

# **Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia**

**Grand Lodge of Spain**



## **3.1- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART FOUR**

**Provincial Education Programme  
Entered Apprentice Degree**

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### THE ORIENTATION OF THE MASONIC LODGE

The east-west orientation of the tabernacle and the temple, with the only entrance in the east, reflects the fact that from time immemorial human beings have associated the east with the source of life and the light of knowledge. This veneration of the east originated in primitive society, probably because of the mystery then associated with the daily rising of the sun after the darkness of the night. Even in ancient times the sun was known to germinate plant life and to ripen the seed and fruits of nature. Hence the sun came to be regarded as a symbol of the commencement of a new cycle of life. This is reflected in the reverence held for the east in the Egyptian rites and other Ancient Mysteries, in which the sun was regarded as a manifestation of God. In those Mysteries the place where the sun rose was esteemed as the birthplace of God. Many of the earliest Christian churches, especially those in the eastern countries, were oriented east west and had the entrance in the east like King Solomon's temple. It also was the custom of the early Christians, when praying in public, to turn towards the east because, as Saint Augustine said:

***"The east is the most honourable part of the world, being the region of light whence the glorious sun rises."***

In operative freemasonry the symbolic lodge was oriented on an east west axis. The entrance to the lodge was at the eastern end and the master was seated in the west. This arrangement was in allusion to King Solomon's temple at Jerusalem, which had a single entrance in the east, flanked by two columns. In his lectures on ***Signs and Symbols***, the Rev Dr George Oliver supported the customs adopted in operative lodges when he said:

***"The principal entrance to the lodge room ought to face the east, because the east is a place of light both physical and moral; and therefore, the Brethren have access to the lodge by that entrance, as a symbol of mental illumination."***

Notwithstanding the historical precedents, the orientation of Christian churches was reversed from about the end of the first century of Christianity. Throughout the great period of cathedral building in Europe and Britain, pains were taken to orient Christian churches and cathedrals on an east-west axis, with the entrance at the western end and the sanctuary and main altar at the eastern end. With this arrangement worshippers facing the altar during prayer were facing the east. This was in accordance with an injunction in the Apostolic Constitutions that required the designers to ***"let the church be of an oblong form, directed to the East"***. In cruciform buildings the transept also was placed towards the eastern end, thus forming a Latin cross. Although the ***Apostolic Constitutions*** are usually attributed to Saint Clement, who died in about 101, this assumption probably is incorrect. Nevertheless, Saint Clement was the first of the ***Apostolic Fathers*** and the second or third successor of Saint Peter in the See of Rome.

Although speculative craft freemasonry closely follows most of the symbolic precedents established by the ancient Israelites and adopted in lodges of operative freemasons, the orientation of speculative lodges is the reverse of their operative counterparts, so that the entrance is in the west and the master is seated in the east. It is not known when this reversal took place, but it probably was in deference to established religious practices in Europe and Britain during the formative days of modern speculative craft freemasonry. It is probable that the early speculative ritualists in England adopted ecclesiastical practice in the orientation of their lodges, because they had not been operative freemasons and were not familiar with the orientation of operative lodges. Most of the

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early English ritualists were acquainted with the **Cabalists** and their teachings, which also might have influenced them with regard to orientation. An essential doctrine of one school of the **Cabalists** ignores the orientation of the tabernacle and the temple and says that:

***"His Majesty . . . sits on a throne in the east, as the actual representative of God."***

Whatever may have been the reason for the change, this reversal of the orientation causes confusion concerning the position of the pillars at the entrance to King Solomon's temple and also reverses the symbolic direction in which the winding stairs are ascended to reach the middle chamber. The middle chamber was one of the rooms that surrounded the temple but was not within the temple as is usually depicted on the second tracing board. In the Prestonian system of speculative craft freemasonry, which had been practised widely for some fifty years before the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813, the **"search for that which was lost"** proceeded logically from west to east in a lodge that was oriented in the same way as the lodges in operative freemasonry.

### THE THREE SUPPORTING PILLARS OF A LODGE

Although it is probably true that there is no Mason, be he ever so unskilled in his Art, who is so ill informed that if he were asked, "What are the symbolical Supports of your Blue Lodge?" would not be able to give the information, "The Three Pillars, Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty," it is to be feared that there is many a Mason who, when he has given the information that the Three Pillars are the Supports of his Lodge and has given those Supports their respective names, has told absolutely all he knows concerning the Three Pillars. He knows nothing of their antecedents and their history; nothing of their symbolic significance. This is decidedly not as it should be. It is, then, worth the time and effort of every Mason who would possess even the elements of a proper knowledge of his Art, and especially is it worth the time and effort of every Mason who would call himself a student of his Art, to make an investigation, if only one of the utmost brevity, of the antecedents, the history, and the symbolism, of pillars and, more particularly, of the Three Pillars.

To an investigation, such as suggested, the brief review below can serve as scarcely more than a synopsis. It is no more than a start in the right direction-- merely the sketching in of some of the more important features of a field of investigation which no Mason can afford neglecting to explore.

Probably pillars have been used for commemorative, monumental and symbolistic purposes since the beginnings of civilization in the world. For example, among the Egyptians many extraordinary events, singular or noteworthy transactions, and new inventions were commemorated, and their histories preserved, by records carved upon pillars of stone. According to tradition, Osiris, that Egyptian hero and god of such peculiar and especial interest to the Mason, set up pillars in commemoration of his conquests; the pillars bore hieroglyphical inscriptions recording certain interesting facts and details relative to those conquests. This reputed example of Osiris was followed by the kings of ancient Egypt for many centuries, for those kings had, in many instances, records of their conquests, triumphs, power, and magnificence, engraved on pillars or obelisks. And, if we are to believe the Greek legends having to do with the legendary world--conquering Egyptian king Sesostris who in those legends carries the burdens and the glories of many of the deeds of Rameses II., Rameses II during his military progress through the various nations which he conquered caused

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pillars to be erected bearing inscriptions and emblematic devices making known to posterity certain features of, and facts relating to, his conquests.

By the biblical people's pillars were used in ways similar to those in which they were used by the Egyptians. Thus, Hiram King of Tyre, upon the forming of his grand junction between Eurichorus and Tyre, dedicated a pillar to Jupiter in commemoration of the event. Enoch erected two pillars--the Pillars of Enoch of which Masonry has its symbolic legend--the one of brass to resist water and the other of stone to resist fire upon which he inscribed information calculated to preserve his knowledge to posterity in the case of the destruction of the world. Jacob's Pillar at Bethel was erected to commemorate his extraordinary vision; his Pillar at Galeed was raised in commemoration of his treaty with his uncle, Laban. Joshua raised a pillar at Gilgal to perpetuate the fact of the miraculous passage of the River Jordan. And Absalom erected a pillar in honor of himself.

Leaving, now, the consideration of pillars as merely individual units and turning to the consideration of grouped pillars, each group consisting of three units, one realizes at the outset that the conception of a symbolic group of three pillars is not by any means one confined exclusively to Masonry; in not a few of the ancient mysteries and religious systems some symbolic meaning was assigned to a group comprised of three pillars.

The symbolistic conception of three grouped pillars was contained in the Druidical Mysteries, indeed, in those mysteries, in some instances, the adytum, or sanctuary, was actually supported on three stones or pillars. In the mythology of India, the conception of three pillars was present, the pillars being considered as located in the East, West, and South and as bearing the names Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty. In also the mysteries of India the three qualities, Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty, were treated of, being there considered as represented by three hierophants, one in the East, one in the West, and one in the South.

The three-pillar-group, in every ancient mystery or religious system where it occurred as such, was the presentation, symbolically, of a triad. Therefore, a consideration of the Three Pillars of the Lodge brings before the student, for his contemplation, the curious fact that nearly every mystery practiced by the ancient peoples of the world contained its reference, and that an important reference, to a triad. In the mysteries of India, the triad was Brahma, Vishnu, Siva; in the Grecian Mysteries the triad was Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto; in the Persian, Ormazd, Mithra, Mithras; in the Gothic, Woden, Friga, Thor; in the Mexican, Tloquenahuaque, Huitzilopochtli, Mictlanteuctli; and so on through the various systems practiced by the ancients.

So, in carrying forward what was best in the conceptions and the teachings of the peoples of antiquity, Masonry, too, has its pillars of peculiar significance; places one in East, one in the West, and one in the South; considers each one symbolically significant as a unit, calling one Wisdom, one Strength, and one Beauty, as did the Hindus; and, finally, Masonry considers those Pillars as a group, unitary in character and in itself a symbol, indeed a symbol of the very highest type, for:

The Mason is informed that the Three Supporting Pillars of the Lodge are Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty "because it is necessary that there should be wisdom to contrive, strength to support, and beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings": he cannot but gather from the lectures and the work, particularly of the First Degree, that the Lodge is the symbol of the World: therefore, when he combines these two conceptions and draws the necessarily resulting conclusion, he arrives at the same understanding of the ultimate symbolic significance of the Three Pillars as did the ancient

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Hindus--the Three Supporting Pillars of the Lodge are, considered as a group, the symbol of Him Whose Wisdom contrived the World, Whose Strength supports the World, Whose Beauty adorns the World-- Deity.

### JACOB'S LADDER

The introduction of Jacob's ladder into the symbolism of Speculative Freemasonry is to be traced to the vision of Jacob, which is thus substantially recorded in the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Genesis: When Jacob, by the command of his father Isaac, was journeying toward Padanaram, while sleeping one night with the bare earth for his couch and a stone for his pillow, he beheld the vision of a ladder, whose foot rested on the earth and whose top reached to heaven. Angels were continually ascending and descending upon it and promised him the blessing of a numerous and happy posterity. When Jacob awoke, he was filled with pious gratitude, and consecrated the spot as the house of God.

This ladder, so remarkable in the history of the Jewish people, finds its analogue in all the ancient initiations. Whether this is to be attributed simply to a coincidence-a theory which but few scholars would be willing to accept-or to the fact that these analogues were all derived from a common fountain of symbolism, or whether, as suggested by Brother Oliver, the origin of the symbol was lost among the practices of the Pagan rites, while the symbol itself was retained, it is, perhaps, impossible authoritatively to determine. It is, however, certain that the ladder as a symbol of moral and intellectual progress existed almost universally in antiquity, presenting itself either as a succession of steps, of gates, of Degrees, or in some other modified form. The number of the steps varied; although the favorite one appears to have been seven, in reference, apparently, to the mystical character almost everywhere given to that number.

Thus, in the Persian Mysteries of Mithras, there was a ladder of seven rounds, the passage through them being symbolical of the soul's approach to perfection. These rounds were called gates, and, in allusion to them, the candidate was made to pass through seven dark and winding caverns, which process was called the ascent of the ladder of perfection Each of these caverns was the representative of a world, or w state of existence through which the soul was supposed to pass in its progress from the first world to the last, or the world of truth. Each round of the ladder was said to be of metal of measuring purity and was dignified also with the name of its protecting planet. Some idea of the construction of this symbolic ladder may be obtained from the accompanying table.

- |                    |               |                        |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| 7. Gold .....      | Sun .....     | Truth                  |
| 6. Silver .....    | Moon .....    | Mansion of the Blessed |
| 5. Iron .....      | Mars .....    | World of Births        |
| 4. Tin .....       | Jupiter ..... | Middle World           |
| 3. Copper .....    | Venus .....   | Heaven                 |
| 2. Quicksilver ... | Mercury ..... | World of Pre-existence |
| 1. Lead .....      | Saturn .....  | First World            |

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## **3.2- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART FIVE**

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### THE ORNAMENTS, FURNITURE AND JEWELS OF A MASONIC LODGE

#### THE ORNAMENTS

The mosaic pavement in the centre of the lodge room floor invariably attracts attention, drawing together the physical elements described as the ornaments of the lodge. The physical interconnection of these three elements is highlighted by the fact that, in most lodge rooms, the blazing star is in the centre of the mosaic pavement, which itself is completely surrounded by the indented or tessellated border. This close physical relationship reflects how the symbolism of the three ornaments are integrated. Taking them in their logical sequence, the mosaic pavement is called the beautiful floor of the lodge; the indented or tessellated border is called the skirt-work around the pavement; and the blazing star is called the glory in the centre. The mosaic pavement is a fundamental element of the composition, representing in particular the terrestrial aspects of mankind's existence and the vicissitudes of everyday life. The mosaic pavement is called beautiful because it is variegated in colour and chequered in design, reminding us of the eternal sequence of day and night, as well as the diversity of objects that decorate and adorn the whole of the creation, both the animate and the inanimate parts thereof.

The indented or tessellated border alludes to the celestial sphere of our existence. In its lesser aspect, the indented or tessellated border refers to the planets in their several orbits around the sun, thus forming a beautiful corona or border around that grand luminary, as the indented or tessellated border does around the mosaic pavement of a mason's lodge. In its more important aspect, the indented or tessellated border refers to the radiant canopy of stars surrounding our universe, pointing out to us the inherent insignificance of mankind except with the guidance, assistance and strength of Almighty God. The blazing star or glory in the centre has a twofold symbolism, although the more important of these is often overlooked. Lectures of or deriving from the English system usually say that the blazing star refers to that grand luminary, the sun, which illumines the earth and by its benign influence dispenses its blessings to mankind in general. However, this is only a secondary symbolism that is closely related to the symbolism of the indented or tessellated border. The old Prestonian lecture defines the primary symbolism of the blazing star in the following words:

***"The Blazing Star, or glory in the centre, reminds us of that awful period when the Almighty delivered the two tables of stone, containing the ten commandments, to his faithful servant Moses on Mount Sinai, when the rays of His divine glory shone so bright that none could behold it without fear and trembling. It also reminds us of the omnipresence of the Almighty, overshadowing us with His divine love, and dispensing His blessings amongst us; and by its being placed in the centre, it further reminds us, that wherever we may be assembled together, God is in the midst of us, seeing our actions and observing the secret intents and movements of our hearts."***

In most lectures, the **Blazing Star** is simply defined as the **Glory in the Centre**. It is an ancient symbol of the **Supreme Being** like the **All-Seeing Eye**, which is widely used in Scottish and American freemasonry. The **Revised Ritual of Craft Freemasonry** that is used in some English lodges, adopts a similar approach and also puts the three ornaments in their logical symbolical sequence, saying **"The Ornaments are the Mosaic Pavement, the Indented or Tessellated Border and the Blazing Star or Glory in the Centre."** Some Scottish lectures do not include the **Blazing Star** as an ornament, as for example in the **A.S.MacBride Ritual**, which says, **"Its Ornaments are the Mosaic Pavement of chequered human existence and the four Golden Tassels of Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance and**

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**Justice.**” These four tassels are those described as pendent to the corners of the lodge in the concluding paragraph of the **Emulation** and most other English lectures on the **First Tracing Board**. In American freemasonry the **Blazing Star** is usually said to be commemorative of the star that guided the wise men of the east to Bethlehem, whence it is said to represent **Divine Providence**. The **Blazing Star** is a symbol of the greatest antiquity and is used in a wide range of religious systems to represent the **Supreme Being**, which has always been its primary symbolism in freemasonry.

### THE FURNITURE

No lodge is complete, nor can a lodge be opened to carry out work, unless the three elements that comprise the furniture of the lodge are open on the pedestal, these being the sacred writings, the square and the compasses. The sacred writings are derived from God to mankind in general, because in them are laid down the divine laws that God has revealed to mankind to regulate the life and actions of each and every person. We live in the sure knowledge that every person will be rewarded or punished, accordingly as those laws have been obeyed or disobeyed. As the sacred writings are intended to rule our actions and govern our faith, so every candidate in freemasonry must be obligated upon the holy book of his faith. A corollary to this requirement is the stipulation that no man can be admitted into freemasonry unless he believes in God.

The square and compasses are placed upon the sacred writings opened at a passage suitable to the occasion, which signifies that the divine laws laid down therein must be the spiritual foundation and moral basis on which every action is undertaken. In this context the square is said to belong to the whole craft of freemasonry, because every freemason is obligated within the square, when he is told that he must square his life and actions according to God’s divine laws. Likewise, the compasses, which are an important instrument in the preparation of all architectural plans and designs, are said to belong to the Grand Master in particular as an emblem of his dignity. As he is the chief head and ruler of the craft, the Grand Master must be circumspect in his actions, must diligently uphold the divine laws and must skilfully delineate how the members of the craft should apply those laws.

The sacred writings, the square and the compasses that comprise the furniture of the lodge, are also designated as the **Three Great Lights** in freemasonry or the **Lights of Revelation**, to which the apprentice’s attention is drawn immediately after he has taken the obligation. The Scottish **A.S.MacBride Ritual** gives the following succinct but beautiful explanation of the **Three Great Lights**:

*“In the Compasses we have an emblem of the Supreme Will, that encircles and over-rules the Universe. In the Square we have an emblem of the perfect Justice that governs all things. In the Holy Book we have that Will and Justice revealed in the character of the Great Creator of all; and by it we are taught how to circumscribe our desires to His Supreme Will and how to accord our actions with His Perfect Justice.”*

In most Irish lodges the **Three Great Lights** are explained to the newly obligated apprentice in the following words:

*“The Volume of the Sacred Law is recommended to your consideration and study without comment, believing that if you follow its teachings and precept, you will find them a ‘Light to your Path’ and a ‘Lamp to your Feet’. The Square is an emblem of Morality and teaches us that all our actions towards our fellow men should stand the test of the Moral Square. The Compasses, which form that perfect figure, the circle, remind us that we should endeavour to surround our conduct*



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***by a line, to keep in check unruly passions and unlawful desires. Thus, the Three Great Lights teach the Freemason his duty to his God, his neighbour and himself."***

The explanation of the **Three Great Lights** that is widely used in English and Scottish lodges and their descendants around the world, which therefore probably is the best-known definition, is given in the following or similar words:

***"Let me direct your attention to the three great though emblematical Lights of Freemasonry, namely the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses. The Sacred Writings are to govern our faith, the Square to regulate our actions and the Compasses to keep us within due bounds with all mankind, more particularly our brethren in freemasonry."***

In the foregoing discussions the **Sacred Writings**, the **Square** and the **Compasses** have been reviewed as the three elements of the **Furniture** of the lodge and also as the **Three Great Lights** in freemasonry. The inclusion of these three elements in what undoubtedly must be their most important capacity in speculative craft freemasonry, which is as the **Three Great Lights**, would appear to have been sufficient. At first sight their additional inclusion as the **Furniture** of the lodge might appear to be a redundancy, were it not for the fact that in medieval times and until at least the end of the seventeenth century, furniture had an important connotation, perhaps even a primary meaning, of doing something completely. It seems most likely that the early compilers of our speculative rituals had this sense uppermost in their minds. In any event the explanations that are given for the symbolisms of these three elements, as the **Three Great Lights** in freemasonry and also as items of the **Furniture** of the lodge, are sufficiently different to offset any suggestion of redundancy.

### THE MOVABLE JEWELS

The **Square**, the **Level** and the **Plumb Rule** are called movable jewels in English, Irish and Scottish lodges, but immovable jewels in American lodges. In respect of the jewels, the early ritualists seem to have faced a dichotomy similar to that relating to the **Furniture** and the **Three Great Lights** discussed above, because the primary roles of the **Square**, the **Level** and the **Plumb Rule** are in their functions as important working tools of the craft. Nevertheless, they have also been adopted quite logically as insignia of office, in which capacity they are considered to be jewels of the lodge. The use of replicas of these three implements as jewels of office derives directly from the practices of operative freemasons. In the context of the present discussion, it will suffice only to outline their symbolism.

The **Square** is an implement that enables an operative mason to determine precisely the angles of the exterior faces of a stone, thus enabling him to bring rude matter into due form. The **Square** is an emblem of **Morality** and **Justice**. It therefore is appropriate as the jewel of a Master whose duty it is to ensure that the members of his lodge conduct themselves morally and justly. The **Level** is an implement that enables an operative mason to set the work to a true level on a given plane. The **Level** is an emblem of **Equality** and therefore is appropriate as the jewel of the Senior Warden, who is in charge of the work and must see that all of the men are treated fairly. The **Plumb Rule** is an implement that enables an operative mason to erect walls and columns truly perpendicular. The **Plumb Rule** is an emblem of **Uprightness** and **Integrity** and therefore is appropriate as the jewel of the Junior Warden, whose duty it is to see that all of the men conduct themselves with uprightness and integrity.

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### THE IMMOVABLE JEWELS

In English and Scottish lodges, the *Tracing Board*, the *Rough Ashlar* and the *Perfect Ashlar* are called the *Immovable Jewels*, because they lie open in the lodge for the brethren to moralise upon. The lecture on the *First Tracing Board* says that the *Tracing Board* is for the Master to lay lines and draw designs upon, so that the operative mason can erect the intended structure with order, regularity and precision. A parallel is drawn to the *Sacred Writings*, which are designated as the *Spiritual Tracing Board* in which are laid down the divine lines and moral designs that should govern our lives and actions. The *Rough Ashlar* is for the Apprentice to work, mark and indent on. Symbolically it represents the mind of man in its untrained state, as rough and unpolished as that stone, but which a liberal and enlightened education can transform into a *Perfect Ashlar*, smooth, squared and polished. Symbolically the *Perfect Ashlar* represents the mind of a man who has rendered himself fit to be a member of a properly organised and civilised society. In most lodges there is a *Perfect Ashlar* fitted with a *Lewis* and suspended from a tripod, which is placed at a point of vantage visible to everyone in the lodge. When the lodge has been opened the *Perfect Ashlar* is raised by means of a winch that symbolises labour. This is intended to remind everyone present that they are engaged in labour and that, as freemasons, they should always work diligently to improve their minds and must regulate their actions according to the divine edicts laid down in the *Spiritual Tracing Board*.

### KING SOLOMON

In writing the life of King Solomon from a Masonic point of view, it is impossible to omit a reference to the legends which have been preserved in the Masonic system.

But the writer, who, with this preliminary notice, embodies them in his sketch of the career of the wise King of Israel, is by no means to be held responsible for a belief in their authenticity. It is the business of the Masonic biographer to relate all that has been handed down by tradition in connection with the life of Solomon; it will be the duty of the severer critic to seek to separate out of all these materials that which is historical from that which is merely mythical, and to assign to the former all that is valuable as fact, and to the latter all that is equally valuable as symbolism.

But it must constantly be kept in mind that the chronology of early Jewish history is obscure. Periods given in the books of Moses are in round numbers and seem based only on tradition. Only when the biblical dates can be checked by external means, as for example by the records of Assyria, may definite dates be accepted with any certainty. Such is the conclusion of the Dictionary of Dates (Nelson's Encyclopedic Library).

Solomon, the King of Israel, the son of David and Bathsheba, ascended the throne of his kingdom 2989 years after the creation of the world, and 1015 years before the Christian era. He was then only twenty years of age, but the youthful monarch is said to have commenced his reign with the decision of a legal question of some difficulty, in which he exhibited the first promise of that wise judgment for which he was ever afterward distinguished.

One of the great objects of Solomon's life, and the one which most intimately connects him with the history of the Masonic institution, was the erection of a temple to Jehovah. This, too, had been a favorite design of his father David. For this purpose, that monarch, long before his death, had numbered the workmen whom he found in his kingdom; had appointed the overseers of the work,

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the hewers of stones, and the bearers of burdens; had prepared a great quantity of brass, iron, and cedar; and had amassed an immense treasure with which to support the enterprise.

But on consulting with the Prophet Nathan, he learned from that holy man, that although the pious intention was pleasing to God, yet that he would not be permitted to carry it into execution, and the divine prohibition was proclaimed in these emphatic words: "Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars; thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight." The task was, therefore, reserved for the more peaceful Solomon.

Hence, when David was about to die, he charged Solomon to build the Temple of God as soon as he should have received the kingdom. He also gave him directions in relation to the construction of the edifice, and put into his possession the money, amounting to ten thousand talents of gold and ten times that amount of silver, which he had collected and laid aside for defraying the expense. Solomon had scarcely ascended the throne of Israel, when he prepared to carry into execution the pious designs of his predecessor. For this purpose, however, he found it necessary to seek the assistance of Hiram, King of Tyre, the ancient friend and ally of his father.

The Tyrians and Sidonians, the subjects of Hiram, had long been distinguished for their great architectural skill; and, in fact, many of them, as the members of a mystic operative society, the Fraternity of Dionysian Artificers, had long monopolized the profession of building in Asia Minor. The Jews, on the contrary, were rather more eminent for their military valor than for their knowledge of the arts of peace, and hence King Solomon at once conceived the necessity of invoking the aid of these foreign architects, if he expected to complete the edifice he was about to erect, either in a reasonable time or with the splendor and magnificence appropriate to the sacred object for which it was intended. For this purpose, he addressed the following letter to King Hiram:

Know thou that my father would have built a temple to God, but was hindered by wars and continual expeditions, for he did not leave off to overthrow his enemies till he made them all subject to tribute. But I give thanks to God for the peace I, at present, enjoy, and on that account, I am at leisure, and design to build a house to God. for God foretold to my father, that such a house should be built by me wherefore I desire thee to send some of thy subjects with mine to Mount Lebanon, to cut down timber for the Sidonians are more skillful than our people in cutting of wood. as for wages to the hewers of wood, I will pay whatever price thou shalt determine. Hiram, mindful of the former amity and alliance that had existed between himself and David, was disposed to extend the friendship he had felt for the father to the son, and replied, therefore, to the letter of Solomon in the following epistle:

It is fit to bless God that he hath committed thy father's government to thee, who art a wise man endowed with all virtues.

As for myself, I rejoice at the condition thou art in and will be subservient to thee in all that thou sendest to me about; for when, by my subjects I have cut down many and large trees of cedar and cypress wood, I will send them to sea and will order my subjects to make floats of them. and to sail to what places soever of thy country thou shalt desire and leave them there, after which thy subjects may carry them to Jerusalem. But do thou take care to procure us corn for this timber which we stand in need of, because we inhabit in an island.

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Hiram lost no time in fulfilling the promise of assistance which he had thus given; and accordingly, we are informed that Solomon received thirty-three thousand six hundred workmen from Tyre, besides a sufficient quantity of timber and stone to construct the edifice which he was about to erect.

Hiram sent him, also, a far more important gift than either men or materials, in the person of an able architect, "a curious and cunning workman," whose skill and experience were to be exercised in superintending the labors of the craft, and in adorning and beautifying the building. Of this personage, whose name was also Hiram, and who plays so important a part in the history of Freemasonry, an account will be found in the article Hiram Abif, to which the reader is referred.

King Solomon commenced the erection of the Temple on Monday, the second day of the Hebrew month Zif, which answers to the twenty-first of April, in the year of the world 2992, and 1012 years before the Christian era. Advised in all the details, as Masonic tradition informs us, by the wise and prudent counsels of Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif, who, with himself, constituted at that time the three Grand Masters of the Craft, Solomon made every arrangement in the disposition and government of the workmen, in the payment of their wages, and in the maintenance of concord and harmony which should insure despatch in the execution and success in the result. To Hiram Abif was entrusted the general superintendence of the building, while subordinate stations were assigned to other eminent artists, whose names and offices have been handed down in the traditions of the Order.

In short, the utmost perfection of human wisdom was displayed by this enlightened monarch in the disposition of everything that related to the construction of the stupendous edifice. Men of the most comprehensive minds, imbued with the greatest share of zeal and fervency, and inspired with the strongest fidelity to his interests, were employed as masters to instruct and superintend the workmen; while those who labored in inferior stations were excited to enthusiasm by the promise of promotion and reward. The Temple was at length finished in the month Bul, answering to our November, in the year of the world 3000, being a little more than seven years from its commencement.

As soon as the magnificent edifice was completed and fit for the sacred purposes for which it was intended, King Solomon determined to celebrate the consummation of his labors in the most solemn manner.

For this purpose, he directed the Ark to be brought from the king's house, where it had been placed by King David, and to be deposited with impressive ceremonies in the holy of holies beneath the expanded wings of the cherubim. This important event is commemorated in the beautiful ritual of the Most Excellent Master's Degree. Our traditions inform us, that when the Temple was completed, Solomon assembled all the heads of the Tribes, the Elders and Chiefs of Israel to bring the Ark up out of Zion, where King David had deposited it in a tabernacle until a more fitting place should have been built for its reception. This duty, therefore, the Levites now performed, and delivered the Ark of the Covenant into the hands of the Priests, who fixed it in its place in the center of the Holy of Holies.

Here the immediate and personal connection of King Solomon with the Craft begins to draw to a conclusion. It is true, that he subsequently employed those worthy Freemasons, whom the traditions say, at the completion and dedication of the Temple, he had received and acknowledged as Most Excellent Masters, in the erection of a magnificent palace and other edifices, but in process

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of time he fell into the most grievous errors; abandoned the path of truth; encouraged the idolatrous rites of Spurious Freemasonry; and, induced by the persuasions of those foreign wives and concubines whom he had espoused in his later days, he erected a fane for the celebration of these heathen mysteries, on one of the hills that overlooked the very spot where, in his youth, he had consecrated a temple to the one true God.

It is, however, believed that before his death he deeply repented of this temporary aberration from virtue, and in the emphatic expression, "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes I, 2), he is supposed to have acknowledged that in his own experience he had discovered that falsehood and sensuality, however they may give pleasure for a season, will, in the end, produce the bitter fruits of remorse and sorrow.

That King Solomon was the wisest monarch that swayed the scepter of Israel, has been the unanimous opinion of posterity.

So much was he beyond the age in which he flourished, in the attainments of science, that the Jewish and Arabic writers have attributed to him a thorough knowledge of the secrets of magic, by whose incantations they suppose him to have been capable of calling spirits and demons to his assistance; and the Talmudists and Mohammedan doctors record many fanciful legends of his exploits in controlling these ministers of darkness. As a naturalist, he is said to have written a work on animals of no ordinary character, which has, however, perished; while his qualifications as a poet were demonstrated by more than a thousand poems which he composed, of which his epithalamium on his marriage with an Egyptian princess and the Book of Ecclesiastes alone remain.

He has given us in his Proverbs an Opportunity of forming a favorable opinion of his pretensions to the character of a deep and right-thinking philosopher; while the long peace and prosperous condition of his empire for the greater portion of his reign, the increase of his kingdom in wealth and refinement, and the encouragement which he gave to architectures the mechanic arts, and commerce, testify his profound abilities as a sovereign and statesman- After a reign of forty years he died, and with him expired the glory and the power of the ancient Hebrew Empires.

# **Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia**

**Grand Lodge of Spain**



## **3.3- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART SIX**

**Provincial Education Programme  
Entered Apprentice Degree**

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### POINT WITHIN A CIRCLE

“There is in every regular and well governed Lodge, a certain point within a circle, embordered by two parallel perpendicular lines. . . “

Familiar to every Mason, this ancient symbol is too often considered merely as one of many, instead of what it really is, among the most illuminating of the entered Apprentice’s Degree.

It is particularly important not only for its antiquity, the many meanings which have been and may be read from it by the student, but because of the bond it makes between the old Operative Craft and the modern Speculative Masonry we know.

No man may say when, where or how the symbol began. From the earliest dawn of history, a simple closed figure has been man’s symbol for deity - the circle for some peoples, the triangle for others, and a circle or a triangle with a central point, for still others. The closed figure, of course, represents the conception of Him Who has neither beginning or ending; the triangle adds to this the reading of a triune nature. It is to be noted that the Lesser Lights form a triangle placed in our Lodges in that orientation which expresses Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. In some Jurisdictions a Lodge closes with the brethren forming a circle about the Altar, which thus becomes the point, or focus of the Supreme Blessing upon the brethren.

Nor must we consider that a reading which is wholly beyond the monitorial explanation of the point within a circle is beyond Masonic conception. A symbol may have many meanings, all of them right, so long as they are not self-contradictory. As the point within a circle has had so many different meanings to so many different people, it is only to be expected that it has meanings for many Masons.

We find it connected with sun worship, the most ancient of religions; ruins of ancient temples devoted both to sun and fire worship are circular in form, with a central altar, or “point” which was the Holy of Holies. The symbol is found in India, in which land of mystery and mysticism its antiquity is beyond calculation. Of its presence in many of the religions of the East, Wilford says (Asiatic Researches):

“It was believed in India that at the general deluge everything was involved in the common destruction except the male and female principles or organs of generation, which were destined to produce a new race and to repeople the earth when the waters had subsided from its surface. The female principle, symbolized by the moon, assumed the form of a lunette, or crescent, while the male principle, symbolized by the sun, assumed the form of the lingam (or phallus) and placed himself erect in the centre of the lunette, like the mast of a ship. The two principles in this united form floated on the surface of the waters during the period of their prevalence on the earth, and thus became the progenitors of a new race of men.”

This is the more curious and interesting when a second ancient meaning of the symbol is considered - that the point represents the sun and the circle the universe. Indeed, this meaning is both modern and ancient, for a dot in a small circle is the astronomical symbol for the sun, and the derivation of this astronomical symbol marks its Masonic connection. The Indian interpretation makes the point the male principle, the circle the female; the point became the sun and the circle the solar system

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which ancient peoples thought was the universe because the sun is vivifying, the life-giving principle, for all the lives.

The two parallel lines, which modern Masonry states represents the two Holy Sts. John, are as ancient as the rest of the symbol, and originally had nothing to do with the “two eminent Christian Patrons of Masonry.” It is a pretty conception, but of course utterly without foundation. The Holy Sts. John lived and taught many hundreds of years before any Masonry existed which can truly be called by that name. If this is distasteful to those good brethren who like to believe that King Solomon was Grand Master of a Grand Lodge, devised the system and perhaps wrote the ritual, one must refute them with their own chronology, for both the Holy Sts. John lived long “after” the wise King wrought his “famous fabric.”

The two perpendicular parallel lines are sometimes thought to have been added to the symbol of the point within a circle as a sort of diagram or typification of a Lodge at its most solemn moment, the point being the brother at the Altar, the circle the Holy of Holies, and the two lines the brethren waiting to help bring the initiate to light.

But it is obviously a mere play of fancy; the two lines against the circle with the point date back to an era before Solomon. On early Egyptian monuments may be found the Alpha and Omega, or symbol of God, in the centre of a circle embordered by two upright serpents, representing the Power and the Wisdom of the Creator.

Mackey reads into the symbol an analogy to the Lodge by observing that as the Master and Wardens represent the sun in three positions in the Lodge, and as the Lodge is a symbol of the world (or universe) the circle can be considered as representing the Lodge, the point the sun at meridian, and the two lines, the Wardens or sun at rising and at setting.

This also seems to many students to be a mere coincidental reading. That derivation of the symbol which best satisfied the mind as to logic and appropriateness, students found in the operative craft. Here is more to encourage than in all the researches into ancient religions and the symbolism of men long forgotten.

Fully to understand just how the point within a circle came into Speculative Masonry by way of Operative Craftsmanship, it is necessary to have some mental picture of the times in which the Craftsmen of the early middle ages lived and wrought.

The vast majority of them had no education, as we understand the word. They could neither read nor write - unimportant matters to most, first because there were no books to read, second because there was nothing which they needed to write! Skilled craftsmen they were, through long apprenticeship and careful teaching in the art of cutting and setting stone, but except for manual skill and cunning artifice founded on generations of experience, they were without learning.

This was not true of the leaders - or, as we would call them - the Masters. The great Cathedrals of Europe were not planned and overseen by ignorance. There, indeed, knowledge was power, as it is now, and the architects, the overseer, the practical builders, those who laid out the designs and planned the cutting and the placing of the stones - these were learned in all that pertained to their craft.



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Doubtless many of them had a knowledge of practical and perhaps of theoretical mathematics.

Certain parts of this theoretical knowledge became diffused from the Master Builders through the several grades of superintendents, architects, overseer and foreman in charge of any section of the work. With hundreds if not thousands of men working on a great structure, some sort of organization must have been as essential then as now. And equally essential would be the overseeing of the tools.

Good work cannot be done with faulty instruments. A square and upright building cannot be erected with a faulty square, level or plumb!

The tools used by the cathedral builders must have been very much what ours are today; they had gavel, mallet, setting maul and hammer; they had chisel and trowel as we have. And of course, they had plumb, square, level and twenty-four-inch gauge to “measure and lay out their work.”

The square, the level and the plumb were made of wood - wood, cord, and weight for the plumb and level; wood alone for the square.

Wood wears when used against stone. Wood warps when exposed to water or damp air. The metal used to fasten the two arms of the square together would rust and perhaps bend or break. Naturally, the squares would not indefinitely stay square. Squares had constantly to be checked for the right-angledness. Some standard had to be adopted by which a square could be compared, so that, when Operative Masons’ squares were tried by it they would not “materially err.”

The importance of the perfect right angle in the square by which stones were shaped can hardly be overestimated. Operative Masonry in the Cathedral building days was largely a matter of cut and try, of individual workmen, or careful craftsmanship. Quality production, micrometre measurement, interchangeability of parts were words which had not yet been coined; ideas for which they stand had not even been invented. All the more necessary, then, that the foundation on which all the work was done should be as perfect as the Masters knew how to make it. Cathedral builders erected their temples for all time - how well they built, a hundred glorious structures in the Old World testify. They built well because they knew how to check and try their squares!

Today any school boy knows the simple “secret of the square” which was then the closely guarded wisdom of the Masters alone; today any school boy can explain the steam engine which was a wonder two hundred years ago, and make and use a wireless which was a miracle scarce ten years gone by. Let us not wonder that our ancient Operative brethren thought their secret of a square so valuable; let us rather wonder that in time in which the vast majority of men were ignorant of mathematics, so many must have known and appreciated this simple, this marvellous, geometrical secret.

Lay out a circle - any size - on a piece of paper.

With a straight edge draw a line across through its centre. Put a dot on the circle, anywhere. Connect that dot with the line at both points where it crosses the circle. Results - a perfect right triangle.

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Draw the circle of whatever size you will; place a dot on the circumference where you will, it makes no difference. So be it. So be it the lines from the dot meet the horizontal line crossing the circle through its centre and they will form a right angle.

This was the Operative Mason's secret - knowing how "to try his square." It was by this means that he tested the working tools of the Fellows of the Craft; he did so often enough, and it was impossible either for their tools or their work "to materially err."

From this, also, comes the ritual used in the lodges of our English brethren, where they "open on the center." Alas, we have dropped the quaint old words they use, and American Lodges know the "center" only as the point within a circle. The original line across the center has been shifted to the side and became the "two perpendicular parallel lines" of Egypt and India and our admonitions are no longer what they must have once been; . . . "while a mason circumscribes his "square" within these points, it is impossible that "it" should materially err."

Today we only have our Speculative meaning; we circumscribe our desires and our passions within the circle and the lines touching on the Holy Scriptures. For Speculative Masons who use squares only in the symbolic sense such an admonition is of far greater use than would be the secret of the square as was known to our ancient brethren.

But - how much greater becomes the meaning of the symbol when we see it as a direct descent from an Operative practice! Our ancient brethren used the point within a circle as a test for the rectitude of the tools by which they squared their work and built their temporal buildings. In the Speculative sense, we used it as a test for the rectitude of our intentions and our conduct, by which we square our actions with the square of virtue. They erected Cathedrals - we build the "House Not Made With Hands." Their point within a circle was Operative - our is Speculative!

But through the two - point in a circle on the ground by which an Operative Master secretly tested the square of his fellows - point within a circle as a symbol by which each of us may test, secretly, the square of his virtue by which he erects an Inner Temple to the Most High - both are Masonic, both are beautiful. The one we know is far more lovely that it is a direct descendant of an Operative practice the use of which produced the good work, true work, square work of the Master Masons of the days that come not back.

Pass it not lightly. Regard it with the reverence it deserves, for surely it is one of the greatest teachings of Masonry, concealed within a symbol which is plain for any man to read, so be it he has Masonry in his heart.

### **BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH – Further Light**

This lecture will rely on what we all already know from the Craft Rituals in use in this country. In this talk, I will only attempt to link them up in developing the subject topic of this evening.

At initiation, we were instructed that "...no institution can boast a more solid foundation than that on which Freemasonry rests ...." An opening prayer in any assembly must of a necessity inculcate the object of such an assembly. This comes in handy in identifying the goal of our Masonic Initiation, namely,

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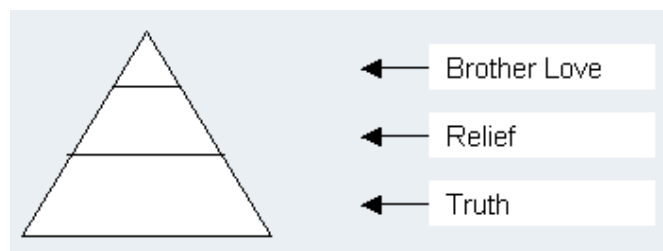
- i. that we may so dedicate and devote our lives to God's service;
- ii. become true and faithful brethren within the Order;
- iii. and be better enabled to unfold the beauties of true godliness.

Soon after initiation, as we study the catechism given to us as a preparatory process to our further advancement in the Craft, we come to the awareness of the three grand principles on which our Order is founded namely "Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth". The text also affords us a summary and ingenious definition of Freemasonry as "a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols".

It is much later in our enjoined "extended research" that, we begin to appreciate that Masonry is indeed "a progressive science," in which we must "distinguish and appreciate the connection of [the] whole system, and the relative dependency of its several parts". As one therefore contemplates these three grand principles, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, he cannot but recall and therefore appreciate the teaching that Virtue, Morality and Brotherly Love are "the principles which lie between the points of the Compasses".

We may just cursorily mention the four cardinal virtues indicated in the First Tracing Board as Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice, issues that can only better be addressed in a separate lecture. These virtues are to direct, chasten, support and guide us in all our actions in the practice of the three grand principles of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

I am inclined to visualize the three grand principles as forming a pyramid with TRUTH as the foundation or base, BROTHERLY LOVE as the superstructure and RELIEF as sandwiched in between or a link to the other two.



One can view this pyramidal form as a pair of Compasses which the First Tracing Board instructs us "belong to the Grand Master in particular". Some early artists had expressed this concept in their several works in which the Great Architect of the Universe is illustrated as meticulously holding a pair of compasses. I will therefore address the topic in this order, beginning from the foundation and rising to the top, namely Truth, Relief and Brotherly Love.

Truth:

The concept of Truth has remained a problem among philosophers. Among the Greeks, there were some like Carneades the founder of the Third Academy, an extension of the Second Academy of Plato a disciple of Aristotle's First Academy, who taught that though it exists, truth has no criterion and is therefore not knowable. On the opposing side of this skepticism, was the simpler thought that held that truth can be known. They also held that "A thing is not true because Aristotle has said it; but Aristotle could not reasonably say it unless it was true". Some of us have had problems

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determining the answer to “what is truth?” and have often based our premise on the presumably un-answered question of Pilate in John 18:38 of the VSL in use in this Lodge.

Incidentally, John the author of this book is very revered in association with St. John the Baptist in Freemasonry. In some old rituals they are substituted in the explanation of the first Tracing Board, for Moses and King Solomon in the definition of the two grand parallel lines bounding the North and South of “all regular, well-formed, constituted Lodges”. “One finished by his learning what the other began by his zeal, and thus drew a second line parallel to the former.” As an aside, it was on the feast day of the Baptist June 24, 1717 that the first Grand Lodge of record was formed by four Lodges that met at the Goose and Gridiron Alehouse. The final reconciliation of the Antients and the Moderns took place in Freemasons' Hall in London, on St. John's the Apostle's Day, December 27, 1813. These dates ideally approximate the summer and the winter solstices and were deliberately chosen for reasons not within the confines of this lecture.

In the VSL, we read that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”; and that “thy word is truth” [John 17:17]. We face a situation where THE WORD is GOD; THY WORD is TRUTH. The conclusion is obvious and is embodied in the statement that Truth is a “divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue”. Virtue includes Brotherly Love and Relief.

This also rhymes with our pyramidal icon in this Truth is depicted as the foundation. Every attribute of God is by definition eternal and absolute.

The truth that is referred to as one of the three grand principles in Freemasonry therefore relates to God. “To be true, and to seek to find and learn the Truth, are the great objects of every good Mason”. We had referred to this at the initial part of this lecture when we identified the goal of Masonic initiation. The ancient axiom is, “to thine own self be true”. Masonry emphasizes and dramatizes this in the 3o address where certain emblems are proffered as guide to our “reflections to the most interesting of all human studies, the knowledge of” ourselves, – emblems we cannot further deliberate upon as a result of the present composition of this Lodge embodying Brethren who are yet to receive that sublime degree.

Every activity in Masonry is begun in God's Name, continued to His Glory in obedience to His precepts. Masonry ensures that each new initiate believes in God and assures him that trust in God was an assurance that “no danger can ensue” in all his laudable undertakings. It also presents to each initiate the VSL of his own faith, with a recommendation that he studies it with a “most serious contemplation” and charging him “to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice and to regulate” his actions by the divine precepts it contains with respect to his duties to God, his neighbor and to himself. To enable us to fulfill this injunction, Masonry instructs us on how to purify our hearts from every baneful and malignant passion and fitted only for the reception of truth and wisdom, which are divine attributes of the Great Architect of the Universe. One of the various essential qualifications for the office of Master of a Lodge is that he “must be true”. The Scottish ritual includes that he must have “an earnest seeking after truth”.

An interesting diversion is the now growing habit by a few of our Brethren in ascribing such Antient Masonic symbols as “Working Tools” to banal issues, much to the disinformation and scandalization of newly made Masons and the discomfiture of senior Masons. This attitude is not in consonance with Truth. We should not ever lose sight of our being considered fit and proper for admission into Masonry based on “a tongue of good report” that indicated that we were “just, upright” men of “sound judgment and strict morals”. The Charge after Passing further admonishes us “to preserve

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our ancient usages and customs sacred and inviolable and induce others by example to hold them in veneration". We should therefore take courage and consolation that the reward for abiding by the Truth is "that when we shall be summoned from this sublunary abode, we may ascend to the Grand Lodge above, where the world's Great Architect lives and reigns forever".

### Relief:

I had identified relief as a virtue. It forms the central figure in our pyramidal icon. Masonry informs the candidate for its mysteries that the Craft "is founded on the purest principles of piety and virtue". It "prizes honor and virtue above the external advantages of rank and fortune". In the NE Corner Charge, it calls on the new initiate "to exercise that virtue which may justly be denominated the distinguishing characteristic of a Freemason's heart". W. Bro. J.S.M. Ward in 'The Moral Teachings of Freemasonry' writes that "To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, particularly Masons, who are linked together in one indissoluble chain of sincere affection; hence, to soothe the unhappy, sympathize in their misfortunes, compassionate their miseries, and restore peace to their troubled minds, is the grand aim we have in view; on this basis we establish our friendships and form our connections." To encourage this virtue, Masonry further instructs that we should "seek the solace of our own distress by extending relief and consolation to our fellow-creatures in the hour of their affliction". To our neighbor, relief enjoins us to always act towards him "on the square, by rendering him every kind office which justice or mercy may require, by relieving his necessities and soothing his afflictions, and by doing to him as in similar cases [we], would wish he would do to [us]".

These clearly define the wide expanse of the duty of relief. Relief does have some qualifications. The first is that the person to whom it is being granted must be a worthy Brother. Secondly, we are to extend relief to the utmost of our power, but without detriment to ourselves or to our connections. Relief need not necessarily imply financial or material assistance. A visit to a brother in distress to share company, proffer kind and consoling words is as much the virtue of relief as a cheque or cash gift. A brother who solicits and invites others to share a ride to visit a far-out country Lodge with dwindling membership provides an illustrious example of relief to the Brethren of the Lodge visited.

I shall briefly here allude to what I understand as "a worthy brother". He must qualify in the full meaning of the class indicated in the Constitution and Laws of the Grand Lodge as "a member in good standing". He must be seen to have abided by the recommendations in the Charge after Initiation, particularly by living "such a prudent and well-regulated course of discipline as may best conduce to the preservation of his corporeal and mental faculties in their fullest energy, thereby enabling him exert those talents wherewith God has blessed him". He must also have "dedicated himself to such pursuits as may at once enable him to be respectable in life, useful to mankind and an ornament to Masonry". In effect there must be evidence that the brother had played his part well to personally relieve himself of his needs. There is through an awareness that "man proposes, and God disposes" equally brought in the NE Corner Charge allusion to "circumstances of unavoidable calamity and misfortune" which results in want and distress among worthy brethren who had done all the good that are in the books to earn and maintain a comfortable living.

### Brotherly Love:

Masonry teaches the immutable law of the Brotherhood of Man deriving essentially and necessarily from the Fatherhood of God. Our Order strives to unite and conciliate into this true brotherhood, all men of every race, nation or creed who believe the Supreme Creator and Sustainer of the Universe and who would otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance. The expression of this amity it

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preaches and practices from time immemorial, is Brotherly Love. I had quoted J.S.M. Ward who said that:

“By the exercise of Brotherly Love, we are taught to regard the whole human race as one family –the high, the low, the rich, the poor - who, being created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, ought to aid, support and protect each other. .... To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, but particularly on Masons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection. To soothe the unhappy, to sympathize with them in their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds is the great aim we have in view. On this basis we form our friendships and establish our connections.”

Masonry classifies this expression of Brotherly Love as Charity. Charity is the greatest of all virtues. All the great religions Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism etc., recognize and encourage the duty of affording relief in aid of the less fortunate. The VSL glamorizes it in several books. In the Koran, Sura ii: 110 recommends “regularity in charity”: as whatever good we perform in charity finds favor “with God: for God sees well all that [we] do”. The same Sura in 177 includes charity as one of the indications of righteousness – “to spend of your substances, out of love for God, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask and for the ransom of slaves;” There are at least twelve references to Charity in the Koran. This is understandable in view of the third pillar of Islam being zakat, or almsgiving recognized as a religious obligation and considered an expression of devotion to God. It represents the attempt to provide for the poorer sectors of society including orphans, widows and slaves and it offers a means for a Muslim to purify his or her wealth and attain Paradise.

Another VSL in use in regular Lodges of this country is the Christian bible. It is equivalently surfeit with the beauties of Charity which in recent translations is rendered as “Love”. Peter wrote in his first letter, - “Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins”. Another passage informs us that “above all these things put on charity which is the bond of perfectness”. In the NE Corner charge the initiate is informed that he represents the foundation stone on which he is to raise a superstructure perfect in its parts and honorable to the Great Architect of the Universe. The initiate is thereupon put through a very dramatic and moving test of his Brotherly Love. The New Jerusalem Bible props up the NE Corner Charge with an appropriately relevant rendition of 1Cor 8:1 by stating that “it is love that makes the building grow”.

St. Paul who most reflects the teachings of Masonry in the VSL, took up this evidence of Brotherly Love extensively and beautifully in his writings. The highlights are particularly in the first letter to the Corinthians beginning with Chapter 13 and climaxing in the 13th verse - “the greatest of these is charity”. This is also indicated in the First Tracing Board whose explanation states that “the third and last, being Charity comprehends the whole, and the Mason who is possessed of this virtue in its most ample sense may justly be deemed to have attained the summit of his profession”. While counseling his young initiate Timothy, Paul tells him that “the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart”. In the New Jerusalem Bible, Paul used the term “brother” in 147 verses of his letters. His teachings on Brotherly Love run as if directed at Freemasons.

One of the sure evidences of Masonic insistence on Brotherly Love is gleaned from the extended address to the new initiate on being clothed with the white lambskin. He was advised on how to redress issues with a Brother with whom he may be at variance so that they may have the moral right to sit at Lodge “and work with that love and harmony which should at all times characterize

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Freemasons". All through our progress in Masonry, we are consistently reminded of the necessity of Brotherly Love. In the lecture on the first tracing board, the symbolism of Jacob's ladder is introduced in illustrating the excellence of Brotherly Love. The ladder stands on the VSL which rests on the upper part of the Circle "from which no Mason cannot err". This ladder defined as "the way by which we, as Masons, hope to "ascend to the GL above.." is composed of three principal staves or rounds – Faith, Hope and "Charity with all men....which comprehends the whole, and the Mason who is possessed of this virtue in its most ample sense may justly be deemed to have attained the summit of his profession: figuratively speaking, an Ethereal Mansion veiled from mortal eyes.." This Mansion is later in the same lecture identified as "not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens". Here the worthy translated Mason will meet "Him who would not deceive us, neither will He suffer deception".

It will not be possible to fully detail the expected requirements of the implications of Brotherly Love on our behavior. A summary injunction is "May Brotherly Love and affection ever distinguish us as men and as Masons. ... Hence we learn ... to drop a tear of sympathy over the filings of a Brother; and to pour the healing balm of consolation into the bosom of the afflicted". Brotherly Love enjoins us "to correct the irregularities of [our] less informed Brethren; to fortify their minds with resolutions against the snares of the insidious, and to guard them against every allurements to vicious practices".

Brotherly Love implies that we treat others in all respects as we would like to be treated. We should reflect on how hastily we are prone to condemn others, to confirm if we would have acted differently from what they did, had we been placed in precisely the same situation as they were.

### THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

In the Entered Apprentice Degree, the new brother is introduced to the Four Cardinal Virtues during the close of the explanatory lecture. These virtues are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice and are very briefly explained to the new Entered Apprentice. Unfortunately, these virtues have no connection to the rite of initiation experienced by the new Mason and the lecture does little to clarify their introduction at this time. From an esoteric standpoint, one must go to great lengths to manipulate these virtues to make a connection to the ritual.

Up to at least 1750, none of the early Masonic manuscripts or ritual exposures contains any reference to the Four Cardinal Virtues. Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia states, "It is probable that this peculiar part of the lectures goes back beyond the dawn of symbolic Masonry and that what we have is a distorted remnant of a much more meaningful symbolism or has been built up in modern times out of a brief and unimportant part of the old pre-Grand Lodge working." In addition, one must realize that the Masonic ritual is a combination of many ideas that have come from the distant past and woven into a ritual. Over time, ideas have been added, removed or merged with other concepts to form the current Masonic ritual. Based on the evidence, the Cardinal Virtues were not added to the Masonic ritual until after the middle of the eighteenth century. Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia suggests that the Cardinal Virtues were "taken from the Christian Church, which

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derived them from Plato and to which the Church had added the three Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity, which Freemasonry also borrowed.”

In any event, the Cardinal Virtues have intrinsic value to the Mason and are certainly essential to Freemasonry. They can stand on their own within the ritual without any direct connection to the initiate experience or to Masonic symbolism.

“Temperance is that due restraint upon our affections and passions which renders the body tame and governable and frees the mind from the allurements of vice. This virtue should be the constant practice of every Mason, as he is thereby taught to avoid excess, or the contracting of any licentious or vicious habit, the indulgence of which might lead him to disclose some of those valuable secrets which he has promised to conceal and never reveal, and which would consequently subject him to the contempt and detestation of all good Masons.” Temperance represents restraint. The Mason must control his passions and desires. He must practice restraint in all things and avoid excess. He must exercise caution in his action, speech, thought, feeling, judgment, and life.

“Fortitude is that noble and steady purpose of mind, whereby we are enabled to undergo any pain, peril, or danger, when prudentially deemed expedient. This virtue is equally distant from rashness and cowardice; and, like the former, should be deeply impressed upon the mind of every Mason, as a safeguard against any illegal attack that may be made, by force or otherwise, to extort from him any of those valuable secrets with which he has been so solemnly entrusted, and which were emblematically represented upon his first admission into the Lodge.” Courage is another name for fortitude. For the Mason, fortitude symbolizes more than physical courage. It also represents moral courage. The Mason must have the strength and ability to make a decision based upon his own moral convictions and stick to it regardless of the consequences. The Mason must exhibit the highest moral and ethical principles in his life and stand by those principles when society looks unfavorably upon those principles.

“Prudence teaches us to regulate our lives and actions agreeably to the dictate of reason, and is that habit by which we wisely judge, and prudentially determine, on all things relative to our present, as well as our future happiness. This virtue should be the peculiar characteristic of every Mason, not only for the government of his conduct while in the Lodge, but also when abroad in the world. It should be particularly attended to in all strange and mixed companies, never to let fall the least sign, token, or word, whereby the secrets of Masonry might be unlawfully obtained.” In its most comprehensive sense, prudence implies not only caution but also the ability to judge in advance the probable consequences of one’s actions. It also symbolizes wisdom in the conduct of one’s activities. Wisdom of mind and soul comes from thought, study and circumspection. It brings the Mason closer to God. Prudence reminds the Mason to reflect upon the moral and social consequences of his activities and his relationship to his Creator.

“Justice is that standard, or boundary of right, which enables us to render to every man his just due, without distinction. This virtue is not only consistent with Divine and human laws but is the very cement and support of civil society; and as justice in a great measure, constitutes the real good man, so should it be the invariable practice of every Mason never to deviate from the minutest principles thereof.” Justice symbolizes equality for the Mason. The Mason should govern his own actions, have them judged openly, and his conduct towards others should be without deception. He should undertake actions because he desires to and not because he is forced to. His actions should be unselfish and self-sacrificing.



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The Four Cardinal Virtues of Freemasonry provide a framework for daily living and serve as a guide for our relationship with God and our fellow man. Thus, these virtues are essential to Freemasonry. Perhaps this is why they are introduced in the Entered Apprentice Lecture, to provide a foundation upon which to build the lessons of Freemasonry. As new Masons we must begin to develop and strengthen these virtues, which will help us grow and develop into better men. As experienced Masons, we should constantly remind ourselves of these virtues and their importance in our lives. If we strive to perfect the Four Cardinal Virtues in our lives, we will grow closer to God, be content with our station in life, and influence society for the better.

# **Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia**

**Grand Lodge of Spain**



## **3.4- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART SEVEN**

**Provincial Education Programme  
Entered Apprentice Degree**

## Provincial Education Programme

### OPERATIVE FREEMASONRY

THE WORD "MASON" was the name of a workman in the building Craft in the Middle Ages. In England that Craft was divided into five or six branches, called by different names, such as tilers, quarrymen, wailers, setters, etc., and each one of these was separately organized with its own officers, rules and regulations; in the large centres of population they were organized as Masons' Companies, each with a building of its own, and working under the borough (municipal) ordinances which governed Companies of all the trades, arts, and professions. These branches and companies were a part of the general gild system in which the whole of Medieval work and trade was organized, and which was governed as a whole by a large body of gild laws; these laws belonged to the Law of the Realm; and since there was also in operation a body of laws enforced by the church, of authority equal to that of the state, and called The Ordinances of Religion, each gild was under a triple government: its own rules and regulations; civil laws; church laws. If some custom, rule, or symbol was preserved by a Craft, and if it continues to be in use, it does not follow that it had its origin in some practice in the work of the gild, but may have been a church practice, or a practice required by the civil law.

Among the five or six branches of the general Craft of builders was one which confined itself to architecture properly so called, which is listed among the fine arts, and the practice of which is a profession. This branch belonged to the gild system in the sense that it came under general gild laws, but in a narrower sense was not a gild but was a fraternity; because after a member of it had finished his work in one place, he moved on to another, sometimes from one country to another. The Craftsmen in this Fraternity were called Freemasons. It was from this particular branch, and not from the building craft in general, that our own Fraternity of Free & Accepted Masons descended. As a convenience, and to distinguish the first half of Masonic history from its later half, we call the workmen in the first period Operative Freemasons, and in the later period Speculative (or Accepted, or non-Operative) Freemasons, but this distinction must not be pushed very far, because as we have learned from the past half century of historical research there is not as much difference between Speculative and Operative as we once believed; in Freemasonry as a fraternity there has been an unbroken continuity from the end of the Dark Ages (about the Tenth Century) to the present time.

In order to make our history yet more intelligible we must carry the distinction between the Freemasons branch of the early building craft and other branches to a farther point. In the Fourteenth Century a number of Freemasons (though not all of them) began to organize permanent Lodges. After that date any given Freemason might or might not belong to one of those Lodges. A further step came when among the two or three hundred Lodges in Britain a few of them in London set up a Grand Lodge in 1717 A.D.; each and every regular Lodge or Grand Lodge now in the world traces its history to that Grand Lodge. The line of our history can therefore be plainly drawn: from the general Craft of Masonry (or building) at the end of the Dark Ages, through the branch of it called Freemasonry, through the permanent Lodges first set up among Freemasons in the Fourteenth Century, through the Grand Lodge set up in 1717 A.D., by a few of those permanent Lodges. We came from Medieval Operative Masonry, but we came from it along that particular path; in each year since the beginning, large areas of the building craft have remained outside the area which that path has traversed.

Architects were called Freemasons rather than Masons partly because they were in a fraternity and free to move about, partly because they worked in free-stone, and partly for a number of other and lesser reasons - the word in itself can tell us little about our history. These Freemasons designed and

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constructed the cathedrals, churches, chapels, monasteries, nunneries, palaces, guildhalls, borough halls, college buildings, forts, and other structures of a monumental type, for public purposes, which then as now, and everywhere, are architecture properly so called, and which stand far apart, almost in another world, from the simple structures of residences, stores, factories, barns, etc., which any man with normal skill and a few years of experience can learn to design and construct. The Freemasons were in a class apart from other Masons because their buildings were in a class apart from other buildings.

But it was not this superiority of the art of architecture to other building construction which alone gave Freemasons their great pre-eminence in the Middle Ages. In the long period between the end of the Dark Ages and the Reformation, in which there was a general illiteracy, and the sciences were forbidden, architecture was the only art to reach greatness, and next to the church itself it accomplished more to shape the world of the Middle Ages than any other agency - even now the Middle Ages are often represented or typified by a picture of a cathedral. Freemasons were then what specialists in the pure sciences are now, picked men, of extraordinary native ability and talents; they were given a long and severe training and education in a system of apprenticeship, and they each one had to be equally adept in engineering, geometry, building design, ornamentation, carving, sculpture - they had to be past masters in the use of stone, that grandest and most difficult of all the materials with which men have ever had to work. And since the structures which they designed and constructed were not only for public use but also in their design and ornamentation had to express the spirit and ideas of religion, government, education, and society the Freemasons built at the centre of those realms of culture because their work carried them there; for more than two centuries they were the supreme men in Britain and Europe for their intelligence, knowledge, ability, and character. No other society in the world can look back to an ancestry nobler than our own.

Our pride in that ancestry could have been almost as great as it is had the Operative Freemasons done nothing more than to carry on at a normal level of excellence the old Roman architecture, called Romanesque, which they had recovered from the wreckage of the Dark Ages; but it happens that in the Twelfth Century they made a great new discovery of their own which was so epoch-making that in the whole history of the world's architecture only one other discovery (the Greek) can be compared with it. This was their invention of the extraordinary, radically new Gothic Style. It was this style which made the cathedrals possible (1500 of them), and which after it had percolated down to such details as the design of buttons and the shape of written letters of the alphabet gave to Europe that shape, form, and colour which in all cultural matters is meant by "Medieval." It called forth a Freemason who was a new kind of man, who mastered arts and sciences not known to others at the time, a man as great in mind as in skill. That particular development within the wide expanse of the building Craft which finally led to our own Fraternity might have occurred if all architects for many generations had not been exclusively trained in the Gothic Style, but probably it would not have done so; therefore 1140 A.D., the date of the first Gothic building, is important in the history of Freemasonry.

The work of using a hammer and chisel on a block of stone was only one among many elements in the Fraternity of Freemasons. A Freemason had his family with him; if he had an apprentice that apprentice was as much a part of his own family as a foster son; the families of the Freemasons at work in the same place were grouped together in a separate quarter, or neighbourhood; the Craftsmen at work, their Lodge, and their neighbourhood, along with everything belonging to each of them, comprised the Masonic Community; and the rules and regulations, with the responsibilities of the Officers, included their Community and were not restricted to the Lodge only. Apprentices

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had training, schooling, education. Adult Craftsmen had to give as much of their time to thinking, to study, and to designing as to work with their hands, for without geometry, engineering, and carving they could do nothing. They were an organized Community, therefore there were Officers, meetings and conferences. The Community had its own funds, its own religious observances, its amusements, feasts, sports, its social life, and cared for its own injured, crippled, dead, the widows, and orphans. In the meantime, the State and the Church were never far away, and civil laws and religious ordinances entered deeply into the Freemason's daily life to shape it in many ways. Much (and the present writer would say "most") of what we now call Speculative Freemasonry was in the practice of the Fraternity eight centuries ago.

When a bishop decided to build a cathedral, he set up a board, usually, with himself at the head of it, which was called an Administration, or a Foundation. This Foundation employed a Master of Masons who was a Freemason of high reputation and after they had agreed with him on the general design of the building and on costs, they and he together made a contract. He then sent out word for Craftsmen. When a Craftsman applied, he identified himself, was examined, and if satisfactory was "signed on," his family to follow. When a sufficient number were signed up the Master called them together, and they formed themselves into a Lodge, which continued to exist as long as the work was in progress and was dissolved when the work was completed. The first act of the Lodge was to secure housing for its members and their families; its next step was to erect a building for its own use (sometimes two), which also was called the Lodge. This building was the headquarters for daily work, a meeting place, and was also sometimes used as a work room. By "Lodge" was meant a body of men organized for the sole purpose of working together as a unit, therefore when the Master had instructions for this body as a whole, he called it into Communication. The Freemasons worked according to a set of rules and regulations of their own, centuries old, among them being a number of Landmarks, and such questions of organization or of work as arose in any given Lodge were settled according to those rules; and since the same rules were in force wherever Freemasons worked, and each Apprentice and Fellow was under oath never to violate them, it was this body of rules which gave its unity and consistency to a Fraternity which had no national organization or national officers, and until the Fourteenth Century did not even have permanent local organizations, and which at the same time preserved its rules and trade secrets in the memory of its members and taught them to Apprentices by word of mouth.

In a period when Freemasons had the use of no books, handbooks, treatises, or blue-prints anything they thought, or learned, or put into practice which appeared to have permanent worth either had to be enacted on the floor of the Lodge, or else had to take an oral form. In order to preserve such things in their purity, and to guard against alteration, these forms necessarily had to be repeated over and over; such forms, thus repeated in exactly the same detail generation after generation, are what historians mean by forms, ceremonies, and symbols. If the word "symbolic" is used as a general name for the whole body of such fixed forms then it is not an exaggeration to say that there was as much of this "Symbolic" Freemasonry in the earliest periods of the Operative Freemasonry as there is now in Speculative Freemasonry; and if we are willing to hazard an over-simplification we also may say that if we grasp the eight or ten centuries of the history of Freemasonry as a whole, the only fundamental difference between Operative Freemasonry in an early century and Speculative Freemasonry now, is that a Speculative Freemason does not use Freemasonry as a means of livelihood, but for another purpose.

If we take the Twelfth Century as the great formative period of the Fraternity, and if we return to it to see what it was that among the thousands of guilds and fraternities at the time gave to the one

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Fraternity of Freemasonry the secret of surviving after other guilds had perished, and of developing into a world-wide Fraternity, the facts as given in the paragraph above show us what to look for. Whatever it was that those Freemasons learned which was to be preserved through future centuries they learned in and from their work; and once they learned it they did not put it into the form of abstract ideas, or doctrines, or books (as we do) but incorporated it into their practices and customs; instead of becoming a book, or a lecture, or a creed, it became a ceremony, or rite, or symbol. The Freemasons as men of mind stood far above the theologians, philosophers, and scholars of Britain for more than two centuries, and under "theologians" are included such men as Thomas Aquinas, Abelard, Roger Bacon, etc.; what the theologians thought, they could write down in treatises; what the Freemasons thought, they embodied in their practices, customs, and symbols. The subject of theology the Freemasons left to the theologians; they devoted their own great minds to the great subject of work, and as will be explained in detail in later chapters they were the first men in the world until that time to discover the truth about that subject. We modern Speculative Masons have therefore a double reason for looking back to the fathers and founders of our Fraternity: we give them the veneration which men give everywhere to fathers and founders; and we look up to them, as also do historians of philosophy and of theology, as having been great men of thought whose achievement as thinkers was even more epoch-making than their discovery of the Gothic Style in architecture. If they did not write down in a book the new truths about work which they discovered, it does not matter; any trained Mason can read the Ritual as easily as an open book.

The Operative Period of Freemasonry was brought to a close and gave place to the Transition Period by a series of historical events which, by one of the most extraordinary coincidences known in history, occurred within a few years of each other. Henry VIII broke Great Britain's tie with the Pope and prepared the way for the Reformation. The same King also abolished the guild system - which was followed by the Mercantile System, a period in business and finance which present - day theorists in economics find it convenient to forget! The Renaissance broke into final flower, in the form of the printing press, printed books, and changed the mental climate in Britain as much as in Europe generally. The discovery of America by Columbus opened the sluice-gates to the Age of Exploration, a wild and adventurous time in which Europe exploded itself over all the world. Gothic architecture gave way with an almost abrupt suddenness to a new style in architecture which originated in Italy and has since passed under many names, such as Classical, Neo Classical, Italian, Palladian and Wren. The old trade secrets of the Operative Freemasons could be kept secret no longer after Euclid's Geometry was published in print, along with many other lesser, old secrets in the arts and sciences. The centre of control in Freemasonry passed from the individual Freemason going here and there in his work, and from his temporary Lodges, into the permanent Lodges which were constituted under authority of manuscript copies of the Old Charges, and from them passed into the new Grand Lodge System after 1717 A.D.

### **CHALK, CHARCOAL AND CLAY**

By these three substances are beautifully symbolized the three qualifications for the servitude of an Entered Apprentice---freedom, fervency, and zeal. Chalk is the freest of all substances, because the slightest touch leaves a trace behind. Charcoal, the most fervent, because to it, when ignited, the most obdurate metals yield; and Clay, the most zealous, because it is constantly employed in man's service, and is as constantly reminding us that from it we all came, and to it we must all return. In the earlier lectures of the eighteenth century, the symbols, with the same interpretation, were given as Chalk, Charcoal, and Earthen Pan.

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### THE LEWIS OR LOUVETEAU

The words Lewis and Louveteau, which, in their original meaning, import two very different things, have in Masonry an equivalent signification - the former being used in English, the latter in French, to designate the son of a Mason.

The English word "Lewis" is a term belonging to operative Masonry, and signifies an iron cramp, which is inserted in a cavity prepared for the purpose in a large stone, so as to give attachment to a pulley and hook, whereby the stone may be conveniently raised to any height and deposited in its proper position. In this country the Lewis has not been adopted as a symbol in Freemasonry, but in the English ritual it is found among the emblems placed upon the tracing board of the Entered Apprentice, and is used in that degree as a symbol of strength, because, by its assistance, the operative Mason is enabled to lift the heaviest stones with a comparatively trifling exertion of physical power. Extending the symbolic allusion still further, the son of a Mason is in England called a Lewis," because it is his duty to support the sinking powers and aid the failing strength of his father, or, as Oliver has expressed it, "to bear the burden and heat of the day, that his parents may rest in their old age, thus rendering the evening of their lives peaceful and happy."

By the Constitutions of England, a Lewis or son of a Mason may be initiated at the age of eighteen, while it is required of all other candidates that they shall have arrived at the mature age of twenty-one. The Book of Constitutions had prescribed that no lodge should make "any man under the age of twenty-one years, unless by a dispensation from the Grand Master or his Deputy." The Grand Lodge of England, in its modern regulations, has availed itself of the license allowed by this dispensing power, to confer the right of an earlier initiation on the sons of Masons.

The word "louveteau" signifies in French a young wolf. The application of the term to the son of a Mason is derived from a peculiarity in some of the initiations into the Ancient Mysteries. In the mysteries of Isis, which were practiced in Egypt, the candidate was made to wear the mask of a wolf's head. Hence, a wolf and a candidate in these mysteries were often used as synonymous terms. Macrobius, in his Saturnalia, says, in reference to this custom, that the ancients perceived a relationship between the sun, the great symbol in these mysteries, and a wolf, which the candidate represented at his initiation. For, he remarks, as the flocks of sheep and cattle fly and disperse at the sight of the wolf, so the flocks of stars disappear at the approach of the sun's light. The learned reader will also recollect that in the Greek language "lukos" signifies both the sun and a wolf.

Hence, as the candidate in the Isiac Mysteries was called a wolf, the son of a Freemason in the French lodges is called a young wolf, or a "louveteau."

The louveteau in France, like the Lewis in England, is invested with peculiar privileges. He is also permitted to unite himself with the Order at the early age of eighteen years. The baptism of a louveteau is sometimes performed by the lodge of which his father is a member, with impressive ceremonies. The infant, soon after birth, is taken to the lodge room, where he receives a Masonic name, differing from that which he bears in the world; he is formally adopted by the lodge as one of its children; and should he become an orphan, requiring assistance, he is supported and educated by the Fraternity, and finally established in life.

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In this country, these rights of a Lewis or a louveteau are not recognized, and the very names were, until lately, scarcely known, except to a few Masonic scholars.



# **Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia**

**Grand Lodge of Spain**



## **3.5- THE TRACING BOARD OF THE FIRST DEGREE**

**Provincial Education Programme  
Entered Apprentice Degree**

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**Note: You can find the original Tracing Board text in your Entered Apprentice Ritual Book.**

### How did the Tracing Boards displayed in our Lodges originate?

In one of its “A Daily Advancement in Masonic Knowledge” the Ruapehu Lodge of Research writes:

“While the Tracing Board today, is looked upon as an ornament in the Lodgeroom, which has various designs for the Brethren to moralize upon, the main aim of a Tracing Board as used by operatives was to lay out the plan and design for the building to be constructed. We find they were in use in the old Middle East countries long before King Solomon’s Temple was planned and constructed. For example, when called upon to erect a building, Persian craftsmen worked out their scheme for the building, on a sectional lined tracing board, divided into squares by horizontal and vertical lines, each square representing either one of four bricks. The Persians used to construct their bricks in a square shape, not in oblongs as we know bricks today. Their Tracing Board was laid on the floor of their workroom so that it was possible to erect a workable model before construction on the main building commenced. If the plans were sufficiently valuable to preserve them, they were copied on a stiff paper or parchment and done up into a roll which sometimes extended out as far as 20 feet. The roll was then finished off with a piece of leather with a thong attached, this thong being long enough to bind round the roll several times and then to be tied. This type of roll seems to have been used for both the ease of carrying or for the ease of hiding should the occasion arise.

“Parchments do not appear to have been made into books until Roman times.

“A system of squared boards appears to have been passed on to the Egyptians, who were great builders in stone, particularly in the construction of pyramids, and that great wonder of the world, the Sphinx. Not only did the Egyptians use the Boards for sculpture and stonecutting, but also for their form of painting. There is also evidence that a similar method of recording plans was used in India.”

Laurence Gardner describes a “Portable Lodge” in Chapter 11 of his book “The Shadow of Solomon” indicating that the Masonic tradition of the Sinclairs of Rosslyn embraces the connected cultures of both stonemasonry and Freemasonry. He writes:

“The structural workmanship of Rosslyn Chapel is the epitome of the former, while its decorative feature is wholly emblematic of the latter. The 15th-century Chapel abounds with carved images of so many tools and symbols that became icons of the Masonic lodge tradition, and these are now artistically depicted on Tracing Boards to aid the instructional process of the Craft.”

It is often thought that the precursors of Tracing Boards were cloths that were unrolled on the floor of a lodge. Gardner writes that it is not strictly true to say that boards took the place of Floor Cloths since boards were also laid on the floor and each may be used for different ritual purposes. Gardner suggests the history of the Cloths and Boards are parallel and evolutionary.

Masonic meetings are often held in rooms that were not specifically designed for the purpose – this being particularly true for the early speculative Lodges of the 17th and 18th centuries. Indeed, taverns were often the preferred places for meetings and the four Lodges which got together on 24

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June 1717 to find the Grand Lodge of England met in The Goose and Gridiron, St Paul's Churchyard, The Crown, Lincoln's Inn Fields, The Rummer and Grapes, Channel Row, and The Apple Tree, Covent Garden. Any room chosen for a meeting had to be prepared and fitted with the appropriate trappings and furniture, and it had to be restored to normality after the meeting. [You might like to note that we still use the words "prepare" and "restore" when we have to change our Lodges around during degree ceremonies.] Everything related to creating the proper environment for a Lodge had to be portable.

One of the Tyler's functions was to mark out the form of a lodge on the floor, using chalk or what other removable markers were available. The shape was called an "oblong square" – which is somewhat ambiguous. Curiously we also use the term parallelepipedon a word which means a prism whose bases are parallelograms and which W.Bro Jim Anderson refers to as "pompous". To the basic shape may be added various Masonic symbols. As the practice became better organized instead of having to mark out and later clean up the markings and symbols, the information was marked out on a cloth which could be simply unrolled before the meeting and rolled up at its conclusion. Gardner writes:

"As the concept became more popular, Masonic symbols were added to the designs, followed by individual cloths that were attributed to the different degrees of working. .... Artists became more ambitious and, instead of bearing mere basic outlines, they transformed the cloths into artworks in their own right. This led to a situation where some Floor Cloths were so heavily worked and expensive that no one wanted to walk on them. Instead, they were hung on display like conventional paintings, which gave rise to a practical dilemma. Where was the lodge? It was on the wall!"

There may be another antecedent for this. According to W.Bro. Anderson:

"We are told (Bro R J Meekren in his *The Lodge, an Essay in Method*, AQC 61) that the primitive operative lodge was held out of doors. Echoes of this tradition are to be found in early speculative documents, and some still persist in the Lectures. To the student of folklore, says Meekren, the marking out of a ritual enclosure on the ground is a familiar and explainable practice. When lodges came to meet indoors, it would be natural for them to continue the customs they were used to out of doors. The 'enclosure had, therefore, to be formed on the floor of the meeting room'."

The problem of damaging the lodge by walking on the markings or the Floor Cloths is discussed by Harry Carr in "The Freemason at Work" in which he says it gave rise to the practice of "squaring the Lodge". He points out that it was not of the 'heel-clicking' type of precise squaring but simply a natural caution to avoid disturbing or spoiling the design. We need to remember that we are not a military order or organization and Carr comments "The practice of squaring is wholly admirable, because it adds much to the dignity of the ceremonies, so long as it is not carried to extremes."

It became the practice to deem a lodge operatively formed so long as its cloth was displayed but since different cloths related to different degrees they could not be hung permanently. But the matter of portability was still of concern, despite, according to Gardner, many lodges acquiring their own meeting halls. Above all there was the question of size. Floor Cloths were necessarily large! Gardner writes:

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“The most common practice, therefore, was to get them off the floor, but not hang them. Instead, they were draped over planks that were raised on trestles, giving rise to the term Trestle Board.”

The size was still inconvenient in the smaller lodges and caused problems with transportation. These were solved by creating smaller panels which were easier to handle than the cloth drapes and were often supported on easels – leading to the form of support for Tracing Boards common today.

Gardner says that set rules were never established for the design of Floor Cloths or Tracing Boards. They merely had to fulfil their respective functions as required for the degrees. Many and various designs have been developed. Sometimes they are complete as they stand while in other instances they allow for lines and additions to be drawn during lectures. This is, of course, a throw-back to the waxed or sand panels used by operative master masons to mark out the day’s plans for their workman.

### **FIRST DEGREE TRACING BOARD**

The First Degree Tracing Board is a collection of symbols. Robert Cooper writes in “Cracking the Freemason’s Code”:

“Each degree and branch of Freemasonry has its own special history, which is designed to impart its particular moral lessons. The first three degrees are centered on King Solomon’s Temple, how it was built, by whom and for what purpose. ... the temple has always had a special resonance for stonemasons and ... it takes pride of place in the Masonic ‘system’, having been included in the first and, for a considerable time, the only Masonic ceremonies in existence ... in them the Lodge is equated with the temple (specifically with the entrance to it, although many forget this). The Traditional History is ... allegorical, designed to convey particular messages, moral lessons and Masonic lore.”

The Lecture introduces the new Entered Apprentice to:

1. Symbolism and its importance in Freemasonry
2. The form and size of the Lodge
3. The placement of the Lodge
4. The orientation of the Lodge and its relationship to Tabernacle and Temple
5. The physical and metaphysical structure of the Lodge
6. The ornaments, furniture and jewels to be found in the Lodge
7. The virtues important to Freemasonry

### **Lecture of the First Degree Tracing Board**

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By the time the Lecture of the First Degree Tracing Board is presented to the newly initiated Entered Apprentice he has already been introduced to some of the important symbols of Freemasonry:

- The three Great Lights
- The three Lesser Lights
- The Working Tools

He has also been advised of the principal virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity and, indeed, tested on his view of them.

If he has been observant, he will have noticed some, maybe all, of the jewels which are apparent around the Lodge. Of course, if he was anything like me, he won't have noticed much because he will have been awestruck by what has taken place around him. It will come to him later and in this respect, the Lecture of the Tracing Board is intended to help him recognize and understand them.

However, the Tracing Board itself raises something of a conundrum. The newly Entered Apprentice is told that the Tracing Board is "for the Master to lay lines and draw designs on" and yet it is covered in permanent designs. How can this be? Because we would expect that such a board would be plain – and in keeping with those referred to in the introduction to this lecture.

W.Bro. Anderson explains the reason as being simple:

"... two separate boards are referred to in the Charge. The first, the real Tracing Board is a plain drawing board depicted on the first degree Board in front of the pedestal. The second, the Lodge Board, is what is usually known to us as the Tracing Board, with various symbols and emblems

"It is with the second of these boards - the Lodge Board or, as it used to be called, "The Lodge" - that we are presently concerned.

"The Tracing Boards of the three degrees, although not used in some workings, and indeed unknown in certain jurisdictions, are a significant survival from our masonic past. In a sense they epitomize a stage in the development of speculative Freemasonry, by way of accepted masonry, from the operative craft."

Let us now look at some of the symbols and meanings embodied in the Lecture of the Tracing Board of the First Degree.

The lecture commences with a commentary on symbols drawing parallels with ancient civilizations and indicating that signs and symbols were methods of communication in those civilizations. It mentions particularly the Mysteries of Ancient Egypt and the System of Pythagoras. That these two in particular are singled out probably stems from the history written in the Constitutions of Rev Dr James Anderson in 1723 the first paragraph of which reads:

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“ADAM, our first Parent, created after the Image of God, the great Architect of the Universe, must have had the Liberal Sciences, particularly Geometry, written on his Heart; for even since the Fall, we find the Principles of it in the Hearts of his Offspring, and which, in process of time, have been drawn forth into a convenient Method of Propositions, by observing the Laws of Proportion taken Year of the World 4003 before Christ from Mechanism : So that as the Mechanical Arts gave Occasion to the Learned to reduce the Elements of Geometry into Method, his noble Science thus reduced, is the Foundation of all those Arts, (particularly of Masonry and Architecture) and the Rule by which they are conducted and performed.

“No doubt Adam taught his Sons Geometry, and the use of it, in the several Arts and Crafts convenient, at least for those early Times ...”

Later he wrote:

“And, no doubt, the Royal Art was brought down to Egypt by MITZRAIM, the second Son of Ham, about six Years after the Confusion at Babel, and after the Flood 160 Years, when he led thither his Colony; (for Egypt is Mitzraim in Hebrew) because we find the River Nile 's overflowing its Banks, soon caused an Improvement in Geometry, which consequently brought Masonry much in request: For the ancient noble Cities, with the other magnificent Edifices of that Country, and particularly the famous PYRAMIDS, demonstrate the early Taste and Genius of that ancient Kingdom. Nay, one of those Egyptian PYRAMIDS is reckoned the First of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Account of which, by Historians and Travellers, is almost incredible.”

There is no doubt that Masonic symbolism was used prior to the early 18th century, but as far as I can determine this is the first reference to place it in the context of modern, speculative Masonry. This, incidentally, is an example of the romantic school of Masonic History.

Geometry is, of course, extremely important. Knowledge of the 47th Proposition of Euclid regarding the properties of a triangle containing a right angle (also know as Pythagoras' Theorem) and the properties of a circle enabled ancient builders and architects to establish levels and perpendiculars with high accuracy.

The description of the form of a Lodge is metaphorical as the Lecture endeavors to explain, encompassing the breadth of Masonic philosophy and, particularly, charity. However, the description of the oblong block or square, that is to say a prism, is perhaps more suitable for a flat earth definition and probably circles, arcs and/or radii would be more accurate.

The orientation of the Lodge is of interest apart from the obvious connection with the orientation of early temples and churches. W.Bro. W. Kirk MacNulty mentions a catechism[vii]:

“A Mason is sometimes called ‘a traveling man’, and one of the Masonic catechisms gives us a little insight into this seldom-used epithet. ‘Q. - Did you ever Travel? A. - My forefathers did. Q. - Where did they travel? A. - Due East and West. Q. - What was the object of their travels? A. - They traveled East in search of instruction, and West to propagate the knowledge they had gained’.”

The Lecture says that a Lodge should be patterned on King Solomon's Temple which itself followed the form of Moses' Tabernacle.

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MacNulty also points out that where a Tracing Board exhibits the cardinal points of a compass (N, S, E and W) the way they define the East-West direction should be understood in terms of Masonic symbolism:

“... in doing so they make some comment about the nature of the journey, which the new Mason apprentices himself to undertake. That journey from West to East is represented, symbolically, by the progress through the Masonic Degrees; and it is, in fact, the ascent up Jacob’s Ladder - one of the ‘Principal Rounds’ for each Degree.”

The next paragraph of the Lecture introduces the pillars and the first indication of the importance of the number three. The Lecture refers to the import of the pillars in a number of ways based on Wisdom, Strength and Beauty:

- Symbolic – the three attributes representing the three historic Grand Masters.
- Metaphysical – referring to the Great Architect.
- Physical – referring to architecture.

MacNulty writes that the columns represent a duality which he says is indicated on the Board: in the juxtaposition of the black and white squares of the pavement and the sun and moon (which are ancient symbols of masculinity and femininity).

“In the central area of the Board, duality is represented by two of the three columns; but here, as we rise from the fixity of the elemental existence of the physical world, the third column introduces a new idea. The striking thing about these columns is that each is of a different Order of Architecture. In Masonic symbolism, they are assigned names: Wisdom to the Ionic Column in the middle, Strength to the Doric Column on the left, and Beauty to the Corinthian Column on the right.”

Drawing an analogy with the Tree of Life from the Sephardic Kabala he writes:

“The three columns all terminate in (depend on) Divinity at the top of the central column. ... The Corinthian Pillar of Beauty is on the right, and in the classical world the Corinthian Order was thought to be suitable for buildings dedicated to vigorous, expansive activities. The Doric Pillar of Strength is on the left, and the Doric Order was used for buildings housing activities in which discipline, restraint and stability were important. The Ionic Pillar of Wisdom is in the middle. The Ionic Order is recognized as an intermediate between the other two and was used for Temples to the rulers of the gods who coordinated the activities of the pantheon. The Three Pillars, like the Tree of Life, speak of a universe in which expansive and constraining forces are held in balance by a coordinating agency.”

The Lecture delineates and gives meanings for the ornaments of the Lodge:

- The mosaic pavement which is said to represent the diversity of creation.
- The Blazing Star which refers to the sun.

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· The Indented or Tessellated Border which, surrounding the Blazing Star draws an analogy with the planets rotating around the sun.

MacNulty, however, takes a much more metaphysical view suggesting that the Ornaments represent the Renaissance concept of the unity of the system. He writes:

“The fact that the Masons who formulated our symbolism gathered these three objects into a single group seems to require that we consider them together and in relationship to each other. The Ornaments of the Lodge are the Blazing Star or Glory, the Chequered Pavement, and the Indented, Tessellated Border, and I will suggest that they are all intended to refer to the Deity. The Blazing Star or Glory is found in the center of the picture. We can be sure it is not a representation of what astronomers today would call a ‘stellar object’. Stellar objects (stars) are to be found with the Moon in the upper left of the picture. In fact, the Blazing Star or Glory is a straightforward heraldic representation of the Deity. ... [and as], shown on the First Degree board in the Heavens, represents the Deity as It is, in all Its Glory, as It projects Itself into existence. The Chequered Pavement represents the Deity as It is perceived to be at the opposite pole of consciousness, here on Earth in ordinary life. The light and dark squares represent paired opposites, a mixture of mercy and justice, reward and punishment, passion and analysis, vengeance and loving kindness. They also represent the human experience of life, light and dark, good and evil, easy and difficulty. But that is only how it is perceived. The squares are not the symbol; the Pavement is the symbol. The light and dark squares fit together with exact nicety to form the Pavement, a single thing, a unity. The whole is surrounded by the Tessellated Border, which binds it into a single symbol. In this representation on the Tracing Board, the Border binds not simply the squares, but the entire picture, into a unity. The Tassels can be thought of as representing Divine agency, which operates throughout the whole.”

The Lecture well describes the Jewels, both movable and immovable and in particular the Ashlars and needs little amplification on these matters. There are earlier references to other symbols such as Jacob’s Ladder and a Point within a Circle. It is worth quoting MacNulty on these:

“...one of the principal features of the Board, [is] the Ladder. It extends from the Scripture open on the Pedestal to the Glory, which represents the Deity; and in the Masonic symbolism, it is said to be Jacob's Ladder. We consider the ladder together with another symbol, the Point-within-a-Circle-Bounded-by-Two-Parallel-Lines which is shown on the face of the Pedestal or Altar. Why should we consider these two symbols together? Because in many early Masonic drawings they appear together as if they have some connection. Consider the Two Parallel Lines first. They, like the Doric and Corinthian columns, represent paired opposites, active and passive qualities. Why? Because in Masonic symbolism they are associated with the Saints John, and the Baptist's Day is Mid-summer, and the Evangelist's Day is Mid-Winter. In the English constitution which has de-Christianized its symbolic structure, the lines are said to represent Moses (the Prophet) and Solomon (the Lawgiver), which is substantially the same idea. The ladder with its ‘three principal rounds’, Faith, Hope, and Charity, rises to the Heavens between the two parallels.

“Now, when you look at this Point-within-a-Circle- Bounded-by-Two-Parallel-Lines together with the Ladder and its three levels you see a pattern very similar to the three columns. There are three verticals, two of which (the Lines) relate to active and passive functions while the third, the Ladder, reaches to the heavens and provides the means ‘...by which we hope to arrive there’. The ladder, which I think is a representation of individual consciousness, has ‘three principal rounds’ or levels, represented by Faith, Hope and Charity, which correspond to the three lower levels of the



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four-level Universe we observed earlier. Both the Macrocosmic 'Landscape' and the Microcosmic 'Man' share the fourth level of Divinity, represented by the Blazing Star, or Glory. Taken together the Ladder and the Point within a Circle bounded by Two Parallel Lines represent the human individual, made '....in the image of God', according to the same principles on which the Universe is based."

The Circle can also be linked with another very important symbol, namely the Compasses. The Lecture tells us that the Centre, being circumscribed by the Circle, represents a point from which a Freemason who allows himself to be so circumscribed cannot err. As the new Entered Apprentice will eventually discover this is part of the catechism associated with the opening of Lodge in higher Degrees. He has already been informed that the Compasses are "to keep us within due bounds with all mankind". He will probably already know that one of the purposes of Compasses is to inscribe a circle. Therefore, we can relate "keeping us within due bounds" to inscribing the circle, from the centre of which we cannot err. Another way of thinking of this is to think of ourselves sitting on a plane which extends to the horizon in all directions. What shape does that horizon take? We could simulate this by imagining we are sitting on a boat out of sight of land. In this sense perhaps the Point at the Centre of a Circle also tells us that our vision and aspirations should be as extensive as the horizon at our limit of sight.

Because the symbols portrayed on the Tracing Board are nearly all evident in a Lodge, the Tracing Board can truly be said to be a model of a Lodge, and if you remember in the introduction I described how floor cloths developed and were then hung on a wall, then the Tracing Board is the historical development of the Lodge "on the wall".

But the Tracing Board also conveys one further great lesson. It shows us the bases of the moral philosophy which is characteristic of and epitomises Freemasonry.

We have seen that the symbols represent concepts of the Three Great Lights, the Three Lesser Lights, the principal virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, and the cardinal virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice. The Lecture tells us that the distinguishing characteristics of a good Freemason are Virtue, Honour, and Mercy. These layouts the moral code of behavior which every Freemason is expected to observe. They are our moral philosophy. And the symbolism of the three columns – Wisdom, Strength and Beauty – offers us the structure by which we will ensure that we adhere to the code.

# **Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia**

**Grand Lodge of Spain**



## **3.6- PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND DEGREE**

**Provincial Education Programme  
Entered Apprentice Degree**

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### PREPARATION FOR THE SECOND DEGREE

The First requisite for any Candidate who wishes to be Passed to the Second Degree is to prove proficiency in the former.

During your ceremony of Passing, the WM will direct you some questions related to the Entered Apprentice Degree to test if you have indeed learned the necessary lessons of your First Degree in Masonry.

The following answers are to be memorized so you may respond to the WM when questioned; however, these questions and answers cannot be considered only a memorization exercise, but a test to you, and if you indeed understood the real meaning of the First Degree.

Anyone can memorize the answers; so, it is expected of you to actually understand their meaning and their impact in your life over the past year or so.

All the topics of the below Q&A were covered during this Education Program. Feel free to revisit previous sections to clarify any doubt you may have.

### THE "NECESSARY QUESTIONS"

1. Where were you first prepared to be made a freemason?

Answer: In my heart.

2. Where next?

Answer: In a convenient room adjoining the Lodge.

3. Describe the mode of your preparation.

Answer: I was divested of all metal and hoodwinked, my right arm, left breast, and knee were made bare, my right heel was slipshod, and a cable tow placed around my neck.

4. Where were you made a freemason?

Answer: In the body of a lodge, just, perfect, and regular.

5. And When?

Answer: When the sun was at its meridian.

6. In this country, Freemasons lodges being usually held in the evening, how do you account for that, which at first view appears a paradox?

Answer: The earth constantly revolving on its axis in its orbit round the sun, and freemasonry being universally spread over its surface, it necessarily follows that the sun is always at its meridian with respect to freemasonry.

7. What is freemasonry?

Answer: A peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols.

8. Name the grand principles on which the order is founded.

Answer: Brotherly love, relief, and truth.

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9. Who are fit and proper persons to be made freemasons?

Answer: Just, upright, and free men, of mature age, sound judgement, and strict morals.

10. How do you know yourself to be a freemason?

Answer: By the regularity of my initiation, repeated trials and approbations, and a willingness at all times to undergo an examination when properly called on.

11. How do you demonstrate that proof to others?

Answer: By signs, tokens, and the perfect points of my entrance.

### THE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

(The following questions are not commonly made to Candidates on their Passing, but may be made by the WM or any other brother at their discretion)

12. What are the three great emblematical lights of freemasonry?

Answer: The Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses.

13. What is the importance of the three great emblematical lights?

Answer: The Sacred Writings are to rule and govern our faith, the square to rule our actions, and the compasses to keep us in due bounds with all mankind.

14. What are the names of the Three Lesser Lights in a freemasons' lodge, where are they situated and what is their purpose?

Answer: The sun, in the South, to rule the day; the moon in the west, to govern the night; and the Master, in the East to rule and direct his lodge.

15. What is the principal lesson of the Entered Apprentice Degree, and how should it be applied.

Answer: The principal lesson of the First Degree is Charity, and to embrace the opportunity of practicing charity to anyone in distress.

16. What are the three working tools of an Entered Apprentice?

Answer: The 24-inch gauge, the common gavel, and the chisel.

17. What do the working tools symbolize?

Answer: The 24-inch gauge represents the hours of the day, the common gavel the force of conscience, and the chisel the advantages of education.

18. What two subjects can never be discussed in a freemason's lodge?

Answer: Religion and politics.

19. What are the four cardinal virtues?

Answer: Prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice.

20. What are the sacred dictates inculcated in a freemason's lodge?

Answer: Truth, honour, and virtue.