

**ONLINE MASONIC EDUCATION COURSE  
MASTER MASON**

“Tier Three”

This manual does not disclose any of the esoteric portions of the ritual. The contents of this manual therefore may be discussed with, and read by, any person interested in acquiring knowledge about Freemasonry. This manual has been produced for use in the “Online Masonic Education Course”.

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## **THE MASTER MASON DEGREE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEGREE**

This Degree is the crown of the Blue Lodge. It is the culmination of all that has been taught to the candidate in the two preceding ceremonies. At this point the candidate has symbolically, if not actually, balanced his inner natures and has shaped them into the proper relationship with the higher, more spiritual parts of him. His physical nature has been purified and developed to a high degree. He has developed stability and a sure footing. His mental faculties have sharpened and his horizons have been expanded. The candidate is now ready to approach the portal of the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

The above would be the ideal scenario, but is rarely carried out so seriously. However, regardless of the candidate's pace through the Degrees, he should always review his personal progress and take action to improve himself in Masonry. He should not be satisfied with taking the Degrees halfheartedly and then consider himself a Master Mason. Very few of us are truly Masters of our Craft, and we should maintain a healthy deference for this exalted status. For the designation Master Mason should always be before us in our journey toward the Light as the ideal of our Fraternity.

Being "Raised to the Sublime Degree" is the appropriate terminology. Sublime is defined as being exalted or elevated so as to inspire awe and wonder. And it also means to undergo sublimation that, like distillation, requires a volatilization of a substance that rises and reforms at a higher level. The significance of this Degree is the portrayal of the removal of everything that keeps us from rising to that state where the soul communes with the Supernal Light.

## **SYMBOLS, EMBLEMS AND ALLEGORIES OF THE THIRD DEGREE**

By this time in your experience with the Ritual you have learned for yourself that every phrase, event, and other detail in the ceremonies of initiation are full of meaning; not a single item is in them merely for effect or as an ornament. This is especially true of the Third Degree. In it you will find, to a larger extent than elsewhere, the deeper secrets and profounder teachings of our Fraternity. You passed through the Degree in one night; to understand it will require many nights, and though you may study it for years to come you will never exhaust it. In the space allotted here but a few hints of its meaning, and those in the hope that they may inspire you to study the Degree for yourself.

The symbolism of the First and Second Degree was for the most part designed around the art of architecture; their purpose was to teach you to be a builder, in the First a builder of yourself, in the Second a builder of society. In the Third Degree the symbolism takes another form, although its background continues to be architecture, and its action takes place in a Temple; it is a spiritual symbolism, cast in the form of the life and death of the soul, and its principal teaching is that if a man has permitted himself to be buried under the rubbish heap of his sins and passions and lusts, it is possible for him, if he has learned the secret of the spiritual life, and with the help of God and of the Brotherhood, to rise again into a new life. This teaching gives us the key to the whole Degree, and in the light of it all its symbols, emblems, and allegories must be understood.

This note is struck in the Scripture Reading, a chapter out of the Book of Ecclesiastes. In this chapter we have the picture of a man, once flushed with health and filled with strength, who is now brought tottering by old age to the brink of the grave. This last breakdown in human nature is one of the bitterest of all the experiences man is called upon to bear, but even this, the chapter tells us, will become a light burden to him who has learned to trust in God, for God is the God of old age and of the soul after death as much as he is the God of youth and strength.

The Working Tools of the Degree are all the implements of Masonry, but chiefly the Trowel, by which we are taught to lay 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, all this is possible only to us as we live in the spiritual life and have our souls purged of lust and selfishness.

You may wonder why it is that the Ritual itself does not explain fully and clearly the meaning of this symbolism and all the others like it, why it leaves it to the candidate to find out the meanings for himself. There are three reasons for this silence, apparently so strange: first, there isn't sufficient time; to explain them all fully would require not three nights but

thirty, and perhaps three hundred. Second, it is one of the secrets of the Masonic life that we grow by what we do for our-selves infinitely more than by what others do for us; moreover, the Ritual presupposes that we are grown men, not boys in school, and that each of us will have the ability to do our own thinking. Third, the method of the Ritual is to bring us into the presence of the greater truths of life and to keep us there, knowing that their mere presence will in the long run have a deep influence over us; each man is left to work them out in detail according to his own needs.

This is especially true of the Emblems of the Third Degree. One after another of these is set before us, apparently in no given order, and each with only the slenderest hint as to what it signifies. Yet each one of them stands for some great idea or ideal, most necessary to us throughout our lives; and the purpose of bringing them before us in this manner is to plant them in our consciousness, to keep them always in our presence.

Each of them is a master truth. In the Three Pillars we have the three great ideas of wisdom, of strength or power, of beauty. In the Three, Five and Seven Steps we have the idea of progress, of making our way upwards, and of how the ascent to a richer and truer life is always made in stages, and against many obstacles; progress is always difficult, but it is always necessary.

The Three Steps remind us of Youth, Manhood and Old Age, of how each is a unity in itself, each possesses its own duties and problems, and each calls for its own philosophy. The Pot of Incense means that, of all forms of worship, to be pure and blameless in our inner lives is more acceptable to God than any-thing else, better than incense, because that which a man really is of vastly greater importance than that which he appears to be. The Book of Constitutions is the emblem of law, not alone as it is in statutes and ordinances, which may change from time to time, but rather that our moral and spiritual character is grounded in law and order as much as government is, or nature and no man can live a satisfactory life who lives lawlessly.

The Sword Pointing to the Naked Heart means that one of the most rigorous of these laws is justice, and that if a man be unjust in his heart, which means at the center of his being, the inevitable results of injustice will find him out. The All-Seeing Eye means that we live and move and have our being in God, that we do not stand in His presence, as children might think, only when we pray or are in church or on Sundays, but that we are constantly in His Presence, wherever we are or whatever we are doing. The Anchor and the Ark stand for that sense of security and stability which one has when his life is grounded in truth and faith; without that sense there can be no happiness or peace of mind. The Forty-seventh Proposition is an emblem of the arts and science; by them we are reminded that next to sinfulness the most dangerous enemy of life is ignorance. In the Hour Glass we have the emblems of the transitoriness of life; no man lives forever here in this world; there is a set time for the work he has to do. The Scythe reminds us that passing time will bring an end to our lives as well as to our work, and if ever we are to become what we know we ought to be, we must not delay.

What if a man has reached middle years and finds when he stands before these undeniable and all-important truths that he has missed them, or been faithless to them, has gone backward and not forward, is not blameless in his heart, lives unjustly, has ignored the fact that his life is in God's hands, and has neglected to take into account the swift passage of time so that he has made a wreck of his life and finds himself buried under a pile of rubbish? Is there hope for him? It is the central teaching of the Master Mason Degree, expressed in the Tragedy of Hiram Abiff, that there is a way for him to recover the possession of his own life, that he can be raised to a new manhood, lifted from the dead level—which means the level of death — to a living perpendicular. He may be called back from a grave that is more terrible than the dissolution of the body! By dying to his old life, by repudiating it, by finding again his faith in God—for the Power of God and the Power of the Brotherhood are there for him as much as for any other man—this is the path of his recovery.

#### **THE LEGEND OF HIRAM ABIFF**

In taking the Third Degree, which is so well named the Sublime Degree of Masonry, you were doubtless impressed by the Tragedy of Hiram Abiff above and beyond all other features of its extraordinarily impressive ceremonies. As the Degree itself is the climax of initiation, so is that Tragedy the climax of the Degree. To know and to understand it and to appreciate at the full its profound richness of meaning will be a possession to you as long as

you live. To assist you to that end I shall make a number of suggestions and call to your attention certain important facts about it.

It is first of all important to understand that the Drama of Hiram Abiff is a ritualistic drama. We all know what a drama is, a conflict between a man and other men or between him and other forces, resulting in a crisis in which his fate or fortune lies at stake; the crisis, or problem, is followed by a resolution or solution; if it turns out in favor of the man the drama is a comedy, in the true and original meaning of that word as a happy ending; if it turns against him, and as a result he becomes a victim or a sufferer, it means that the drama is a tragedy. By drama in either sense it does not refer to plays as they are acted on the stage, which are not dramas at all but representations of dramas: it refers to drama as it occurs in our own lives, to each of us, and in our daily experience. The only reason for our interest in reading or seeing stage plays is because they mirror the dramas in real life in which we ourselves are the actors.

But the ceremony of Hiram Abiff is not only a drama, it is a ritualistic drama, and the major emphasis should be placed on that word. What is a ritual? It is a set of fixed ceremonies which address themselves to the human spirit solely through the imagination. A play in the theatre may be built around some historical figure or some historical event as is the case in Shakespeare's plays about the English Kings and about Julius Caesar; and if the figures and events are not actually historical, they are supposed, or feigned, to be, so that the facts of time, place, and individual identity are of necessary importance to it. A ritualistic drama on the other hand does not pay any heed to historical individuals, times or places but moves wholly in the realms of the spirit, where time, space and particular individuals are ignored; the clash of forces, the crisis and fates of the human spirit alone enter into it, and they hold true of all men everywhere and always, regardless of who they are, or where and when they are.

Since the Drama of Hiram Abiff is ritualistic, it is a mistake to accept it as history. There was a Hiram Abiff in history, but our Third Degree is not interested in him; its sole concern is with a Hiram Abiff who is a symbol of the human soul, that is, its own Hiram Abiff. If therefore you have been troubled with the thought that some of the events of this Drama could not possibly have ever happened you can cease to be troubled; it is not meant that they ever happened in ancient history but that they are symbols of what is happening in the life of every man.

For the same reason it is an inexcusable blunder to treat it as a mere mock tragedy, a serio-comedy; savage peoples employ initiation ceremonies as an ordeal to test the nerve and courage of their young men, but Freemasonry is not savage. Boys in school often employ hazing, which is a horseplay caricature of the savage ceremonial ordeals, but Freemasonry is not juvenile. The exemplification of our ritualistic drama is as sincere, as solemn, as earnest as a prayer before the altar of a church; he who takes it trivially or even with a perverted humor, betrays a shallowness of soul which makes him unfit ever to have become a Mason.

Hiram Abiff is the acted symbol of the human soul, yours, mine, any man's. The work he was engaged to supervise is the symbol of the work you and I have in the supervision, organization and direction of our lives from birth to death. The enemies he met are nothing other than the symbols of those lusts and passions which in our own breasts, or in the breasts of others, make war on our characters and our lives. His doom is the same doom that befalls every man who becomes a victim to those enemies, to be interrupted in one's work, to be made outcast from the lordship (or mastership) over one's own self, and, at the end, to become buried under all manner of rubbish—which means ill fame, defeat, demoralization, disgrace, weakness, misery, evil habits and scorn. The manner in which he was raised from that dead level to that living perpendicular again is the same manner by which any man, if it happens at all, rises from self-defeat to self-mastery. And the Sovereign Grand Architect, by the power of whose word Hiram Abiff was raised, is that same God in whose arms we ourselves forever lie, and whose mighty help we also need to raise us out of the graves of defeat, or evil, or death itself.

Did you ask yourself, while participating in that drama, why you were made to participate at all? Why you were not permitted to sit as a spectator? You were made to participate in order to impress upon you that it was your drama, not another's, there being exemplified; because no man can ever be a mere spectator of that drama, since it takes place in his own soul; and because it was intended that your participation should itself be an experience to prepare you for becoming a Master Mason by teaching you the secret of a Master Mason, which is that the soul must rise above its own internal enemies if ever a man is

to be a Mason in reality as well as in name, for the reality of being a Master Mason is nothing other than to be the Master of one's self.

Did you ask why it was that the three enemies of Hiram Abiff came from his own circle and not from outside? It is because the enemies to be most feared by the soul are always from within, and are nothing other than its own ignorance, lust, passions and sins; as the Holy Bible reminds us, it is not that which has power to kill the body that we need most to shun, but that which has power to destroy the spirit.

Did you ask why it was that after Hiram Abiff was slain there was so much confusion in the precincts of the Temple, so much anarchy among the Craftsmen? It was because the Temple is the symbol of a man's character, and therefore breaks and falls when the soul, its architect, is rendered helpless; because the Craftsmen are symbols of our powers and faculties and they fall into anarchy when not directed and commanded by the will at the center of our being.

And did you ask why the Lodge appeared to neglect to explain this ritualistic drama to you at the end of the Degree? It was because it is impossible for one man to explain the Tragedy of Hiram Abiff to another; each must learn it for himself; and the most we can obtain from others is just hints and scattered suggestions as these I have given you. Print the story of Hiram Abiff indelibly upon your mind; ponder upon it; when you your-self are at grip with your own enemies recall it and act according to the light you find in it; in so doing you will find that your own inner self will give in the form of first-hand experience that which the drama gave you in the form of ritual, and you will be wiser and stronger for having the guidance and the light the drama can give you.

### **THE THREE GRAND MASTERS**

The three Grand Masters mentioned often in our rituals concerning the building of the Temple are: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abiff. In early times, some religions regarded Deity in three aspects. The secrets known only to these Three Grand Masters typify Divine Truth, which was known only to Deity, and was not to be communicated to man until he had completed his own spiritual temple. Once these secrets were attained, a man could reap the rewards of a well-spent life, and travel to the unknown country toward which all of us are traveling. By knowing the meaning of these names and references to their offices, you will better understand what the ritual means. Tyre, by the way, means stone or rock.

### **TRAVELING IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

The goal of our ancient operative brethren was to become masters, so they might possess those secrets which would enable them to practice the art of the builder, no matter where they traveled, even in foreign countries.

The term "foreign countries" is used symbolically in Speculative Masonry, and is not meant to refer to a certain geographical location. Freemasonry itself is a foreign country to every new member. To fully appreciate and enjoy the privileges of membership, he must become familiar with its territory. He does this by learning its language, customs, and history.

Once raised, many of our members continue their journey into the inner recesses of the Craft. This can be a most rewarding experience. Truly, Freemasonry is the journey of a lifetime. We must continue to search for light and truth wherever it may be found, even in foreign countries.

The term "foreign countries" may also be a metaphor for the spiritual worlds. The ancients, and some not so ancients, concerned themselves with vast spiritual worlds. Their method of gaining admission was through secret passwords, grips, signs, and sometimes-angelic names and holy words.

### **THE WAGES OF A MASTER MASON**

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

### **THE THREE RUFFIANS**

There are many symbolic explanations for the appearance of these three ruffians in our ritualistic work. Their attempt to obtain the secrets not rightfully theirs, and the dire consequences of their actions, are symbolic of many things. Trying to obtain knowledge of Divine Truth by some means other than a reward for faithfulness makes the culprit both a thief and a murderer. Each of us is reminded that rewards must be earned, rather than obtained by violence or devious means. The Ruffians are also symbolic of the enemies we have within us: our own ignorance, passions and attitudes, which we have "come here to control and subdue".

### **LOW TWELVE**

In ancient symbolism, the number twelve denoted completion. This sign arose from the twelve signs of the Zodiac being a complete circle and the twelve edges of the cube being a symbol of the earth. The number twelve denoted fulfillment of a deed, and was therefore an emblem of human life. High Twelve corresponds to noon, with the sun at its zenith, while Low Twelve denotes midnight, the blackest time of the night.

### **THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH**

The lion has always been the symbol of might and royalty. It was the sign of the Tribe of Judah, because this was the royal tribe of the Hebrew Nation. All Kings of Judah were, therefore, called the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah." This was also one of the titles of King Solomon. This was the literal meaning.

In the Middle Ages, the lion was a symbol of resurrection. There were common tales that the lion cub when born lay dead for three days until breathed upon by its father. This breath brought the cub back to life. Representations of roaring lions symbolized the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. The lion, being such a majestic animal, has long been considered the "king" of beasts; associated with the sun because of its mane. Its likeness is commonly found on the thrones and palaces of rulers. The Mithraic god Aion had a human body with a lion's head.

Because of its association with the sun and its correspondence to the zodiacal sign of Leo, the Lion is also considered a symbol of alchemical Fire.

### **THE LOST WORD**

In the search for "That Which Was Lost," we are not actually searching for a particular word. Our search is a symbol for our "feeling of loss" or "exile" from the Source of Life. What we are searching for is Divine Truth, which should be the ultimate goal of all men and Masons.

The Book of Genesis gives us a clue to the power of speech. In it, we learn that the first Act of Creation occurred when "God said." The utterance of the Word is also closely connected with the idea of Light, and therefore knowledge. Having the power of speech is perhaps the noblest attribute of man, because he can communicate his thoughts to his fellows. Thus, The Word has been carried down through the ages as synonymous with every manifestation of Divine Power and Truth. We must always search diligently for truth, and never permit prejudice, passions, or conflicts of interest, to hinder us in our search. We must keep our minds open to receiving truth from any source. Thus, Masons are devoted to freedom of thought, speech and action. In our Craft Lodges, we have but a substitute for the True Word. Each person must ultimately seek out and find the True Word for himself, through his own individual efforts.

Some Masons feel that the names of the Ruffians give us a blatant hint at the Lost Word. Indeed, there is an allusion to the sacred syllable of the Vedic texts found in these names. But again, that word is itself a symbol of the underlying Reality that upholds and sustains the world. Some Masons feel that the Lost Word is spoken of in the scriptures variously as "the sound of rushing waters" and "I heard behind me a Voice like a great trumpet," or "a great roar like a lion" and such.

### **SIGNS, TOKENS AND WORDS:**

They provide modes of recognition. Also, each sign, token and word has a symbolic meaning which serves to enrich the mind and improve our lives as Masons.

## **THE SETTING MAUL**

This was a wooden instrument used by operative masons to set polished stone firmly into a wall. The Maul has been shown to be a symbol of destruction from prehistoric times, and is shown many times in mythology. One of the best known is that of Thor, God of Thunder, who is shown as a powerful man armed with a mighty hammer.

## **THE SPRIG OF ACACIA**

Hebrew people used to plant a sprig of acacia at the head of a grave for two purposes - to mark the location of the grave, and to show their belief in immortality. Because of its evergreen nature, they believed it to be an emblem of both immortality and innocence. The true acacia is a thorny plant, which abounds in the Middle East. Both Jews and Egyptians believed that because of its hardness, its evergreen nature and its durability, it signified immortality. It is believed that the acacia was used to construct most of the furniture and the tabernacle in the Temple. Acacia has red and white flowers. It is a tradition in the Near East that the Crown of Thorns was acacia. In Egypt, it symbolized rebirth and was an emblem of Neith.

## **RAISING OF A CANDIDATE**

Most people do not understand what being "Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason" means. This Degree is the sublime climax of Symbolic Freemasonry. If you learn only that the living, dying and raising of a Master is a drama, designed to teach the virtues of fidelity, faith and fortitude, you have received only partial light and have seen nothing but a moral lesson. This Degree seeks to answer the age-old question put forth by Job - "If a man die, shall he live again?"

The Degree delves into the deepest recesses of man's nature. While it leads the initiate into the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple, it probes into the Holy of Holies in his heart. As a whole, the Degree is symbolic of old age and by the wisdom of which we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent and properly directed life, and die in the sure knowledge of a glorious immortality. It teaches no creed, no dogma, no doctrine, no religion, only, that there is immortality.

## **CABALISTIC ALLUSIONS OF THE THIRD DEGREE**

The system of Traditional Jewish Mysticism known as Qabalah often provides important clues to the interpretation of passages of Scripture. Since much of our ritual is derived from Scripture, there are certain very interesting Qabalistic allusions throughout the rituals of Freemasonry.

We will here list only one of the more interesting occurrences, without reference to either Hebrew or Greek. However, some familiarity with these languages can be useful when searching for Qabalistic allusions within Freemasonry.

Using the Qabalistic discipline of gematria, the Hebrew spelling of Hiram Abiff equals the number 273. So does the Hebrew word for "Hidden Light". And the phrase found in Psalms 118:22 "the stone refused by the builders" also adds up to 273. Sometimes Gematria can cross languages, too. For example, the Greek word *athanasia*, which means "immortality," also equals 273. From the standpoint of gematria, the message could not be clearer. [See also FC: THE MASONIC LETTER "G"]

## **HIEROGLYPHICAL EMBLEMS**

In The Three Pillars we have the three great supports of Masonry - Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. The Three Steps remind us of how youth, manhood and old age is each an entity in itself, each possessing its own duties and problems, and each calling for its own philosophy. The Pot of Incense teaches that, 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. It is also a symbol of prayer and meditation. The Beehive recommends the virtue of industry and teaches us that we should never rest while our fellow creatures are in need of assistance. It should be mentioned that bees have also been symbols of messengers from the heavens. The Book of Constitutions Guarded By The Tyler's Sword is the emblem of law and order, and reminds us that our moral and spiritual character is grounded in law and morality as much as is government and nature. It teaches that no man can live a satisfactory life that lives lawlessly. The Sword Pointing To A Naked



Heart symbolizes 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 single Eye is found in many countries from Egypt to India: The Eye of Horus, the Eye of Shiva and so on. The Anchor and Ark stand for that sense of security and stability of a life grounded in truth and faith, without which sense there can be no happiness.

The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid, or the Pythagorean Theorem, is a very potent symbol and is so important in Freemasonry that it cannot be overemphasized. It is the Sacred King of the scalene (limping) triangles. Its properties have incredible implications in many different areas. Plutarch informs us that the Egyptians attributed the holy family of Osiris, Isis, and Horus to this specific triangle: Osiris the vertical (3), Isis the horizontal (4), and Horus the diagonal(5). Remember that after Osiris is killed, Horus becomes the Son of the Widow.

In The Hourglass we have the emblem of the fleeting quality of life. The Scythe reminds us that the passing of 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.

### **INTERPRETATION OF THE RITUAL OF THE THIRD DEGREE**

The Sublime Degree of Master Mason. It is indeed a "sublime" Degree, one to which a man might devote his whole time in study for years to come without exhausting it. Undoubtedly you realized this yourself as you participated in its mysteries, so that you may now appreciate a hint as to its meaning.

Almost any interpretation of it, especially one so brief as this, must necessarily be a hint only, and that for the sake of stimulating a man to reflect upon it for himself and to study it more thoroughly in the future.

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

The second step is to recognize that the ritual of the Third Degree is, by its nature, and of purpose, such as lawfully to have many meanings; it is not intended to be a lesson written complete, finished, closed up; but rather to be a pointing, out of paths, a new departure, a series of inspirations, an awakening of all the faculties, like a great drama, picture or symphony to which one may evermore return to find new meanings as in an inexhaustible fountain-head of truth.

For this reason there may be a number of interpretations of the Degree, and they may all be true at one and the same time. It is, for example, lawful to explain it as a drama of old age, with its attendant losses, sorrows, evils, and its final end. It is also lawful to find in it a drama of the immortality of the soul, how in it is set forth the truth that while a man withers away and perishes there is that in him which perishes not.

Another suggestion to you another interpretation, equally lawful, based on the fact that at the center of the Degree is a dying and a raising again. That this is the meaning most generally adopted by the Craft is shown by our habits of language; we say that a man is initiated an Entered Apprentice, passed a Fellowcraft, and raised a Master Mason; by this it appears that it is the raising that most Masons have found at the center of the Master Mason ceremony.

What does this raising signify? If you have the answer to this question you can afterwards find your own way into all the meanings of the Degree.

The life of a man organizes itself into a number of groups of experiences, each of a different kind from the others. Consider what these are, a few of them. There are those experiences which are incidental to our passage through time, from childhood, through manhood, to old age. There are those incidental to the life of the body, hunger, sleep, weariness, the senses, the feelings, etc. There are those which cluster about the home and family. There are those which have to do with religion, worship, God, the meaning and purpose of life. There are those which have to do with a man's work, his trade or occupation, how he makes a living for himself and his dependents. There are those which center about his life in the community, a social being, as a neighbor or a citizen. Unless one is adequate to live

in and to deal with each and all of these groups of facts, circumstances, realities and experiences, he cannot be happy.

Now it is probable that the most difficult of all these to deal with—one not mentioned above—is that group made up of the evils of life; in this are such hard experiences as 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, our severest testing; if we can find the wisdom to deal with these, if we can triumph over them and solve their problems, our characters will be made secure, our happiness will be assured. What are you doing about evil, in yourself and in the world about you is a question life asks of each of us, and if we fail of the right answer it enforces upon us the worst of all penalties.

Let us go one step farther. As it comes to us evil may take two forms: it may be brought upon us by our own acts, or it may be brought upon us through no responsibility of our own. If evil comes upon a man by his own acts we feel that it is a just compensation; but what of the evil that comes upon a good man? Such an event we call a tragedy, and tragedy is the supreme form of evil.

It is evil in the form of tragedy that is set forth in the Drama of the Third Degree. Here is a good and wise man, not a destroyer but a builder, working for others and giving others work, and whose work is the highest we know, for it is dedicated wholly to God. Through no fault of his own he is set upon by men who formerly have been friends and fellow Masons; he is tortured and killed, and his body thrown to the rubbish. Here is tragedy pure and unalloyed, and it is a complete picture of all human tragedy whatsoever.

How did the Craft meet this tragedy? The first step was to impose upon the ruffians the supreme penalty; they had them-selves possessed the will to destruction and therefore they had themselves become evils; such evils had to be destroyed lest another tragedy follow. This means that the greatest enemy man has is that which makes war upon the good; to that enemy no quarter can be given.

The next step was to discipline and then to pardon those who acted not out of an evil will, but out of weakness. Forgiveness is possible if a man himself condemns the evil he has done, because it means that 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 ever thus, it is in the nature of such tragedy that the good suffer for the evil, 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 we come upon 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. There was that in him which rose above the reach of evil; there was that in him by virtue of which he was raised again from the dead level to a living perpendicular. Our name for that is the spirit.

Let us imagine a genuinely good man who has been the victim of a tragedy. Let us imagine this to have been one of the most terrible kinds of tragedy, one caused by the treachery of friends. Let us further imagine that this treachery has brought destruction upon one of the foundations of his life, his home, his reputation, or his ability to earn a livelihood. How can he be lifted above it? How can he be raised above the clutch of such circumstances? How can he emerge as possibly a happier man than he was before? By his spirit rising to the level of pity, or forgiveness, of resignation, or self sacrifice, a refusal to stoop to retaliation or to harbor bitterness. It is in such a spirit as this that the truest happiness is found.

## **PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF FREEMASONRY**

### **THE RIGHTS OF A MASTER MASON**

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

#### **MASONIC RELIEF**

Masonic Relief may be applied for by any Master Mason - either to his own Lodge, or to an individual Master Mason. In every case, the individual asked has the right to determine the worthiness of the request and whether such aid can be granted without material injury to his family. Relief is a voluntary function of both the Lodge and the individual. If the Lodge's financial condition will not allow it to help, he can apply to the Grand Lodge for help. In California, in order to be eligible for Masonic Relief, the Brother must not have been suspended in the past five years, and there can be no charges pending against him at the time of application. The widow and/or orphan of a Master Mason, who was a member of the Lodge at the time of his death, are entitled to consideration if they apply for assistance. The same conditions as to worthiness and the ability and willingness of the Lodge apply in these cases.

#### **MASONIC VISITATION**

Visitation of other Lodges is one of the greatest privileges of being a Master Mason. Before you can sit in another Lodge, you must prove yourself to be a Mason in good standing. If you can so prove, and if no member of the Lodge you are visiting objects to you sitting in the Lodge, you may do so. In order to attend another Lodge, you should learn the memory work and modes of recognition in each Degree (if you have not already done so), and carry your paid-up dues card with you at all times.

You can gain admission to another Lodge in one of two ways - examination or avouchment by a Brother who has sat in Lodge with you previously. An examination usually consists of showing your dues card, followed by examination by a special committee appointed by the Master of the Lodge. After successfully passing the examination, the committee will vouch for you and you may be admitted to the Lodge.

#### **THE RIGHT OF BURIAL**

The Masonic Funeral Service is conducted only at the request of a Brother or some member of a Mason's immediate family. The choice belongs to the family, not to the Lodge. This service can be held in a church, the Lodge room, funeral parlor or grave site. It is a beautiful and solemn ceremony and, like Masonry herself, does not conflict with a man's personal religious beliefs.

#### **THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MASTER MASON**

The constant responsibility of a Master Mason is "to preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied". Leading a good life is the best means of carrying through our individual responsibility to our Lodge and our Craft. The conduct of each Master Mason is strictly his own responsibility. He should choose the course which will bring credit to himself and honor to the Fraternity.

We would all do well to remember that brotherhood is the cornerstone of our Fraternity. Treat others with the same respect and consideration with which you would like to be treated. In all your actions, be an example of brotherly love in action.

Be not hasty to condemn others. How do you know that in their place, you could have resisted the temptation? And even were it so, why should you condemn one who is weaker than you? If your brother should slip, offer your hand to him without judgment or harsh criticism. Judge him not by your standards but by his own.

#### **LODGE ATTENDANCE**

We do not have a mandatory attendance requirement as ancient Lodges did; nor is there a penalty for not attending, as there once was. However, every Master Mason has an obligation to be loyal to the Lodge, which gave him Masonic Light and all the benefits, which come with his membership. This should be your inducement to attend Lodge as often as possible and to join in the fellowship that is an important part of Freemasonry.

## **BALLOTING**

Only Members in good standing have a right to vote. No member present can be excused from balloting on any petition before the Lodge. No member will be permitted to retire from the Lodge to avoid casting his ballot. The white balls indicate an affirmative, or favorable ballot, and the black cube indicates a negative, or unfavorable ballot. If you have no reason to believe otherwise, then you should accept the word of the Investigating Committee and cast a favorable ballot on a petition for membership. If you have an objection to an applicant, the time to raise that objection is before the ballot is taken. You have the right to speak to the Master privately and express your objection. This is one of the reasons we wait a full month after a petition has been presented before voting on it. However, if you know of some legitimate reason why the petitioner is unworthy, for strictly Masonic - not personal - reasons, a black cube may be cast to protect the Lodge from an undesirable member.

As you approach the ballot box, examine your motives and be sure that the ballot you are about to cast will do justice to the candidate and Freemasonry. The Right to Secrecy of the Ballot is guaranteed by Masonic law, and custom allows each member to have perfect freedom in balloting on petitioners. No brother should disclose how he voted and no brother should inquire into how another brother voted on a particular candidate.

## **DEFINITIONS OF NON-AGE, DOTAGE AND FOOL**

In the jurisdiction of California, non-age refers in this Degree to one who is not yet 18 years of age. Dotage is a condition associated with old age, and is marked by juvenile desires, loss of memory and failure of judgment. Being old does not bar someone from seeking membership, but we require that he be mentally alert and healthy. A fool is a mature man without good sense. Legally, he may be of age, but mentally he is incapable of understanding.

## **WOMEN AND FREEMASONRY**

The question of women's role in Freemasonry has arisen many times. When we were an operative craft, the buildings were built by masons who were, by all accounts, men. The Craft became a fraternity for men. Thus, it was a practice that only men became operative masons. This practice has continued down through the years.

Certain Masonic Lodges do admit women, but they are not recognized [See REGULARITY AND RECOGNITION below] by the Grand Lodge of California.

Women are certainly included in the Family of Freemasonry through Concordant Bodies, such as the Order of the Eastern Star, the Order of Amaranth, and so on.

## **EXAMINING VISITORS**

This responsibility belongs to the Lodge itself and is delegated by the Master to a committee of Brethren who are to satisfy themselves that the visitor is a Master Mason in good standing in a regular and recognized Lodge. The Master may call upon any member of the Lodge to serve on the examining committee.

It should ever be remembered that the purpose of examination is to prove that a visitor is a Mason, not to prove that he is not a Mason. Kindness and courtesy should be shown to all visitors at all times.

## **VOUCHERS ON PETITIONERS**

Before endorsing the petition of anyone for initiation into our Mysteries, you should take the time to discuss Masonry with the applicant. You should know why he wishes to become a Mason, what he expects and what may be expected of him. The Investigating Committee should explain much of this to him, but you should be satisfied with his understanding and know that he is of good moral character. The signing of the petition should be a source of great pleasure for you.

You should also remember that signing the petition of a man who wishes to become a Freemason is a significant responsibility. By doing so, you are committing to assist him to learn and grow as a Mason. Nor does your responsibility end when he has been Raised. From the moment you sponsor his petition, you are bound to him by a strong tie.

## **INVESTIGATING PETITIONERS**

This responsibility belongs to every member of the Lodge, and should not be taken lightly. Serving on an Investigating Committee should be regarded as a mark of special trust by the Master of your Lodge. It is a solemn responsibility. Only those who can be counted on to make a complete and impartial inquiry into the petitioner's character and determine his worthiness to become a Mason, should be selected. The members of the Investigating Committee are known only to the petitioner and to the Master who appointed them.

## **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Your financial responsibilities are twofold. The first is in the area of mandatory support - the payment of annual dues. The second is in the area of voluntary contributions to certain charities, Masonic Homes Endowment Fund, distressed worthy Brothers, and other Masonic organizations, as you desire. By paying dues, each Brother carries his share of the expenses to run his Lodge. Regarding voluntary financial support, he must determine the extent of his participation, measuring the need against his ability.

Any member failing to pay his dues for a period of more than twelve months is subject to suspension. There is no reason a Brother should be suspended for non-payment of dues. Not being able to pay dues can be handled easily and without embarrassment. No Lodge desires to suspend a Brother who is unable to continue payment of dues. A distressed Brother should inform the Master or the Secretary of his situation. One of these Officers will take care of the situation so no record is shown on the books and no debt is accumulated. This is not Masonic Charity, but rather Brotherly Love. In most cases, the other Brethren in the Lodge know nothing about his situation.

## **LODGE MEMBERSHIP**

Although Entered Apprentices are considered Masons in every sense of the word, one does not become a member of a Lodge until after being raised. Termination of membership can occur in one of four ways - dimit, suspension, expulsion or death. One can apply for a dimit (or transfer to another Lodge) if his dues are current and he is otherwise in good standing. You can, in California, also hold plural or dual membership in more than one Lodge. This sometimes occurs when one Lodge raises a candidate and he then moves to another area and wants to become active in a new Lodge. One must be a member of a Lodge in order to become an officer there. Plural Membership refers to being a member of more than one Lodge in this Jurisdiction (California), while Dual Membership refers to being simultaneously a member in this jurisdiction and in a Lodge of another jurisdiction. See your Lodge secretary for proper handling of the paperwork.

You can be suspended for nonpayment of dues or "unmasonic conduct". If suspended for nonpayment of dues, you can apply for reinstatement. At any time, you may pay back dues for the year of nonpayment, plus the current year. If suspended for "unmasonic conduct", you may petition for reinstatement through the proper procedures and channels. If convicted of un-masonic conduct by trial, the trial board may direct expulsion from the order. The verdict can be appealed to the Grand Lodge. A Mason suspended or expelled from a Lodge is automatically denied membership in all Masonic organizations.

## **ENTERING OR RETIRING FROM A LODGE**

Courtesy dictates that you should always arrive before a Lodge meeting is scheduled to begin. This also allows you to share in the fellowship of the Lodge, meet any visitors who may be present, and so on. If you are unavoidably detained and arrive after a meeting has begun, you should clothe yourself properly, inform the Tiler, and ask to be admitted.

The Tiler will inform the Junior Deacon, who will then request permission from the Master that you be admitted. The Junior Deacon will notify you when it is appropriate to enter and also of the Degree in which work is taking place. When permitted to enter, proceed West of the Altar, give the due guard and sign of the Degree, and then quickly take a seat. Keep in mind that you are likely interrupting the business of the Lodge, so be as unobtrusive as possible.

Retiring from a Lodge is accomplished in much the same way. Move West of the Altar, give the appropriate signs, and then leave.

## **DEPARTMENT WHILE IN THE LODGE**

Your deportment while the Lodge is open should be governed by good taste and propriety. You should not engage in private conversations, nor through any other action disrupt the business of the Lodge. Discussions in the Lodge are always a healthy sign and promote the interest of the Lodge - if properly conducted. If you wish to speak, rise and, after being recognized, give the due guard and sign and make your remarks. Always address your remarks to the Master, even if you are responding to a direct question from another Brother. When finished, you may then be seated. Religion, partisan politics and any other subject, which might disrupt the peace and harmony of the Lodge, should not be discussed in Lodge. Voting on routine matters is usually conducted through a voice ballot.

## **OFFICERS OF A LODGE**

There are five elected officers of a Masonic Lodge: the Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Master appoints the Chaplain, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Marshal, Senior Steward, Junior Steward, Tiler and Musician. The Master, Wardens, and Senior Deacon must be proficient in the Work of their respective positions, and the District Inspector must certify their proficiency. Any qualified member may be elected by the Lodge to hold office, but most officer lines are progressive.

## **APPENDANT AND CONCORDANT BODIES**

Once you have been raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, you may choose to join any number of Masonic Appendant Bodies. The two most common Appendant Orders are known as the Scottish Rite and the York Rite.

The Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite is an additional system of degrees from the early 19th Century which are designed to add further Light to one's Blue Lodge experience. The Scottish Rite is divided into four interrelated bodies, each of which deals with the recovery and meaning of the True Word of a Master Mason. The Scottish Rite system progresses through the 33°, but it should be remembered that the highest degree in Masonry is the Third Degree. Thus, the Scottish Rite degrees are more properly called additional degrees, rather than higher degrees. The Scottish Rite is well known for the pageantry and flair with which it presents its beautiful degree ceremonies.

The York Rite is a confederation of three independent Masonic bodies: The Royal Arch Chapter, the Cryptic Council, and the Knights Templar Commandery. The Royal Arch is the foundation of the York Rite, and it is here that the recovery and meaning of the True Word of a Master Mason is dealt with. The Chapter confers four degrees. The Degree of Royal Arch Mason is often described as the most spiritual and mystical of all the degrees of Freemasonry. The Royal Arch is also known as a "gateway" degree, and membership entitles one to join certain smaller rites and orders, such as the Allied Masonic Degrees, Knights Masons USA, Red Cross of Constantine, and so on.

The Cryptic Council confers three degrees which help explain how the True Secrets of a Master Mason were safeguarded until the time when future ages should discover the right. The Knights Templar is the third body of the York Rite. It is Christian in character and content, and describes the passage of pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem during the Crusades.

Master Masons in good standing are eligible to join the Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (Shriners), a benevolent and social Masonic organization. The Shrine is particularly well known for the many hospitals and burn centers it maintains for the care of children. This care is offered to all children in need at no cost to them or their families. It is supported entirely from the donations of members of that body.

There are other rites, degrees, and organizations one may join upon becoming a Master Mason, depending on one's interest in searching for further Light in Masonry. California has three Research Lodges, each of which is dedicated to promoting scholarly Masonic study and discussion. The Philaethes Society is an International organization of Masonic Research and offers members an outstanding quarterly publication, The Philaethes magazine, which includes excellent Masonic information from around the world. The Societas Rosicruciana in Civitatibus Foederatis (the Masonic Rosicrucian Society of the United States) is the most esoteric of all the rites and degrees of Freemasonry. It is an invitational body open to Master Masons.

The Order of the Eastern Star, Order of the Amaranth, and the White Shrine of Jerusalem are popular concordant bodies which admit both men and women. Often, they provide the chance for a husband and wife to share in the Masonic experience together.

There are also three Masonic Youth Orders in California, which include boys and girls (and young men and young women) in the family of Freemasonry: The International Order of DeMolay for Boys, the International Order of Job's Daughters, and the International Order of Rainbow for Girls.

Each of these Appendant and Concordant Bodies is an important part of the larger Family of Freemasonry in California, and each must obey the rules and regulations of the Grand Lodge.

## **THE GRAND LODGE AND YOU**

Every Grand Lodge presides over one (and only one) Masonic jurisdiction. It is the supreme Masonic authority within that jurisdiction. Its authority extends not just to the Lodges under its control, but also to each of the Appendant and Concordant Bodies within its confines. Jurisdictions vary in size and composition. In some places, like England and Scotland, there is a single Grand Lodge for the entire country. Others, like the United States, have multiple Grand Lodges, but each has a certain exclusive territory in which it operates. [See the important exception below under PRINCE HALL MASONRY.] Still other places have multiple Grand Lodges acting within the same territory, each responsible for its own Lodges. Currently, there are 51 mainstream Grand Lodges in this country - all 50 States and the District of Columbia.

A Grand Lodge serves as the administrative center for a Masonic jurisdiction. It sets policies and procedures, ensures that rules and regulations are being followed, maintains the esoteric work according to the ancient usages, charters new Lodges, provides information and assistance to its constituent Lodges, and so on.

Constituent Lodges are responsible for paying per capita to the Grand Lodge for its upkeep and maintenance. This money comes from the annual dues of the membership of each of the Lodges. Each Lodge must also adhere to all of the rules and regulations adopted by the Grand Lodge. However, it is important to remember that the authority of the Grand Lodge is derived from the Lodges. Individual Lodges can exist without a Grand Lodge, but a Grand Lodge cannot exist without Lodges.

## **REGULARITY AND RECOGNITION**

One of the most complicated areas of Masonic jurisprudence, or law, relates to the standards a Grand Lodge must follow in order to be considered REGULAR. Each Grand Lodge has its own set of standards, and since there is no central governing authority within Freemasonry, determining REGULARITY is difficult at best.

Masonic Law is based in part on Anderson's *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons*, originally published in 1723. This book was written just six years after the formation of the first Grand Lodge [See EA: *ORIGINS OF THE FIRST GRAND LODGE*] and lists the commonly accepted rules of the time for a Grand Lodge, Lodge, and individual member. Space does not permit a comprehensive list of all the relevant issues, but some examples include: acceptance of candidates, irrespective of their personal religious beliefs; the Holy Bible, Square, and Compass displayed upon the Altar at all times; the acceptance of men only; the Hiram Legend as an integral part of the Third Degree, and so on.

In the late 19th Century, Albert Mackey published a list of 25 Ancient Landmarks of Freemasonry. A Landmark is supposed to be an integral part of the Craft and can never be changed. Mackey's list has served as the basis of REGULARITY since its publication, but confusion arises, because each Grand Lodge determines its own set of Landmarks. Some jurisdictions use all 25 Landmarks as presented by Mackey. Others have a shorter list. Still others, like California, refer to the Ancient Landmarks but do not define them.

REGULARITY is, therefore, a subjective term. It depends on the perspective of the one making the determination. Furthermore, a Grand Lodge may be considered REGULAR by one jurisdiction and IRREGULAR by another!

In contrast to REGULARITY, the concept of RECOGNITION is purely objective. RECOGNITION refers to the state of amity between two Masonic jurisdictions. The relationship

is similar to that between Nation States, and since each Grand Lodge is sovereign, it decides for itself which Grand Lodges it will RECOGNIZE and which it will not.

When two Grand Lodge share RECOGNITION, their members are permitted to visit one another and, in most cases, hold dual membership across jurisdictional lines. The only Brethren permitted to visit our Lodges are those from RECOGNIZED Masonic jurisdictions. Brethren from UNRECOGNIZED jurisdictions may not visit a Lodge in our jurisdiction. It is the responsibility of the Master, or his designee, to make this determination and to ensure that all visiting Brethren are from a RECOGNIZED Lodge. The book List of Lodges Masonic is published annually and includes a comprehensive list of every Lodge in the world which is RECOGNIZED by the Grand Lodge of California. Every Lodge Secretary should have a copy of this book in his office.

The term Clandestine is often misused and should be avoided as much as possible. A Clandestine Lodge is simply one that is not working with a legitimate charter from a Grand Lodge. It may have been in possession of such a charter at one time, but for any number of reasons, it no longer possesses one, and thus, it is considered Clandestine, or "in the dark." This term is not the same as IRREGULAR.

#### PRINCE HALL MASONRY

In 1783, a free Black man named Prince Hall was made a Mason in Massachusetts by a traveling Irish Military Lodge. Hall wished to form a lodge but was denied dispensation by the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. He sent his petition to the Grand Lodge of England, and after 12 years, he received a charter for African Lodge No. 459 on their rolls.

This Lodge eventually led to the first "Prince Hall" Grand Lodge. Since that time, Prince Hall Grand Lodges have spread across this country, much like mainstream Grand Lodges. For 200 years, these Grand Lodges were unrecognized and considered irregular. It is only very recently that Prince Hall Masonry has started to be accepted by the mainstream.

It should be understood that the separation between Prince Hall Masonry and mainstream Masonry was not entirely one-sided. Prince Hall Masons are justifiably proud of their Masonic heritage, and there was some concern on their part that recognition would lead to their jurisdictions being swallowed up by the larger mainstream. However, there can be no doubt that racism played a large part in the gulf between mainstream Freemasonry and Prince Hall Freemasonry.

In 1989, the United Grand Lodge of England extended recognition to the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. Connecticut and Massachusetts soon followed with recognition of their own. Since that time, many Prince Hall and mainstream Grand Lodges have extended recognition to one another. As of 1998, 28 of 51 mainstream Grand Lodges were in fraternal accord with their Prince Hall counterparts.

The Grand Lodge of California recognized the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of California and Hawaii, Inc. at our 1995 Annual Communication. We are now permitted to visit their Lodges, and they are permitted to visit ours, without restriction. Dual membership is not permitted, however, because their Masonic Code expressly prohibits their members from joining Lodges outside their jurisdiction.

We are also in fraternal accord with the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of Oregon.

#### THE GRAND LODGE OF CALIFORNIA

The Grand Lodge of California is composed of 7 elective officers. Their titles are: Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Senior Grand Warden, Junior Grand Warden, Grand Treasurer, Grand Secretary and Grand Lecturer. They are elected by ballot at each annual communication after all other business has been completed. There are 20 appointed Officers.

Grand Lodge Officers, Past Grand Officers, the Masters and Wardens of each Lodge in the State, and the Past Masters of all Lodges in this jurisdiction.

Our Masonic Law is codified in a document called the California Masonic Code (C.M.C.). Every member of a Lodge and every Masonic organization in this jurisdiction must adhere to the rules and regulations of the C.M.C. Failure to do so may be grounds for disciplinary action. You are therefore encouraged to make yourself familiar with this important document.

Each October during Annual Communication, the members of Grand Lodge meet at the California Masonic Memorial Temple in San Francisco and conduct the business of the Grand Lodge. During Annual Communication, resolutions are presented and voted on by the Grand



Lodge. Each member of Grand Lodge has one vote, except the Grand Tiler who has no vote and Past Masters who have one collective vote for their whole Lodge. Thus, each Lodge in this jurisdiction has four votes total: one for the Master, one for each of the Wardens, and one for its Past Masters as a group. All Master Masons in good standing are permitted to attend these sessions but may not vote unless they are members of Grand Lodge. Pre-registration is required and is handled by the Lodge Secretary.

Resolutions must receive a 5/6 affirmative vote for adoption. Legislation receiving less than 5/6 but greater than a majority of the ballots are carried over to the next year's session, where they must receive 2/3 affirmative vote for passage. Resolutions receiving less than 1/2 fail. The Grand Master is permitted to make Recommendations and Decisions, which are special kinds of legislation and are described below. Legislation which passes is adopted as part of the California Masonic Code.

Every year, the results of the Annual Communication are recorded in the Grand Lodge Proceedings.

### **THE GRAND MASTER**

The Grand Master of Masons of California is elected for a one year term by the members of the Grand Lodge. Almost without exception, he has served the prior three years as Junior Grand Warden, Senior Grand Warden, and then Deputy Grand Master.

The Grand Master is the chief executive officer of this jurisdiction and his powers and responsibilities are wide and varied. In brief, he may grant dispensations, convene and preside over any Lodge, arrest the charter or dispensation of any Lodge, suspend the Master of any Lodge from the exercise of his powers and duties, and officiate at the laying of cornerstones. The Grand Master also acts on behalf of the Grand Lodge when it is not in session.

During his term, the Grand Master is sometimes called upon to interpret the California Masonic Code. He may consult with the Jurisprudence Committee on the matter, but the final determination is his to make. This interpretation of the C.M.C. is called a Grand Master Decision and immediately becomes law within the jurisdiction. At the Annual Communication next following, all Grand Master Decisions are voted on by the Grand Lodge. They must receive 2/3 affirmative vote for passage and are subject to the same rules regarding carry-over legislation as any other resolution.

The Grand Master may also offer his Recommendations to the Grand Lodge. These are treated like any normal resolution brought before the Grand Lodge, except that the Recommendation of a Grand Master often carries a great deal of influence.

The Executive Committee consists of the Grand Master, the Deputy Grand Master, and the Senior and Junior Grand Wardens. In the absence of the Grand Master, one of these other officers presides on his behalf.

### **THE GRAND SECRETARY**

The Grand Secretary is the chief administrative officer of the Grand Lodge. He has many responsibilities, most especially managing the staff and day-to-day operations of the Grand Lodge office. He is also responsible for serving as secretary for various Grand Lodge Boards and Committees, recording all transactions of the Grand Lodge proper to be written, maintaining important documents and papers of the Grand Lodge, and conducting the correspondence of the Grand Lodge. He also receives Resolutions, Decisions, and Recommendations presented to the Grand Lodge for Annual Communication, maintains membership statistics, and more.

### **THE GRAND LECTURER AND RITUAL COMMITTEE**

In matters of ritual, this jurisdiction is divided into four geographical Divisions, each of which is under the supervision of an Assistant Grand Lecturer, who is appointed each year by the Grand Master. These four Assistant Grand Lecturers receive instruction in the ritual and report to the Grand Lecturer, who is an elective Grand Lodge Officer.

Each of these Divisions is further subdivided into Districts, which are overseen by an Inspector. Each Inspector is usually accountable for about four Lodges. The Inspector oversees the ritual work and is also the representative of the Grand Master within the District. He is authorized to ensure that the administration of each Lodge in his District is handled

properly. Within each Lodge, an Officers Coach, appointed by the Inspector, sees that the ritual work of that Lodge is done properly.

#### **BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

The Grand Lodge maintains a number of Boards and Committees, each of which has a specific responsibility within the overall structure of the Grand Lodge. Boards and Standing Committees are mandated by the California Masonic Code. The Grand Master may also convene any number of Special Committees at his pleasure.

All Members of Grand Lodge Boards and Committees are appointed by the Grand Master and are usually Past Masters, but a limited number of Master Masons may be appointed, as well. Members may only serve for nine years, with five of those as president or chairman, unless the Grand Master feels that circumstances warrant a longer term.

## **MASONIC GLOSSARY - MASTER MASON**

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Approbation    | approval, commendation or praise; a formal or official act of approval  |
| Brute creation | animals at their birth; anything non-human in its infancy   |
| Cleaves        | comes apart from; separates into distinct parts; divides; to part or split especially along a natural line or division  |
| Dotage         | a decline of mental faculties associated with old age; a state or period of senile decay marked by decline of mental poise and alertness                            |
| Emulation      | ambitious rivalry; ambition or desire to equal or excel others in achievement   |
| Fiat           | an authoritative decree, sanction or order; a command or act of will that creates something without, or as if without, further effort; an arbitrary decree or order |
| Hecatomb       | 100 oxen or cattle (in ancient Greece a public sacrifice of 100 oxen to the gods in thanks for some great discovery, event or victory)                              |
| Imbrue         | stain; soak; drench   |
| Injunction     | a warning, order, direction or instruction  |
| Seraph         | an order of angels; one of the 6-winged angels standing in the presence of God  |
| Speculative    | theoretical rather than practical; involving, or based on, intellectual questioning and curiosity; marked by meditating or pondering on a subject                   |
| Sublime        | lofty, grand or exalted in thought; expression or manner; of outstanding spiritual, intellectual or moral worth; tending to inspire awe                             |
| Zeal           | enthusiasm; diligence; eagerness and great interest in pursuit of something   |

## **MASONIC GLOSSARY - TERMS DEFINED BY THE GRAND LODGE OF CALIFORNIA**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Ballot                | a secret vote by balls and cubes or in writing   |
| Clandestine           | not recognized by the Grand Lodge of California  |
| Constituent           | a Lodge chartered by, or under dispensation from, a Grand Lodge  |
| Dimit                 | a document, bearing the seal of a Lodge and attested to by the Secretary, terminating membership   |
| Fraternal             | activities that promote fraternalism in Intercourse constituent Lodges or Masonic Youth Orders and are not prohibited by this Code   |
| In Good Standing      | when dues are current  |
| Masonic Lodge         | a group of Masons with common Association employment or profession and with a membership of not less than 25 Master Masons of this jurisdiction; in good standing  |
| Masonic Clothing      | white aprons   |
| Masonic Communication | any communication involving the esoteric Intercourse or secret portion of the ritual   |
| Masonic affiliation   | any group, chapter, order, club, or organization requiring as a prerequisite to membership, except Masonic Lodges  |
| Masonic Regalia       | aprons, jewels, implements and hats appropriate to one's station or office   |
| Masonic Youth         | International Order of the Rainbow for Orders Girls, International Order of Job's Daughters, International Order of DeMolay  |
| Notice                | a call issued by the Secretary, by order of the Lodge or Master, or by other competent authority to attend or perform as specified   |
| Summons               | an imperative order issued by the Master, and attested to by the Secretary, or by other competent authority, to appear as specified; a trial summons is one issued for the purpose of answering Masonic charges. |

## Questions for the Master Mason Degree

1. What does the Lodge represent in this degree?
2. What is the meaning of "sublime," and why is this word used to describe the Third Degree?
3. Which part of man is dealt with in the Master Mason Degree?
4. Of what is the candidate reminded by his reception at the door of the Preparation Room?
5. What are the Working Tools of the Master Mason? Which of these is most important, and what does it symbolize?
6. Who does the candidate represent in the Second Section of the Third Degree?
7. Why is this character important, and what was his role at the Building of King Solomon's Temple?
8. What is the meaning of "Abiff"?
9. What are the Wages of a Master Mason?
10. What do these Wages symbolize?
11. Which question by Job does this degree attempt to answer?
12. Who are the Three Ancient Grand Masters?
13. What is the meaning of the term "foreign countries"?
14. What do the Three Ruffians symbolize?
15. What is the significance of the term "Low Twelve"?
16. To whom was given the title "Lion of the Tribe of Judah"?
17. Discuss some of the ancient meanings of the lion.
18. As Master Masons, for what are we in search? What does this symbolize?
19. Why are Signs, Tokens and Words significant to Masons?
20. What is a Setting Maul?
21. Of what is the Sprig of Acacia an emblem? Where was it traditionally placed by the ancients?
22. What are we symbolically trying to teach when we "Raise to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason"?
23. Through what symbol is the virtue of industry taught to Masons?
24. What is the meaning of the All Seeing Eye?
25. According to Plutarch, which Egyptian Gods are attributed to the three sides of the Pythagorean Triangle?

26. What are the rights of a Master Mason?
27. What are the responsibilities of a Master Mason?
28. Is Lodge attendance mandatory?
29. Who has the right to vote in a Lodge? Can a member be excused from voting if he has good reason?
30. If you have an objection to a petition, when is the proper time to raise this objection?
31. Can you discuss how you voted with other members of the Lodge?
32. What are the financial responsibilities of a Mason to his Lodge?
33. What are the four ways in which membership may be terminated?
34. Can we discuss religious and partisan political issues within a Lodge?
35. Name the Elected Officers of a Masonic Lodge.
36. Name the Appointed Officers of a Masonic Lodge. Who appoints these officers?
37. How many mainstream Grand Lodges are there in the United States?
38. What is "per capita" and where does it come from?
39. How many Ancient Landmarks are there in our Jurisdiction? What are they?
40. Only visitors from what sort of other Masonic Jurisdictions are permitted to visit our Lodges and we theirs?
41. When was the Grand Lodge of California formed?
42. Briefly describe Prince Hall Freemasonry. In what year did the Grand Lodge of California recognize its Prince Hall counterpart?
43. What is the name of the volume containing our Masonic Law?
44. When is the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge, and where does it take place?
45. Who may attend these sessions?
46. What are the titles of the seven elective Grand Officers of our Jurisdiction?
47. How long does the Grand Master serve?
48. How have the lessons of Freemasonry made you a better person?
49. What suggestion(s) would you make for improving this course.
50. Did reading this book add anything to your experience in taking the Third Degree of Masonry?