

Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia

Grand Lodge of Spain



EDUCATION PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR THE MASTER MASON

**Provincial Education Programme
Master Mason Degree**

Provincial Education Programme

Dear Brother,

Congratulations on being Raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason in your Lodge. You have completed the three degrees in Craft Freemasonry. You have just gone through an ancient and archaic ceremony, and you have taken solemn oaths and obligations as a newly Raised Master Mason.

As part of the Provincial Education Program, you will receive certain material from the Lodge Preceptor or Education Officer about the Third Degree and Freemasonry.

As a newly Raised Master Mason you will likely have questions about Freemasonry and the Third Degree. Over the coming months you will be provided with several papers and texts covering basic aspects of Freemasonry in the Third Degree.

The **Master Mason Education Programme** is divided in 12 sections (3 on the reduced version), each one delivered in the course of 1 month following your Raising Ceremony.

At some future, you may be asked to memorize the Working Tools Lecture, which was given to you during your Raising, and then present this lecture during a subsequent Raising Ceremony.

As a Master Mason you are entitled to visit other lodges in Spain and in other Grand Lodges recognized by the Grand Lodge of Spain. The Lodge Secretary can provide you with information about other Lodges and their meeting times and make the initial communication on your behalf if you decide to visit a lodge of another Grand Lodge.

Again, hearty congratulations on being made a Master Mason. If you have any questions please get in touch with the lodge Preceptor, or a senior brother.

Best fraternal regards,

The Provincial Learning and Development Committee.

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1.1- BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

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As practiced today, Master Mason is the third and last Degree in the Masonic Blue Lodge. This Degree was originally called the "Summit of Ancient Craft Masonry." The whole system of Craft Masonry is intended to present the symbolic idea of man's pilgrimage on earth.

The First Degree is often referred to as a representation of youth, of the period of learning, or the time for the purification of affections, as the period of preparation for advancement into higher spheres of life here on earth. The Second Degree is often referred to as the representation of the period of adult life, of manhood, a time for increased and enlarged learning and of work. The Third Degree is referred to as symbolic of mature life, of ripened experiences, and a time of continued activities, but of decrease in toil and laborious endeavor. That there should be continued increase in knowledge and wisdom is a prime goal.

But it is also a period of heavier responsibilities in many respects, of trials, of sufferings, and of inevitable termination in Death. Foremost in the conceptions of this period of life is that it is a time of waiting by the wearied workman for the word of the Grand Master of the Universe which will summon the Master Mason from the labors of earth to the central refreshments of heaven.

For these reasons, and because of the superlative beauty and significance of the Ritual, the Ceremonies, and the Symbols of the Degree, it is called "The Sublime Degree Of Master Mason."

As an Entered Apprentice, the Mason is taught those elementary instructions which fit him for further advancement in his Masonic career, just as the youth is taught those elementary rudiments of education which prepare him for entering upon the active duties of Life.

As a Fellowcraft, the Mason is taught to continue his investigations into the science of the Ancient Fraternity, and to labor diligently in the tasks prescribed by the Order, just as a man is required to enlarge his mind by the acquisition of new ideas and to extend his labors for the welfare of his fellowmen.

As a Master Mason, he is taught the last, the most important, and the most necessary of all Truth, that having been faithful to all his Trusts, he is at last to die, and to receive the reward of his Fidelity. Foremost of all the Truths taught and emphasized in this Degree is the immortality of the soul of man, and the certainty of the Resurrection of his body to Eternal Life.

The whole scope of the Ritual, and the ultimate of the symbols of the Master Mason Degree place supreme emphasis upon the Truth that when a man's life has spent itself on earth, has passed away as the fleeting shadows, his soul returns to God who gave it and his body which returns to dust will be Raised, incorruptible and glorified and qualified for entrance into the Grand Lodge of the Celestial City of God. By the instructions of the Notable Legend and of the entire Ritual, it is implied that we have been redeemed from the death of sin and the sepulcher of pollution. The Master Grip of the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" brings ultimate triumph to every true, tested, tried and faithful Master Mason.

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1.2- THE TEACHINGS OF MASONRY FOR THE MASTER MASON

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You have now had conferred upon you the First and Second Degrees of Ancient Craft Masonry. And while you have yet to reach the climax of your journey in the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, already you have discovered that Freemasonry has a certain teaching of its own, and to expound on this is one of the principal functions of the Ritual.

You have likewise discovered that Masonry's method of teaching is unlike that of the schools. Instead of employing teachers and textbooks and lessons in didactic form, expounding its teaching in words, Freemasonry uses Ritual, symbol, and allegory. This is not as easy to follow as the schoolroom method but has this great advantage; it makes a Mason study and learn for himself, forces him to search out the truth, compels him to take the initiative, so that the very act of learning is of educational value. The purpose of secrecy is not to keep a candidate in the dark, but to stimulate him to seek the light; the symbols and emblems do not conceal the teaching, they reveal it, but in such a manner that a man must find it for himself. Only when a man finds truth for himself is it likely to remain a permanent possession.

A few interpretations of Masonic teachings can only suggest what you will find by your own efforts, how you will find it, and where. Necessarily there can be no exhaustive exposition of Masonic truth, because in its nature it is something each man must discover for himself.

Freemasonry is devoted to Brotherhood, exists to furnish opportunities to its members to enjoy it not only for its own sake but as a means to something beyond. Brotherhood rests on a religious basis; we are all brothers because God is the Father of us all; therefore, religion is one of the foundations of Masonry.

Masonry is dedicated to God, the Great Architect of the Universe. An altar at the center of every Lodge room bears the Holy Bible open upon it. Lodges begin and end their meetings with prayer. When Freemasonry obligates a candidate, he must be upon his knees. Petitioners must believe in God. All this is genuine religion, not a formal religiousness; it is sincerely held and scrupulously upheld, and without this basic the Craft would wither and die like a tree with roots destroyed.

But this religion of Masonry, like all its teachings, is not set forth in written creeds; the Mason must come upon it for himself and put it in such form as will satisfy his own mind, leaving others to do likewise. This is Masonic tolerance, one of the prime principles of the Craft, and protected by the Old Charge which forbids all sectarian discussion in our assemblies.

Masonry teaches the necessity of morality, requiring its member to be good men and true, righteous when tried by the Square, upright when tried by the Plumb, their passions kept in due bounds by the Compass; just in their dealings with their fellows, patient with the erring, charitable, honorable. A candidate must possess such a character as indicated to be qualified for admittance, and a Mason must persevere in it to retain his right to membership.

Through the agency of the Lodge and of the Grand Lodge each of us gives support to the charities maintained by both. Also, each of us should privately extend a helping hand in relief of an unfortunate brother, or of his dependents. Masonry does not advocate a charity carried to the limits of fanaticism; it is limited by the extent of ability and opportunity, and we are not asked to give relief to the injury of ourselves or hardship to our families.

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Another of Masonry's great teachings is Equity, symbolized by the Level. This does not represent that doctrine which would erase all distinctions. There are no duplicates in Nature. Equity is, rather, the principle that we owe good will, charity, tolerance, and truthfulness equally to all, and that within our Fraternity all men travel the same road of initiation, take the same obligations, pay the same dues, and have the same duties, rights and privileges.

The Mason is a good citizen, loyal to his government and just to his country, conducting himself as a wise and moral man, remembering in all things that he has in his keeping the good name of his Fraternity.

These teachings are bound together in an organic unity by the nature and needs of the Brotherhood for the sake of which the whole system of the Craft exists. To endure through all vicissitudes, and to satisfy our natures, Brotherhood must have a spiritual basis, hence the importance of our conception of religion. Brotherhood requires that men must be held together by unbreakable ties, hence the necessity for morality, which is a name for the forces that bind us together in ethical relations. Differences in beliefs and opinions must not rupture these bonds, hence the need for tolerance. Men cannot easily come together except when they have the same rights and privileges, hence the necessity of equality. They cannot work together unless all understand the work to be done, hence the need of enlightenment. They will not be drawn together unless they are filled with that spirit of good will which necessarily expresses itself in charity and relief. And Brotherhood cannot exist except in a nation which admits of it, hence the need for Masons to be good citizens. Through all the teachings of Masonry run these principles which lead back to the conception and practice of Brotherhood; from the conception all teachings emerge, to it all come in the end. Gain a clear understanding of that and you will have that secret by which all else is made plain.

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1.3- AN INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL OF THE THIRD DEGREE

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You have been raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. It is indeed a "sublime" Degree, which a man may study for years without exhausting.

Any interpretation must necessarily be a hint only; yet a hint may stimulate man to reflect upon it for himself and to study it more thoroughly in the future.

In the First and Second Degrees you were surrounded by the symbols and emblems of architecture; in the Third Degree you found a different order of symbolism, cast in the language of the soul--its life, its tragedy and its triumph. To recognize this is the first step in interpretation.

The second step is to recognize that the Third Degree has many meanings; it is not intended to be a lesson, complete within itself, but rather a pointing out of paths, a new department, a series of inspiration, like a great symphony, drama or picture to which one may evermore return to find new meanings, new beauties and new truths.

There are many interpretations of the Degree; but essentially .it is a drama of immortality of the soul, setting forth the truth that while a man's body withers away and perishes, the man, himself, perishes not.

That this is the meaning most generally adopted by the Craft is shown by our habits of language; we say that a man is "initiated", an Entered Apprentice; "passed", a Fellow Craft; and "raised", a Master Mason. By this it appears that it is the raising that most Masons have found at the center of the Master Mason's Degree.

Evil in the form of tragedy is set forth in the drama of the Third Degree. Here is a good and wise man, a builder, working for others and giving others work, the highest we know, as it is dedicated wholly to God; a man who through no fault of his own experiences' tragedy from friends and fellow Masons. Here is evil pure and unhallowed, a complete picture of human tragedy.

How did the craft meet this tragedy? The first step was to impose the supreme penalty on those who had possessed the will to destroy and therefore had to be destroyed lest another tragedy follow. The greatest enemy man has makes war upon the good; to it no quarter can be given

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

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

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

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Let us imagine a genuinely good man who has been the victim of the most terrible of tragedies, one caused by the treachery of friends. This treachery has brought destruction upon the foundation of his life, his home, his reputation, his ability to earn a livelihood. How can he be raised above the clutch of such circumstances? How can he emerge a happier man than before? By his spirit rising to the level of forgiveness, of resignation, of self-sacrifice, refusing to stoop to retaliation or to harbor bitterness. In such a spirit the truest happiness is found.

The secret of such a power is in the Third Degree, symbolized by the Word. If that Word is lost a man must search for it' if a man possesses that word, he has the secret of the Masonic Art. To rise to the height of spiritual life is to stand on a level above the reach of tragedy or the powers of evil. To have the spirit rest in God, to have a sincere and unvarying faith in truth and goodness, is the inner secret of a Master Mason, to teach which is the purpose of the Third Degree.

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1.4- THE MASTER MASON

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THE MASTER MASON

In the third ceremony in Craft masonry, a brother is raised to the 'Sublime Degree of a Master Mason'. It is indeed a 'Sublime' Degree, which, as a full member of the Craft, a Mason may study for years without exhausting it.

Any interpretation in this article must necessarily be a hint only. Yet a hint may stimulate a Mason to reflect upon it himself, and to study it more thoroughly in the future.

In the First and Second Degrees, the candidate was surrounded by the symbols of architecture, nature and science. In the Third Degree a different order of symbolism is found, cast in the language of the soul – it is life, tragedy and triumph. To recognize this is the first step in interpretation.

The second step is to recognize that the Third Degree has many meanings. It is not intended to be a complete lesson in itself, but rather a signpost pointing out paths to follow, a new departure in the form of an awakening of all the faculties. It is like the unfolding of a drama, or a work of art or symphony to which one may evermore return to find new significance and implications.

The Third Degree is indeed a drama. It is the drama of the immortality of the soul. It sets forth the truth that whilst man withers away to crumble and decay, there is deep within him that something that will never perish.

So, what does this 'Raising' ceremony of the Third Degree signify? To have the answer to this question is to have found the key to open up all the meanings of the Degree.

The life of a man is organized into a number of groups of experience. Some of these experiences are incidental to our passage through time, from childhood, through manhood to old age.

The most difficult of all to deal with is that made up of the evils of life, such as hard experiences, sin, defeat, suffering, disease, pain, loss of friends or fortune, enmity, treachery, crime, wickedness, sorrow and death.

Herein lie our greatest problems, our most trying ordeals and severest tests. If we can find the wisdom to deal with these, if we can triumph over and solve these problems, our characters will be secure, our happiness assured.

Evil, in the form of a tragedy, is set forth in the drama of the Third Degree. Here we witness a good and wise man, a builder, working for others, and giving others work. This is work of the highest order, dedicated wholly to God. Through no fault of his own, he experiences tragedy from those he would call his friends and his fellow Masons.

Here is pure and absolute evil – a complete picture of human anguish and sorrow. The ritual explains how the Craft dealt with this tragedy. The first step was to impose the supreme penalty on those who had possessed the will to destruction. Therefore, they had to be slain, lest further tragedy would follow.

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Hence, we learn the great truth that the greatest enemy man has makes war upon the good of mankind. Our response to such heinous crimes is that no quarter can be given. Throughout history, sound and proper justice has, and never will permit, any compromise.

What of the victim of the tragedy? Here is the most difficult and profoundest lesson of the drama of the Third Degree. It is difficult to understand, and difficult to believe without a true understanding of the implications of a spiritual life.

Because the victim was a good man, his integrity rooted in an unvarying faith in God, that which destroyed him in one sense, could not destroy him in another. This is because the spirit in him rose above the reach of evil, and by virtue of that he was raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular.

What is the lesson to be learnt here? Let us imagine the case of a genuinely good man who has become the victim of the most terrible tragedy, one that has been caused by the treachery of his friends. This deceit has brought devastation upon the foundations of his life, upon his home, his reputation, even his ability to earn a living.

How can he be raised above the clutch of such destruction to his circumstances? How can he ever emerge a happier man, having endured such an ordeal? This is achieved by the effect of his spirit rising to the level of forgiveness, or resignation, or even self-sacrifice, by refusing to stoop to retaliation, or even to harbor thoughts of bitterness.

In such a spirit, the truest and most profound human happiness in the circumstances can be found. The secret of such power is in the Third Degree, symbolized by the tragedy of Hiram Abiff. It is the climax of the Craft ceremonies of Freemasonry. It stirs men to serve the truth by steadfastly maintaining their noblest aspirations even in the face of appalling adversity, out of which can rise a more perfect tribute to our Masonic ideals.

Next in importance, and in many ways equal in interest, is the strange and captivating 'search for that which was lost'.

This has an historical background. To the early Jewish people, frequently a name was peculiarly identified with a person. It was held in reverence. Hence it was often secret. Hence a substitute name was used in daily life. In particular the name of God was held in extreme reverence. This holy name was never pronounced above a whisper.

After a while it was only spoken by the High Priest, and then only when alone in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. It is understood that at the time of the Babylonian captivity, the High Priest was killed before he had the opportunity to pass the word on to his successor. Hence 'the word' was lost.

All this appears in the ritual in the form of a story or fable, called an allegory. So why does the ritual not explain fully and clearly the meaning of this symbolism? This is one of the genuine mysteries of the Third Degree, which leaves the candidate to find out the meaning for himself. It provides him with one of the most important challenges in his career as a Craft Freemason.

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Freemasonry's brotherly love began with the close ties of our forefathers – the operative Masons. Living together, working together, planning together and protecting each other soon made men learn to love each other.

Through their early and simple ritual, it may well be that the Five Points of Fellowship had its origin. It would have united them in one sincere bond of fraternal affection. We can summarize this remarkable concept as follows:

In stretching forth the hand of friendship, and a pledge of brotherly love to render him assistance.

It pledges us to support a brother in all his praiseworthy undertakings and are reminded that we should press forward in the exercise of charity and kindness to a distressed fellow creature, whether Freemason or not.

A brother, when at prayer, in his devotions to Almighty God should always remember another brother's welfare as his own, when the petition and prayer for self intermingles with aspirations of benevolence for a friend.

It demonstrates that a brother's lawful secrets when entrusted to us, we should keep as our own. If he confides to us a secret, we are made keepers of his trust as well as his secret. To betray a trust is not the act of a brother Freemason.

We should never revile a brother's character behind his back but, rather when attacked by others, support and defend it. "Speak no ill of the dead, since they cannot defend themselves".

A Master Mason's rights and privileges are to be described in principle and in spirit rather than in detail. Beyond all specific duties, rights and privileges, exists a region in which all are mingled together – the whole domain of Masonry's teachings, ritual and symbols, history, ideals of jurisprudence, philosophy, literature – the whole Royal Art.

It is his right to be taught that Art, and have it in its fullness, none of it being reserved for a privileged few. It is his to enjoy all the privileges it offers to the spirit, the mind and heart. All that Freemasonry is, all that it means, all that it has to give or offer, belongs to every individual Mason in the same way and to the same extent as to all others.

However onerous one's duties may prove to be, or however rigidly rights may at times appear to be regulated, such burdens sink into nothingness by comparison with this one privilege: that Freemasonry, in all its height, breadth, length and richness, belongs to you, to use and enjoy.

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1.5- THE NEWLY RAISED MASTER MASON

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THE NEWLY RAISED MASTER MASON

True Antient Freemasonry consists of three degrees, and three degrees only. As all three degrees have been conferred upon you, thus making you a Master Mason, you are now entitled to an explanation concerning the peculiar nature of these ceremonies. Reference to the Ritual of the three degrees, plus the accumulation of educational material provided by Grand Lodge and your own Lodge will enable you to appreciate the connection of our whole system, and the interdependence of its several parts. But it must be remembered that the information which has been and is now being given to you of necessity barely scratches the surface and cannot constitute any more than a single stone in the foundation of your future Masonic knowledge.

In retrospect, you were admitted to Freemasonry in the Entered Apprentice Degree in a state of helpless indigence, to inculcate a useful lesson of natural equality and mutual dependence; then in the Fellowcraft Degree, you were urged to cultivate "with the most diligent care and attention" those wondrous faculties with which God has endowed the being created after His own image; finally, in this Degree, you symbolically passed through the valley of the shadow of death to a purified resurrection. Thus each degree, while supplementing and complementing the others, had its own general theme. These may be stated here respectively as Moral, Intellectual, and Spiritual.

From the beginning to the final act, the Temple of Solomon loomed large in the drama as you were conducted successively from your first entrance between the Two Great Pillars at the Porch or Entrance up the winding stairs to the Middle Chamber, and finally even into the Sanctum Sactorum itself, in a state of darkness which served only to express that gloom which the eye of human reason cannot penetrate unless assisted by the Light which is from above. While in that cloud of darkness you were made to represent the central figure in a tragedy wherein certain mysterious secrets were said to be lost, and a noble individual died in order that Virtue might live.

That magnanimous being was Hiram Abiff, "a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali". That tribe's territory bordered that of Tyre, and his father had been a man of that country. In the Second Book of Chronicles, Chapter 2, he is described thus ". . . skillful to work in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out any device which is put to him . . ." In other words, a Prince of Builders, able to design and to draft, make or create, anything and everything which goes into or onto even the noblest of structures, whether for practical or ornamental purposes. By his description as recorded above he is eminently fitted to be the Operative ideal of all Speculative Master Masons.

Of course, the Hiram Legend as used by us is purely allegorical; we are not necessarily dealing either with a tangible building or with literal history. The Temple of Solomon symbolically represents your own character; the Three Great Pillars: Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, embody your personal ideal for a philosophy of life; Hiram Abiff is not dead, but lives on as your immortal soul. The "genuine secrets" were lost to us through the inability of fallible human beings to resist temptation, as related in the Volume of the Sacred Law in the account of the Garden of Eden. For us, their substitutes are the Grand Principles upon which Freemasonry is founded, namely Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, principles which you are charged to inculcate, that they may be always maintained and ever renewed, to the glory of the Most High and the benefit of mankind.

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To sum up, Freemasonry is a way of life, and to inculcate this has been the main purpose of your progress through the three degrees. If you and I are the better for our association with the Craft, then the ceremonies through which we have passed will not have been conducted in vain. If, through these rituals, we have been inspired to renew our dedication to the lofty ideals represented by the Order, and to practice both in private and in public life the duties we have been taught in Freemasonry, then the high purpose of the Institution will have been fulfilled, and as a result the World will to that extent have become a better habitation for mankind. To achieve these things is the fundamental aim of Freemasonry.

It is hoped that your recent experiences will have helped to kindle within you a curiosity concerning the Craft, together with the determination to discover even more about it, its' history, its' meaning and its' purpose, so that eventually you may become known and accepted, not only as a Master Mason, but as a Master among Masons.

The Worshipful Master, Officers and Members of your Lodge bid you welcome to full status in the Fraternity. May you find in Freemasonry that which you came to seek and may the genuine tenets of the Craft ever prove to be a source of refreshment and inspiration to you.

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1.6- LIFE AS A MASTER MASON

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LIFE AS A MASTER MASON

As a new Master Mason, it is hoped that you will wish, in a short while, to embark on an exciting ladder of progression within your Lodge, culminating in years to come with your installation as Worshipful Master. To be installed as Worshipful Master of his Lodge, is the pinnacle of a man's Masonic career.

But for the moment, you would be well advised to remember the motto of Grand Lodge 'Audi, Vide, Tace' meaning 'Watch, Learn and Listen' for these are key words not only for newly made masons, but for us all.

You should now be in possession of a Book of Ritual and should not be embarrassed to ask your Mentor or, in his absence, more experienced members of the Lodge what passages actually mean, if their meaning is not clear to you.

Try to make occasional visits to other lodges, as each lodge approaches the ritual in a different manner, some of which are most interesting and original.

Volunteer to undertake Stewarding duties if the opportunity arises, as this helps you get to know the other Brethren in your Lodge.

In many Lodges, new Brethren are encouraged to do small pieces of work, such as the explanation of the Working Tools, on the floor of the Lodge.

Mention to the Lodge Director of Ceremonies that you would be interested in learning and delivering a small piece of ritual. You may well wonder at the long pieces of ritual committed to memory by some Brethren which are then delivered on the floor of the Lodge, in front of an audience, with great aplomb

– remember, each one of those Brethren probably started his Masonic career learning just such a short piece of ritual as you will do.

Be interested in everything that is going on in your Lodge. Become involved as an active and useful member, but do not overburden yourself. The true test is always – am I still enjoying myself?

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1.7- SYMBOLIC EXPLANATION OF THE CEREMONY OF RAISING

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Symbolic Explanation of the Ceremony of Raising

It was no doubt obvious from the outset that this Ceremony is the most dramatic of the three through which you have progressed. It is also the one that has the deepest meanings, so take time to review the Ceremony. In the Exhortation you were encouraged to reflect on the previous degrees in order to prepare yourself for the teachings of this degree. You are told that its peculiar objects are to reflect on death. This is so, and no doubt forms an appropriate conclusion to the study of yourself that is encouraged in the Charge. The ceremony teaches us to die with honor and courage and expresses our hope for life after death. Death is inevitable and we learn to meet it face on, with dignity. However, there is so much more to the meaning of the ceremony and reflection over time will lead you to consider many points.

You are introduced to the legend of King Solomon, King Hiram and Hiram Abif. Clearly there is a genuine secret that they possess, but which is lost following the death of Hiram Abif. A highly dramatic and poignant moment occurs when you represent him, following which you are Raised on the Five Points of Fellowship. You should discuss in detail with your Mentor the Five Points of Fellowship, as they are not only a key part of this degree, but also of the whole Masonic structure.

Through your preparation in the earlier two degrees you are now capable of being raised to a new sublime level of speculative thinking.

This will lead you to consider why you need to improve yourself. The purpose of improvement lies in a personal need to search for that Supreme Being, for whom you have been in the process of creating the Temple. Through our work and especially through the Light received from the Volume of the Sacred Law, we are now able, on the center, to contemplate this most important of matters.

Now you have been raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, it means that you are permitted to take part in all of the ceremonies of Craft Freemasonry with the exception of the Esoteric Board of Installed Masters.

With due diligence and careful preparation, that will surely come in the fullness of time.

Applying the Principles to our Everyday Lives

The ceremony seeks to demonstrate a noble principle, that often it is better to die rather than be subjected to any falsehood and dishonor. This was dramatically shown when you became the representative of one who did just that.

It also taught you loyalty to your fellow men; a sense of not wishing to let them down. However, you have been made aware this loyalty must never be misplaced, for whilst you have promised to keep the Masonic secrets safe, you always have an overriding obligation to act as a dutiful citizen and obey both the civil and moral law.

As quoted in an earlier degree, you need to do your duty to God, your neighbor and to yourself. By now you should realize that there is a strict code of conduct to which all Masons are required to adhere in their everyday lives.

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1.8- COMMENTARY ON THE THIRD DEGREE CEREMONY

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Commentary on the Third Degree Ceremony

This presentation of the ceremony starts when the Inner Guard, as if having enquired of the Tyler about the candidate, says he will report to the Worshipful Master. On this occasion the obligation ought to be given in full except for the affirmation and sealing. When there is a dialogue between the Senior Deacon and the Wardens only one of the Wardens needs be involved each time. This presentation ends with the explaining of the tools. No one present takes any part in the ceremony except the designated officers and everyone else remains seated throughout. What now follows are the points when there is a Pause whilst an explanation is given of what has just taken place.

1st Pause: When the Worshipful Master has asked the Inner Guard if he can vouch for the candidate and the Inner Guard has said, 'I do, Worshipful Master'.

Commentary: The powerful aid which the candidate here is said to possess consists first, as in the previous degrees, of the 'help of God'. This repeated emphasis on the necessary assistance that only a Supreme Being can provide is surely enough to question the repeated claim that the Craft degrees are simply concerned with encouraging moral endeavor. The awareness of, and reliance on, an active Divine power in our lives is a constant part of what being a Freemason means.

This truth about our Society, the name we were given in the first degree, is underlined by the description of this degree as 'sublime'. This means that we are to be admitted to special experiences of an uplifting nature. We may not reach the goal first intended in this degree, and stated by the Junior Warden in the opening, the genuine secrets, but at least we know that the full circle of God's plan for us is meant to be revealed somewhere that we may attain because we have the help of the compasses and not just the square. The G. A. O. T. U. is calling us to be fellow architects of our destiny as men and as Masons.

2nd Pause: When the Candidate has stood up after prayer.

Commentary: This ceremony begins with a recognition of the Architect and Ruler of the Universe. Yet we do not simply acknowledge our Creator. We seek his 'grace' or divine aid so that we may share 'the mysterious secrets' of a Master Mason. Let us note that there is no mention here of any 'substituted secrets'.

The prayer further seeks divine assistance in passing through the experience of death so that there may be a rising from the 'tomb of transgression'. This may pose a question or two for us since what is described here does not properly fit what we know is to follow. The words speak of a dead person's emergence from a tomb and not a grave, and the tomb moreover of one who had done wrong rather than one to whom wrong was done. Yet no candidates actually die in this ceremony and Hiram is accredited with more significance than he merits. Was this prayer perhaps first compiled for a form of ceremony somewhat different to our present one? On the other hand, mention of an 'hour of trial' does fit very well with what is to follow.

3rd Pause: At the end of the third perambulation when the Senior Warden says, 'Pass, T.....n'

Commentary: We are so used to having this Password that it may never occur to us to question its relevance to this degree. What do 'the first Artificer in Metals' or 'Worldly Possessions' have to do

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with what we know takes place later? If one suggests that Hiram Abiff supervised the casting of the pillars, B.....z and J.....n, then surely this Password belongs more fittingly to the first or second degree. It is interesting therefore to discover that in French exposures of this degree from 1743-1751 we read: 'The Password of the Apprentice is T.....n, of the second degree is Sh.....th and of the third degree G.....m'. For those further qualified in Masonry it will be seen that an alteration of words took place later and so a gap appeared in the third degree. Was the password 'T.....n' adopted to fill that gap?

Moreover 'Worldly Possessions' also fits the first degree best as a reminder of what we have to surrender as we enter the Craft. These alterations suggest that this degree is not the complete one that once it was.

4th Pause: When the 'proper steps' to the East have been taken and the candidate stands before the pedestal.

Commentary: We perhaps need to be reminded, as was pointed out in the first degree, that the steps for reaching the East are not regular ones although they have some 'proper significance'. What matters is that we recognize that we are passing over a grave in roughly the form of a square and from then on can proceed with renewed confidence.

It may be of interest to learn that in some Lancashire lodges, as no doubt elsewhere, the old custom of having a Brother actually lying in the shroud as the candidate passes over him is still practiced. You then learn to lift your legs as you cross where a body lies. After the candidate has moved forward the recumbent Brother removes himself so as to leave the space for the new Master Mason. In other places, such as at Spilsby and Barnstaple, a real cavity in the floor of the lodge is at this point opened up.

5th Pause: At the close of the obligation and before the affirmation with sealing by the lips.

Commentary: As appropriate for so 'sublime' a degree the obligation is both long and detailed. The Deity is addressed as the 'Most High' and the lodge is additionally described as 'duly constituted', suggesting that it was originally created as a separate body from the operative lodge. This is correct historically because, as we learnt earlier, the working site lodge was composed of Fellows and ruled over by a Warden. The Master Mason did not appear in that lodge.

The reference to 'within the length of my Cable-tow' is fully explained in Bernard Jones's Compendium. It may well have meant originally a distance of some 3 miles or as far as a Mason could be expected to walk to lodge. Today it means as far as reasonable circumstances permit. Its original use leads us back into Noachic Masonry, but that is another story.

The most distinctive section of this obligation refers to the F. P. O. F. about which more will be said shortly but this part of our tradition dates from at least the 18th Century or possibly earlier. It may interest you to know that in early French working it was 'cheek to cheek', rather than breast to breast, and in a working in London in the 1730s there were six points of Fellowship because the sixth was the whispering of the word in the ear.

6th Pause: When, the sealing being omitted, the emblems on the Volume of the Sacred Law have been indicated and the Worshipful Master says, 'Rise, newly obligated Master Mason'.

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Commentary: Mention was made at the entrance of the candidate for this degree that he came with the aid of the compasses and here he is shown that they are now made available for his use. It is worth pointing out that the compasses were the tool of a working Master Craftsman who was skilled enough to create curved items such as keystones and arches. Here, of course, for Free and Accepted Masons, it means that we can begin to embrace all that Freemasonry has to offer, especially when we shall have discovered the point within a circle in the fully completed Master Mason degree.

7th Pause: After the words in the Exhortation, 'equal to the stain of falsehood and dishonor', have been said.

Commentary: This passage of ritual is, when thoughtfully considered and rendered, one of the highlights of this degree. It consists of a review of the path which the new Master Mason has previously taken. What needs to be again emphasized is that whilst the moral efforts of a Brother are described, the aim and goal of all his doings is 'above all to bend with humility and resignation to the will of the Great Architect' and 'to dedicate one's heart to (God's) glory' as well as 'the welfare of our fellow mortals'.

Even when, in the second degree, our intellectual faculty is engaged, it is to lead us to 'the throne of God himself and it is to that presence, and with that aid, that we are to face even death. It is here worth remembering that the 'Throne of God' in the Temple of Solomon was the golden plate on the top of the Ark of the Covenant in the Sanctum Sanctorum. That is where Masons are meant finally to discover themselves, as the seal of our Grand Lodge on their certificates suggests.

8th Pause: When the candidate has been lowered to the ground after the Worshipful Master says, '...lifeless at his feet.'

Commentary: The story here told is so familiar that we can be forgiven for not always realizing its significance. Although the Temple of Solomon was not completed the Holy of Holies was finished and set apart at the western end of the Holy Place. What we are told happened here was that since the Holy Place was not yet consecrated for the use of the priests alone Hiram Abiff used to go there at high noon to pray about the work, standing before the door of the Sanctum Sanctorum. It was as he came away from there to the South door leading to the side chambers, he was met by the first Fellowcraft who was eager to have the Master's secret. Attacked for his inevitable refusal, he goes to the North door and is similarly treated. It is then, turning to the East door, that was the porchway or entrance that he is fatally struck and dies.

What this meant was that in a strange way the ancient building tradition that required a sacrifice at the threshold of all new buildings was provided. It also meant that Solomon had indeed to ensure the proper consecration of the Temple to cleanse it of the stain of this 'heinous crime'. What the real secret was that Hiram Abiff refused to give will be discussed soon.

9th Pause: When, having assisted with the raising, the Wardens are invited to 'resume your seats'.

Commentary: In his remarks before the attempts made to raise the Brother representing Hiram Abiff the Worshipful Master spoke of Hiram's 'unshaken fidelity to the sacred trust reposed in him'. This was a reference to his repeated unwillingness to share with the three Fellowcrafts a secret restricted

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to the Master Masons. Strictly we should say that he refused to give up his part of the secret because it was a secret that had to be shared by three participants to make it complete. Whilst it was right that this true secret was temporarily lost by his death it was not lost altogether for when another suitable Mason was appointed in his place, as did in fact take place, the secret was restored.

The greatest operative secret of the medieval Master Masons was the knowledge of how to create a right angled triangle by a 3:4:5 formula. That is why in some ancient Masonry the rulers of a Guild lodge had rods of 18in, 24in and 30in. One such 18in rule dated 1663 is still in existence in York.

The secret of Accepted Freemasonry was a tripartite Word or Name. Its discovery was originally the climax of this degree. Indeed, third degree tracing boards in Holland still display the Name but do not explain it. For us the completed secret now has to be found elsewhere.

10th Pause: At the end of the Charge that now follows and when the Worshipful Master says, '... the faithful and obedient of the human race'.

Commentary: The charge which has just been delivered is the other highlight of this degree. Its message is sublime as would befit the complete Master Mason degree. It rightly reminds us that our only real hope of facing the future beyond death lies in the light of divine guidance, the emphasis once again being on how dependent on God's assistance we need to be.

What is surprising is that it is only at this stage of our Masonic progress, with the immediate prospect of the grave and of our mortal remains, that our thoughts are supposed to be led to that ancient study, The Knowledge of Oneself. In several European workings this comes at a much earlier stage because it is so crucial for our balanced and sensible behavior towards others.

Surprising also, in what is nowadays supposed to be a de-Christianized Freemasonry, are the references to 'The Lord of Life' who will enable us to conquer evil, and that 'Bright morning star' (a clear reference to Christ in the Bible's Book of Revelation) 'whose rising', which here means resurrection, 'brings peace and salvation to the faithful...' we have here a real reflection of 18th Century English Freemasonry.

11th Pause : When the Worshipful Master invites the candidate to retire to restore his personal comforts and says, '...the Ss, T. and W. will be further explained'.

Commentary: You will have noticed that following the Charge the Worshipful Master swings the new Master Mason from north to south. Why does he do that? The answer is that as was explained in the Exhortation this Brother, like all of us, has passed from the first degree, represented by the north-east corner, to the second degree in the south-east corner. It is from this latter spot that he appropriately takes his third regular step, in which alone he can receive the present 'secrets', What is not indicated at this stage is that these signs are 'substituted ones' though we shall learn that very shortly. It is true, as the Worshipful Master says later, that these will 'designate you Master Masons throughout the Universe' but only 'until time and circumstances shall [note shall and not may] restore the genuine ones'. It is important for us to realize that these are temporary, makeshift alternatives to real ones that have existed from Time Immemorial and can be discovered.

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In the F. P. O. F. we need to note that 'knee to knee' is a reminder of daily prayer in which we remember others' needs and that 'hand over back' in earlier practice meant hand into back so that it truly represented a support for another's character in their absence.

The Word that is given turns out to be two words. This is because at the union of the Modems and Antients Grand Lodges they could not agree on which of their substituted Words to use and with good English compromise they agreed to use both.

12th Pause: When the Worshipful Master has commented on the apron and says, '... the Brethren in the inferior degrees'.

Commentary: You will notice that though we are now in the new context of a Master Mason's lodge, the right of the Warden to put the apron on a newly raised Brother is still recognized. This is so striking that it suggests three things.

One is that perhaps there had been occasions in a Guild lodge when a Master Mason was so recognized. Secondly, that perhaps the present Master Mason is really only a glorified Fellow or Master craftsman because he is without the true secret, and is therefore still under a Warden's rule. That would explain why Master Masons in a lodge opened in their degree are asked to leave when at an Installation. It is because they are not true Master Masons. Or thirdly, because the United Grand Lodge wanted to retain a certain similarity of pattern in the manner of investing all Brethren even if it did break tradition. Further, it is still a matter for research to discover what are, or were, 'those great duties you have just solemnly engaged yourself to observe'.

13th Pause : At the end of the extended History when the Worshipful Master has said, '... the heinousness of their crimes so amply merited'.

Commentary: It hardly needs stressing that the dramatic tale just recounted is one of the wholly fictitious sections of speculative Freemasonry. We know from the Volume of the Sacred Law that figures like Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and even Hiram Abiff and Adoniram existed and played parts in some measure comparable to what our ritual describes. There were also officers of the working masons called Menatschim or Overseers and being human they were no doubt as susceptible to greed, envy and anger as we are. Yet whether the events just described took place is totally unproven by any known evidence. It is a good and even a moral tale but we can claim nothing more for it.

In the course of the story Solomon informs the returning craftsmen that 'by his untimely death the secrets of a Master Mason are lost'. As explained above, we need to realize that he means 'temporarily lost' and the resulting 'substituted secrets' were also meant to be temporary and for Craftsmen only. Perhaps we have here the solution of the puzzle that was raised over the investiture of a Master Mason by a Warden.

14th Pause: At the end of the Tracing Board explanation.

Commentary: The explanation of the Tracing Board in this degree is one of the most unsatisfactory parts of the whole ceremony. Between 1730 and 1760 there are many descriptions of how Solomon insisted that his chief artist be buried in the Holy of Holies itself. Yet in our present version, bearing in mind Jewish law and custom, such a possibility appears quite unacceptable. We are still told,

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however, that he was buried as near to this spot as was possible. What does that mean? Could it be that as the Temple was not completed and hence unconsecrated Hiram was carried into the area which became the Holy of Holies and was buried beneath it. Some rituals say this and that it was in a vault that was uncovered later.

Again, when the Dormer is said to give 'light to the same' we should realize that it was the Porch of that place that is meant to be lit up. It could not be the Sanctum Sanctorum as that was, we know, always in total darkness.

We are also told nothing about the old cipher writing on the coffin or why the veils of the Holy Place are drawn back. That needs more explanation than can be given here.

15th Pause: At the end of showing the alternate signs.

Commentary: The signs as English Freemasons give them are mainly self-explanatory though the interpretations of the sign of Joy and Exultation the interpretations of the sign of Joy and Exultation vary considerably. The most satisfactory form would seem to be to join the hands over the head in a nearly triangular manner, thus representing the way the wings of the Cherubim appear over the Ark of the Covenant. This should also be the Grand or Royal sign. There should be no clapping of hands because the Temple was a silent place both during and after building.

The sign of Grief and Distress as used in North America seems, from my acquaintance with it, to be given by dropping the bent arms in three positions parallel with the neck, the chest and the stomach thus relating them to the three penal areas. The founder of the Mormon religion was a Mason and he gave a sign just like this when he appealed to Masons outside to be released from the gaol at Albany.

16th Pause: When the tools of a Master Mason have been presented.

Commentary: At the outset of these Commentaries mention was made of the Great Architect's desire that Master Masons should also become good architects. The implements just explained are those of that profession because that is what medieval Master Masons were. The skirret, so named after an old Scandinavian word, 'skirra' meaning 'to whirr like a thread leaving a spindle', was used for marking out a new building site. The various forms of marking and registering plans for the building are represented by the pencil, and the compasses were the most advanced instrument available for both designing and creating beautiful items with which to decorate the structure.

What is most noticeable as we come to moralize on these tools is that we are again called to consider the dimensions of divinity. The Volume of the Sacred Law, our words recorded by the Almighty Architect and the commands or justice of our divine Creator are all specifically mentioned.

Is it not very telling that as we come into this degree with God's aid we come to its close with the hope of ascending to the Grand Lodge above where the world's Great Architect lives and rules forever? Master Masons and Craftsmen are always to have God in view.

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1.9- SHORT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS OF THE THIRD DEGREE

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Questions and Answers

Craft Freemasonry - Third Degree

Q. What is the origin of the phrase “darkness visible”?

A. It appears in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (Bk I. 1. 63) A dungeon horrible on all sides round. As one great furnace flamed yet from those flames No light, but rather darkness visible. Served only to discover sights of woe.

This great work was begun in 1658, when Milton was already blind, and the sombre gloom of these lines may well be contrasted with the many beautiful passages in which the poet was able to conjure up his visions of light, in words which seem to acquire a greater strength and majesty because of the perpetual darkness in which he lived.

The same phrase, “darkness visible”, was used far less effectively, by Alexander Pope, in the *Dunciad* (Bk Iv. 1. 3.) and by Gilbert White, in his *Natural History of Selborne* (Letter xxvi)

Explain “It Proves a Slip “

These words are a survival from the early versions of the Third Degree, and they allude to a theme which seems to have disappeared from the modern renderings of the ceremony. This part of the ceremony was originally designed to illustrate the lessons of Death, Decay or Corruption, and Resurrection, but nowadays only the first and last of these are emphasized.

The evidence from some of the early Catechisms and Exposures shows how “the slip” arose, e.g. “...takeing a greip at a ffinger it came away so from Joynt to Joynt so to the wrest so to the Elbow...so one said here is yet marrow in this bone” (*Graham MS.*, 1726.)

“... when Hiram was taken up, they took him by the Forefingers, and the Skin came off’ which is called the Slip...” (Prichard’s *‘Masonry Disected,’* 1730.)

“one of them took hold of the body by a finger, and it came away in his hand. Another did the same ... and then taking him by the wrist it came away... he cried out ... which signifies among the Masons “The flesh falls from the Bones”...

(Translated from “*Le Catechisme des Francs Macens,*” 1742.)

‘la chair quiue lea os, ou Is corps est corropu... - (The flesh parts from the bones or the corpse is rotten,) (From “*LVrdre des Francs-macons Trahi,*” 1745.)

It seems that there may have been some sort of mnemonic link between the MMs. word and phrases

“Marrow in the Bone” or “Rotten to the Bone”.

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Where does the phrase “The Bright Morning Star” come from?

[The following consists of extracts from *Miscellanea Let ornorum*, series II, vol. 31, pp.1-4.1]

It is argued that this reference to “that bright Morning Star” is an allusion to the Founder of Christianity, and as such should never have been included in, or retained in the ritual of an Association professing entire freedom from denominational creed or dogma, outside of the simple basic belief in the existence of a Supreme Being. This attitude has unfortunately been bolstered up by a frequent misquotation of the wording, the phrase “whose rising brings peace and tranquility” being often rendered as “peace and salvation”, which is erroneous and decidedly mischievous.

As a symbol, the Morning Star is indeed most appropriate to the ceremonial incident just previously enacted; so apt, in fact, that it may be confidently asserted that no other symbol could be found which would so perfectly fit the circumstances of the case. Astronomically the Morning Star is the herald of the dawning of a new day, just as its opposite, the Evening Star, precedes the coming of night. The latter foretells the dying of another day the approach of the time when man can no longer work; when darkness covers the face of the earth. Darkness has ever been associated with evil and in its sombre unknown possibilities is a fitting emblem of death. On the other hand, the rising Morning Star brings joy and gladness with its promise of yet another day, of light once more, in which man may work and renew his association with his fellow-man in business or in pleasure. In short, with the new-born day, man rises to a new life. What more fitting symbol, then, than this of the promise of new life after death of the immortality of the soul.

Q “Where do you hope to find them?” The given answer is ‘With the Centre’. Why not ‘At the Centre’

There is a quite remarkable degree of variation among the different rituals on this subject. In the question we have quoted *Emulation*, and that same formula appears in *Claret* (1838), *Irish* (1910), *Exeter* (1932), *Standard Stability*, *Sussex* (1965), *West End* (1967).

Here we have named only a few examples taken almost at random, and it must be clear that the answer is either in very bad English, or it is simply not the answer to that question. If the question is “Where”, the answer should begin “In, Within, At, On, Around, Near”, etc., i.e., a location, and so long as the answer begins : “With”, something must be wrong. In all fairness we quote a few correct versions, e.g. *Veritas* (1937) - “Where do you ..” - “At the Centre”; *Complete* - “Within a Centre”; “Castle”, *Northumbrian* (1927) - “On the Centre”.

There are a number of Workings which ask “How do you hope to find them?”

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These require an answer beginning “With or By” and the rituals examined that have the question “How generally have a grammatical answer. e.g. *Logic* (1899) - “How do we - “With the Centre”, and we find the same formula in *Oxford* (1904), *English* (1946) and *Universal* (1968).

By way of an interesting variation we quote an extract from the *Turk MS.* an exact copy of one of Preston’s versions of the Third Lecture c. 1816 (in a Paper by Bro. P.R. James to be published in A.Q.C. Vol.84. 1972): M. Bro. J.W. how do you hope to find them?

J.W. By Working towards the centre.

If we try to analyze the question *in its proper context*, it seems possible that there may be a clue as to how the question and answer should run. At that point in the ritual at which the question arises, we are talking - of course - about finding the “genuine secrets of a M.M.” which were “lost” through the untimely death of H.A. As Masons to whom the Hiram legend is an important part of our teachings, we know that the secrets were not, in fact, lost, but simply abandoned (out of fear that H.A. had divulged them) and we know that certain somewhat casually substituted secrets were adopted in their places. There is good and ample evidence in various early Masonic documents of the 1740’s, that the substituted secrets were adopted to replace the “sacred and mysterious Name”, i.e., the Tetragrammaton, which appears clearly written, in several early versions of the T.B. of the 3°. Obviously, that was never lost; it was the Ineffable Name, and therefore unpronounceable, but not lost. There is - of course - one of our later ceremonies in which the Candidate learns the manner in which it may be pronounced and conferred.

Now, allowing that we do know the details of the so-called “lost” secrets, it seems to me that we have no need to worry about “How to find them” and I am inclined to believe that the question should not be “How do we hope but “Where do we hope to find them”. The answer “At (or in) the Centre” is probably to be preferred. It had already been foreshadowed in the 2° Closing ceremony where we teach that another name of the G.G.O.T.U. is situated at (or in) the centre (of the building).

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1.10- SYMBOLS AND ALLEGORIES OF THE THIRD DEGREE

**Provincial Education Programme
Master Mason Degree**

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Symbols and Allegories of the Third Degree

In your experience with the Ritual and your meetings with us, you have learned that every phase, event, and other detail in the ceremonies of initiation is full of meaning. No item is merely for effect or ornament. In the Third Degree are the deepest secrets and profoundest teachings of our Fraternity. At this time, we can give you but a hint, in the hope that it may inspire you to study the Degree for yourself.

The symbolism of the First and Second Degrees centers around the art of architecture; Their purpose is to teach you, in the First Degree to be a builder of yourself; in the Second Degree to be a builder of society. In the Third Degree the symbolism takes another form. Although its background continues to be architecture, and its actions take place in and about a Temple, it is a spiritual symbolism of life and death, and its principal teaching is immortality.

Frequent references are made to King Solomon's Temple.

This great temple reflecting majesty, magnitude, and magnificence, after standing for 420 years, was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar of the Chaldees. Its successor, erected by Zerubbabel, stood nearly 500 years, when it was reconstructed by Herod-- The Temple of Herod--which was destroyed by the Romans under Titus. The Mosque of Omar, occupying the original site, has stood for twelve centuries. These thirty centuries have produced great changes, but the foundations remain unmoved. Each stone, immense and artistic, may be identified by the private mark of the quarryman and still defies the ravages of time.

So, with Masonry, its foundation, composed of the grandest principles ever communicated from God to man, stand unmoved. The Temple of Freemasonry symbolizes the Temple of the Soul. Just as the Temple of King Solomon was then considered the finest ever erected by the hand of man, so the Great Architect intends that we shall develop the finest and most nearly perfect characters. As certain working tools were employed to-erect that greatest of temporal buildings, so in Speculative Masonry we must choose as our working tools in life those moral lessons that build character. So may the rough ashlar become in time the perfect ashlar.

The Working Tools of the Degrees are all the implements of Masonry, but more especially the Trowel, by which we spread the cement of Brotherly Love. But Brotherly Love itself has its source and seat in the soul. To love a man above his sins, to cherish him in spite of his faults, to forgive him in all sincerity, to bear with him and to forbear, is possible only as we feel the influence of the spiritual and have divested ourselves of selfishness.

The Tragedy of Hiram Abif is the climax of the Degree. Next in importance, and in many ways equal in interest, is the allegorical Search For That Which Was Lost. This has an historical background. To the early Jewish people, a name was something peculiarly identified with a person, and held in reverence. Sometimes it was secret, and a substitute was used in daily life. All this appears in our Ritual in the form of an allegory. A Word was possessed; a Word was lost.

Like all symbols, this means many things. One of its profounder meanings is that if a man has lost the ideals and standards of his youth, his character, his faith in truth and goodness, he must, if he is to live the Masonic life, go in search of that which was lost, and continue searching until he finds it.

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You may wonder why the Ritual does not explain fully and clearly the meaning of this symbolism, why it leaves the candidate to find the meaning for himself. There are at least three reasons for this silence, apparently so strange. First, lack of sufficient time. Second, the Masonic life grows by what we do for ourselves, infinitely more than by what others do for us. The Ritual presupposes that we are grown men, not boys in school, and that each of us does his own thinking. Third, the method of the Ritual is to bring us into the presence of the greater truths of life knowing that their mere presence will have a deep influence over us; each man is left to work them out in detail according to his own needs.

Of the Emblems of the Third Degree, one after another is set before us, apparently in no given order, and each with only a hint of what it signifies. Yet each of them stands for some great idea or ideal. Each of them is a master truth.

In the three Pillars we have the three great ideas-Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. The three steps remind us of how Youth, Manhood, and Old Age is a unity in itself, each possessing its own duties and problems, each calling for its own philosophy. The Pot of Incense teaches that, of all forms of worship, to be pure and blameless in our inner lives is more acceptable to God than anything else, because that which a man really is, is of vastly greater importance than that which he appears to be. The Book of Constitution is the emblem of law, and that our moral and spiritual character is grounded in law and order as much as is government or nature. It teaches that no man can live a satisfactory life who lives lawlessly.

The sword Pointing to a Naked Heart discovers that one of the most rigorous of these laws is justice, and that if a man be unjust in his heart, the inevitable results of injustice will find him out. The All Seeing Eye shows that we live and move and have our being in God; that we are constantly in His Presence, wherever or whatever we are doing.

The Anchor and the Ark stand for that sense of security and stability of life grounded in truth and faith, without which sense there can be no happiness. The Forty-seventh Problem of Euclid is an emblem of the arts and sciences; by them we are reminded that next to sinfulness the most dangerous enemy of life is ignorance. In the Hour Glass we have the emblem of the fleeting quality of life. The Scythe reminds us that passing time will end our lives as well as our work, and if ever we are to become what we ought to be, we must not delay.

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1.11- DUTIES, RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF A MASTER MASON

**Provincial Education Programme
Master Mason Degree**

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Duties, Rights and Privileges of a Master Mason

You will not find the duties, rights, and privileges of a Master Mason anywhere completely stated and numbered. They are scattered here and there, some in symbols, others in the form of customs, others in laws. Some are explicit, others are implied.

A Master Mason's first duty is obviously to live by and act consistently with his obligation. Unless this is done, he cannot perform his other duties, nor can he justly claim his rights and privileges. With this as a foundation, a number of those duties and rights can be discussed in detail.

Full privileges of membership are established when he is raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. Thereafter he has a right to a voice in the administration of the affairs of the Lodge, to vote, hold office, and demit.

It is a Master Mason's duty, legal and moral, to pay his share of the financial costs of the Fraternity, promptly and ungrudgingly.

He has the right to petition for affiliation under various circumstances in accordance with the provisions of the Code.

Visiting in Lodges in which he does not hold membership is both a right and a privilege, though not a duty. It is a right in the sense that he may seek admittance into any regular Lodge; it is a privilege in the sense that his admission into that Lodge is contingent upon his being vouched for, or examined, if necessary, and being permitted to enter by the Worshipful Master. If a Mason is not permitted to enter some Lodge at a certain time, the fact does not cancel his right to seek to visit it at another time or to seek to visit any other Lodge. The right to attempt to visit is indisputable.

Masonic relief, within its proper limitations, is a privilege to be valued, on the one hand, and a responsibility to be recognized, on the other. The rite of Destitution in the First Degree provides an object lesson that should never be forgotten, and the obligation of the Third Degree contains a still broader definition of the requirements of Masonic relief.

Every affiliated Master Mason has the right to Masonic burial. In practice his family has the right of requesting this honor. This right is of more importance than may at first appear. If without giving cause a Lodge refused to give Masonic burial, the community might naturally infer something reprehensible, known only to the Lodge, and both his name and family would suffer accordingly.

Among the most important of his rights, though exercised under unhappy conditions, is his right of trial by his peers, under regulated conditions, with freedom to present evidence. This assures him that no Lodge can degrade him without a fair trial. Neither his Lodge, nor any officer or member, can remove him through malice or spite, nor can he be made to suffer the penalties of Masonry through idle gossip or hearsay.

If he is brought to trial in his own Lodge on charges of unmasonic conduct and found guilty, he has the right of appeal to the Grand Lodge. This right is his guaranty against possible injustice, more particularly against local prejudice or spiteful persecution by some private enemy.

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A Master Mason's rights and privileges are to be described in principle and in spirit rather than in detail. Beyond all specific duties, rights and privileges exists a region in which all are mingled together; the whole domain of Masonry's teachings, her ritual and symbols, her history, her ideals of jurisprudence, her philosophy, her literature, the whole Royal Art. It is his right to be taught that Art and to have it in its fullness, none of it being reserved for a privileged few. It is his to enjoy all the privileges it offers to the spirit, the mind, the heart. All that Freemasonry is, all that it means, all that it has to give or to offer, belongs to every individual Mason in the same way and to the same extent as to all others. However onerous your duties may prove to be, or however rigidly your rights may at times appear to be regulated, such burdens sink into nothingness by comparison with this one privilege, that Freemasonry in all her height, and breadth, and length, and richness belongs to you to use and enjoy.