, man avoids any consideration of his own eventual death. This evasion of a fact that is inevitable for mortal man has been questioned by many. John Keats asks:

How strange it is that man on earth should roam,  
And lead a life of woe, but not forsake  
His rugged path; nor dare he view alone  
His future doom, which is but to awake.

Alexander Whyte, the noted preacher during the early years of this century, recommended an exercise too often neglected. “Forefancy your deathbed” was his brief instruction. Every Master Mason will recall the fine phrases in which this same instruction was communicated to him as he confronted the grim emblems of man’s mortality. “Forefancy your deathbed” is indeed the

basic theme of the Master Mason Degree. It is when a man contemplates his own inevitable destiny that a belief in immortality becomes a very personal matter. The Mason then is encouraged to meditate upon the writings of men of every generation who bear witness to man's perennial hope for a life beyond death.

This is not the place to present a studied argument in support of man's hope for immortality. Emerson wrote: "We are much better believers in immortality than we can give grounds for. The real evidence is too subtle, or is higher than we can write down in propositions". It is sufficient for us to be reminded that in every age there have been men who have given expression to this hope. The writer of Ecclesiastes faced the grim fact of death, describing it as the return of dust to dust, but he also assures us that the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. A text, carved inside an Egyptian pyramid before the year 2000 B.C., tells us:

Death is before me today  
As a man longs to see his house  
When he has spent years in captivity.

According to Xenophon, King Cyrus comforted his children on his deathbed with these words of hope: "And a man's nature being by death dissolved, it is apparent and well enough to all men known to what place all the other parts do go, for they do all return to that matter whereof they had their first and original beginning; but the soul only is never with any bodily eyes seen nor perceived, neither when it is in the body, nor when it goeth and departeth out of the body". The same idea is given in this brief epigram from the *Greek Anthology*: "Protagoras is said to have died here; but his body alone reached the earth, his soul leaped up to the wise". Similar quotations can be given from poets and philosophers of every generation, expressing man's hope in immortality. "From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing." That is what Robert G. Ingersoll said when he spoke at the funeral of his brother, and when he said it he spoke for us all.

### **The Charge to the Newly Raised Candidate**

Up to this point not much effort has been required from the candidate. He has shown some enthusiasm for Masonry (or he would not be present). He has carried out the tasks assigned to him (or he would not have passed a satisfactory examination in open lodge). He has cheerfully conformed to the regulations of the Craft, as he undertook to do at the time of his Initiation (though to be sure he has had hardly any opportunity to violate them). Yet



even these feeble efforts have been crowned by recognition, and because of them he has been raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason.

In our speculative lodges this progress is much faster and easier than it was in operative times, and the third degree is far less exclusive. If an operative builder ever managed to rise this high it was the culmination of his career. His seven year apprenticeship was behind him, and his long service as a journeyman mason. His new status brought with it increased responsibilities. He at last had an opportunity to plan and supervise the work, and to superintend the training of new workmen.

In like manner the speculative Master Mason has new burdens thrust upon him, slight as they may seem at first glance. He is now responsible for others besides himself. His duty is now not merely to strive to become better himself, but also to teach others, Masons and profane, by precept and example. As a newly initiated candidate his attention had been peculiarly and forcibly directed to the practice of Fidelity in himself. Now his horizons are widened, and he is to protect the younger brethren against any breach of Fidelity. Earlier he had been admonished to correct and harmonize his own conduct by the principles of morality and virtue. Now he is to expand his sphere, and seek to improve the morals of men in society. As an Entered Apprentice, he had been instructed to practice charity, and to exercise universal beneficence. Now he is not only to do it himself, but he is to inculcate in others the practice of universal benevolence. When he had been newly passed he had been forewarned that in discussions an experienced Master would guard the Landmarks against encroachment. Now he is himself that experienced Master, and is charged with preserving those Landmarks sacred and inviolable.

In short, it is his duty to show the world that he has been made a Master Mason because he is a good Mason.

### **The Rights and Responsibilities of a Master Mason**

**These are extensive** – they include the right to vote in his own lodge, the right to Masonic Relief, the right to Masonic Visitation, the right to Masonic Burial, and the right to trial by his peers. Each of these rights carries a corresponding responsibility.

**Voting** – it is the right of every Master Mason to vote in his own Lodge and to do so responsibly. For example, you do not cast a black cube unless you know the candidate to be unworthy and you do not vote for or against something capriciously.

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

Masonic Relief is also available from the Grand Lodge. Generally, the Lodge is expected to pick up a portion of the cost and application is made through the Lodge. 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.

**Masonic Visitation** – One of the most interesting experiences in Freemasonry occurs when you visit another lodge, particularly one in another recognized jurisdiction. When you can prove yourself a Mason in good standing, you are entitled to visit another lodge if no member of that lodge objects. In order to prove yourself a Mason in good standing you must either be “vouched for” by a Brother of the lodge you are visiting or undergo “strict trial or due examination.” For the latter, you need to show your dues card and meet with a committee appointed by the Master.

The committee will ask you some questions about each degree, so you should have memorized the signs, tokens and words for each of the three degrees and be prepared to answer questions. Don't worry, you do not have to be letter perfect; however, you should know enough to put portions of each degree in your own words. You will also be asked to take the Tyler's Oath on a Volume of the Sacred Law. In Michigan, the Tyler's or Test Oath goes as follows:”I, (insert full name), of my own free-will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God and these witnesses, do hereby and hereon, most solemnly and sincerely swear that I have been regularly initiated an Entered Apprentice, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft, and raised to the sublime Degree of a Master Mason, all in a just and legally constituted Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. That I do not now stand under the sentence of suspension or expulsion and know of no good cause why I should not be admitted to a seat in this Lodge, so help me God.”

**The Right of Burial** – Masonic Funeral ceremonies are conducted only at the request of a Mason's immediate family. The choice is that of the family and not the Lodge. The family should contact the Master or Secretary or some member of the Lodge, who in turn will contact the Worshipful Master or Secretary. If the ceremony is to take place far from the Lodge, the Lodge will usually contact a Lodge closeby who will perform the service as a courtesy; but the request for that service must come from the Lodge to which the deceased Brother belonged. The ceremonies are usually conducted in a house of worship, funeral home, or at the grave site; however, they may be

conducted in Lodge.

**The Right to Trial by Peers** – Should a Mason be charged with unMasonic conduct, it is his right to have a trial by his peers under regulated conditions, with total freedom to present evidence on his behalf in a timely fashion. This assures him that no Lodge can degrade him without a fair trial. No officer or member can have him removed out of malice or spite; nor can he be made to suffer the penalties of Masonry out of idle gossip or hearsay. If he be brought to trial in his own Lodge and found guilty, he has the right to appeal to the Grand Lodge.

There are many other rights or privileges not listed here; for example, he has the right to a voice in his own Lodge as long as he does not abuse it, in which case, the Master can rap him down, because the Master is the master of that Lodge. He has the right to hold office and serve on committees. He, his wife, Mother, Father and children have a right to apply for admission into the Michigan Masonic Home in Alma. The Home does not have to accept you or your family if you do not qualify or if it does not have room, but these situations are rare. The Lodge may hold social affairs, special entertainment or have a lending library to which a member is entitled. If services are offered by the Lodge or the Grand Lodge, every member has an equal right to enjoy them.

**Your Responsibility as a Master Mason** – *“To preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied, must be your constant care.”* Toward this end, practicing the tenets of the institution in every aspect of your life is the best way to meet your responsibility as a Master Mason.

**The Responsibility of Recommending Others** – You should be particularly careful not to recommend a man for Masonry whom you feel will not share the ideals of the fraternity. When you sign a petition for Freemasonry, you are attesting to that man’s character to the best of your knowledge. Be careful! You should take time to discuss Freemasonry with the petitioner until you are satisfied that you know why he wants to become a member and that he is of good moral character. Freemasonry is only as good as its worst member!

## **Selected References**

*The Michigan Ritual*

Brown, W., *Facts, Fables and Fantasies of Freemasonry*



# Test Questions

Please note space is allowed for the brother to write his answers after the question.

## Master Mason Degree

1. What is "Sublime" about the Master Mason Degree?
2. What is the message of the Master Mason Degree?
3. What does the lodge room represent in the third degree?
4. How were you received into the Lodge and what is the lesson imparted?
5. What are the meanings of the words nonage, dotage, clandestine as applied to men and/or Masons?
6. What are the purposes of the signs, tokens and words in Masonry?
7. What are the working tools of a Master Mason and which is singled out for importance to this degree?
8. According to legend, who were the first three Grand Masters?
9. King Solomon's Temple was constructed where and when?
10. Who was responsible for building the Temple and why was it built?
11. A man is \_\_\_\_\_ an Entered Apprentice, \_\_\_\_\_ to a Fellowcraft, and \_\_\_\_\_ a Master Mason.
12. What is the importance of the Five Points of Fellowship?
13. What do the three ruffians represent?
14. What is Low Twelve and what does it represent?
15. What is represented by the Lost Word?
16. What does "being raised" symbolize?
17. What are the three Grand Masonic Pillars and by whom are they

represented?

18. What does the Bee Hive symbolize?
19. What does the Setting Maul symbolize?
20. What does the Sprig of Acacia symbolize and why?
21. What moral lesson does the Tyler's Sword represent?
22. Draw the 47th Problem of Euclid and describe its importance.
  
23. What are we taught by the legend of Hiram Abif?
24. What are some of the rights of a Master Mason?
25. What are some of the responsibilities of a Master Mason?

# Appendix D

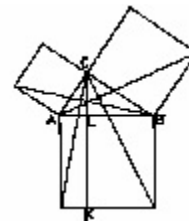
## Possible Answers to Questions On the Master Mason Degree

### Introduction

Once again, these are just possible answers to these questions. They are intended to cause you to think about the various aspects of this sublime degree. By speculating on the answers, we grow in Masonic knowledge.

1. What is "Sublime" about the Master Mason Degree? – The solemnity of the ceremony and its profound lessons.
2. What is the message of the Master Mason Degree? – That we will triumph if we lead a virtuous life.
3. What does the lodge room represent in the third degree? – The Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies of King Solomon's Temple.
4. How were you received into the Lodge and what is the lesson imparted? – Upon the points of the compasses. That the lessons of Freemasonry must be contained in the heart if they are to be useful.
5. What are the meanings of the words nonage, dotage, clandestine as applied to men and/or Masons? – Nonage refers to someone who has not attained the age of maturity, dotage refers to someone who has become senile and clandestine refers to a Lodge that is operating without a charter issued by a recognized grand lodge or an individual belonging to such a lodge.
6. What are the purposes of the signs, tokens and words in Masonry? – They provide a means of recognition.
7. What are the working tools of a Master Mason and which is singled out for importance to this degree? – All of the tools of Masonry indiscriminately, but more importantly, the trowel, which is used to cement Masonic brotherhood.
8. According to legend, who were the first three Grand Masters? – Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif.
9. King Solomon's Temple was constructed where and when? – The Temple was built on Mt. Moriah in Jerusalem in 1004 B.C.
10. Who was responsible for building the Temple and why was it built? – King Solomon, as a place for God to dwell in the midst of His people.
11. A man is initiated an Entered Apprentice, passed to a Fellowcraft, and raised a Master Mason.
12. What is the importance of the Five Points of Fellowship? – In addition to the lessons imparted, we need to know how to give them and to communicate the Word in order to visit other lodges.

13. What do the three ruffians represent? – The challenges that we will meet on our passage through this life, including the passions within ourselves.
14. What is Low Twelve and what does it represent? – Midnight and death.
15. What is represented by the Lost Word? – Divine Truth.
16. What does “being raised” symbolize? – It represents our Masonic faith in the immortality of the soul.
17. What are the three Grand Masonic Pillars and by whom are they represented? – Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, represented by King Solomon (the Worshipful Master); Hiram, King of Tyre (the Senior Warden) and Hiram Abif (the Junior Warden).
18. What does the Bee Hive symbolize? – It is a symbol of industry.
19. What does the Setting Maul symbolize? – The casualties or diseases by which we may lose our own lives.
20. What does the Sprig of Acacia symbolize and why? – It symbolizes immortality because if the Acacia be cut down, it simply sprouts again.
21. What moral lesson does the Tyler’s Sword represent? – It teaches us to be guarded in our thoughts and our speech and to control our actions.
22. Draw the 47th Problem of Euclid and describe its importance. – It is a basic theorem of geometry and considered to be the foundation of mathematics.



23. What are we taught by the legend of Hiram Abif? – To betray a trust is a fate worse than death.
24. What are some of the rights of a Master Mason? – The right to vote in our own Lodge, the rights to Masonic Relief, Masonic Visitation, Masonic Burial and the right to Trial by one’s Peers.
25. What are some of the responsibilities of a Master Mason? – Lodge attendance when possible, balloting, examining visitors, signing petitions, Lodge dues, contributing to Masonic relief and maintaining the reputation of Freemasonry unsullied.