

STANDARD PROFICIENCY

for the

MASTER MASON DEGREE

for

NEBRASKA LODGES

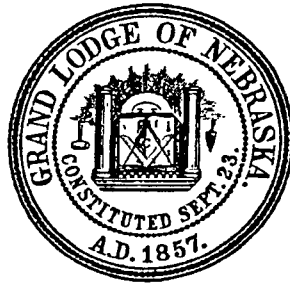


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Grand Lodge Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Nebraska

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Brethren:

This manual has been adopted by the Committee on Nebraska Work and the Officers of the Grand Lodge A.:F.: & A.:M.: of Nebraska as the minimum required proficiency in the Master Mason Degree for all Nebraska lodges.

Candidates shall be determined proficient in the Master Mason Degree upon:

1. Completion of a study of the material contained herein.
2. Verification by the Worshipful Master that the candidate has expressed his knowledge of the material in this manual by answering, in his own words, the questions listed for the Master Mason Degree (pages 17-25).
3. Successful completion by the candidate of an examination in open Lodge, consisting of questions and answers from the First Section Lectures as follows: Master Mason Degree starting with the words, "Have you any signs belonging to this degree?" and continuing to the end of the Lecture.

Any Lodge may, at the discretion of its' members, request that their candidates learn a lecture, answers to additional questions, etc., as it so chooses. However, once the three requirements listed above have been met, the candidate will be declared proficient in the Master Mason Degree.

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August 1990

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THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

The Sublime Degree

It is called this not only for the solemnity of the ceremonies, but also for the profound lesson of wisdom it teaches. This Degree symbolizes the great lessons of the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul.

The Master Mason Degree differs in many ways from the previous two Degrees. Many of the symbols are the same, but they are interpreted differently. In other degrees, the Lodge is a symbol of the world in which we live trying to sustain life; striving to obtain knowledge; and becoming virtuous through wisdom.

In this degree, the Lodge becomes a representation of the Sanctum Sanctorum, or Holy of Holies, of Solomon's great Temple at Jerusalem. This magnificent structure was a symbol of Heaven to the Hebrew people. Supposedly, Solomon built it as the dwelling place of Jehovah, that he might be in the midst of his people, Israel. The Hebrew law of cleanliness was strictly enforced and nothing earthy or unclean was permitted to enter the Temple. When you attain the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, you receive this most valuable lesson and truth that having been faithful to your trust, you must at last die, in order to attain the ultimate reward of your fidelity. This teaches immortality of the soul.

In this state of life man is represented to have died; and then he is raised from the grave to another and better place. Thus, these ceremonies of the Degree lead to the inevitable conclusion that youth, properly directed, leads to an honorable and virtuous maturity; and that, regulated by morality, faith and justice, life will be rewarded in its' closing hours by the prospect of eternal bliss and immortality.

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

The Significance of the Degree

The significance can best be understood when we compare it to the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft Degrees. In the first two Degrees, architecture was the theme of the symbols. The symbols in the Degree of Master Mason refer to life, its' tragedy, and its' ultimate triumph, if we lead virtuous lives. In other words, the symbols of this Degree deal with the spiritual part of man's life. We should keep in mind that in our later years we are getting closer and closer to immortality, and that we have work to perform which is given us by the Supreme Architect of the Universe. Resurrection and immortality are both significant lessons in this Degree.

Preparation

The preparation of the candidate reminds him of several things. First, through the clothing, he is reminded that he is to be humble. He is also taught that his obligations become more extensive and binding each time he advances. Finally, he is reminded that he is able to attain many of his desires only with the assistance given him by a friend or brother.

Reception

In the reception at the door, you are reminded that all the lessons of Freemasonry must be implanted in the heart if they are to serve a useful purpose and become a part of your way of life, and that you should practice these in your daily life.

Obligation

The Obligation is the heart of the Degree. By taking the Obligation, the candidate obtains the privileges, the rights, and the benefits, of the Masonic institution. You must know the Obligation if you are to abide by it.

Clandestine Lodge and Clandestine Mason

A Clandestine Lodge is one that has not been issued a charter from a duly recognized Grand Lodge. One who belongs to one of these lodges is a clandestine mason.

Black Freemasonry

We believe black Freemasonry began in Boston in 1775, when a black man, by the name of Prince Hall, and fourteen other black men, were made Masons in Military Lodge No. 441, operating under a charter from the Grand Lodge of Ireland. Nine years later, in 1784, Prince Hall applied to the Grand Lodge of England for a charter. From this, a Lodge called African Lodge No. 429 was born. We are not sure what happened; but, seven years later, in 1791, the Lodge assumed Grand Lodge powers, and called itself the Prince Hall Grand Lodge. Prince Hall died nine years later, in early 1800, and the Lodge became dormant. It was later revived by some of the original members.

Some Prince Hall Grand Lodges have recently been recognized, and it appears more and more will be recognized in the future. In February of 1990, the Grand Lodge of Nebraska A.:F.: & A.:M.: and Prince Hall Grand Lodge F.: & A.:M.: of Nebraska extended full recognition to each other. The Prince Hall Grand Lodge requires the same qualifications of a man as we do, and they perform essentially the same ritual work.

Masonic Definition of Dotage, Fool, Libertine and Profane

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

Women

The question of not allowing women to become Masons has arisen many times. When we were an Operative craft, the buildings were built by Operative Masons, who hired men who could carry large, heavy objects. Thus, it was a requirement that only men could become Operative Masons. This has continued down through the years to us, today; but as you know, new laws may make this requirement obsolete in the near future.

Signs, Tokens, and Words

We feel these are very important because 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. You should know how to properly execute all the Signs, at all times, in order to properly show your respect for the dignity of this part of the ceremonies.

The Working Tools

The working tools of a Master Mason are all the instruments of Masonry. In the United States the Trowel is especially assigned to this Degree. The Master Mason is to use the Trowel to cement ties between Masons and to spread Brotherly Love.

The Legend of Hiram

Hiram Abif, the skilled artificer, was the son of a widow of the Tribe of Naphtali. The earlier accounts of Hiram are recorded in the First Book of Kings, Chapter 7, Verses 13 and 14. His coming to work on the great Temple at Jerusalem is mentioned in a letter written to King Solomon by Hiram, the King of Tyre, and recorded in II Chronicles, Chapter 2, Verses 13 and 14. The word Abif means "his father" or "my father", and the name is translated to "Hiram, my father." He was regarded as the father of all his workmen on the Temple. By using Hiram Abif we are taught the magnificent lessons of fidelity.

The Three Grand Masters

The three mentioned often in our rituals concerning the building of the Temple are: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abif. In early times, it was thought that Deity was regarded as three persons working together to get things done. The secrets known only to these Three Grand Masters typify Divine Truth, which was known only to Deity, and was not to be communicated to man until he had completed his own spiritual temple. Once these secrets were attained, a Mason could reap the rewards of a well-spent life, and travel to that well-known country toward which all of us are traveling. By knowing the meaning of these names and references to their offices, you will better understand what the ritual means. All of us are forever reaching outward and upward, looking for further knowledge of God and our relationship with Him, which is Divine Truth.

King Solomon's Temple

This magnificent structure was located on Mount Moriah, at Jerusalem. It was near the place where Abraham was about to offer up his son Isaac. The site was purchased by David, King of Israel, for it was here that the hand of the Destroying Angel was stayed after David had repented. The incident is recorded in II Samuel, Chapter 24, Verses 15 through 25; and I Chronicles, Chapter 21, Verses 14 through 30. The building of the Temple was begun around 1012 B.C., and finished eight years later, around 1004 B.C. It was about 480 years after the people of Israel came out of Egypt as a band of refugees. The people lost their sense of spiritual direction and destiny, so their Temple was destroyed in the year 586 B.C., by Nebuchadnezzar.

The Symbolism of the Temple

The chief purpose of Solomon's Temple was to provide a dwelling place for God in the midst of his people, Israel. People thought that God dwelled with man in those days, and this should be a fundamental human thought today. Some people of that day claim this was the most perfect building ever erected by man. Whether it was or not was open to conjecture, but perfection was certainly the goal of both David and Solomon. The symbol of the Temple for each of us is founded upon the idea that man himself is a living Temple where God resides. Freemasonry tries to undertake the task of helping each of its' members build a more stately mansion within themselves where God can reside. Each of us should be aware of the fact that we are a symbolic Temple and that we should work toward the same type of perfection in our own Temple as that sought for in the Temple at Jerusalem. Our individual temples are mental, physical and spiritual, and our work on these temples should not be inferior.

Solomon, King of Israel

Solomon was the son of David and Bathsheba. He was born about 997 B.C. He became king at the age of 20, and reigned 40 years. During Solomon's reign, Israel had its greatest power, prosperity, and recognition. The name Solomon means peaceful, and his reign was one of peace.

Hiram, King of Tyre

Hiram was a friend of King David, and became both ally and friend of King Solomon. According to the Biblical accounts, he assisted Solomon by supplying certain materials for the construction of the Temple; and in return received a gift from Solomon of ten cities.

Hiram Abif

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

To Travel in Foreign Countries

The ultimate goal of our ancient Operative Brothers was to become Masters so they might possess secrets and knowledge which would enable them to practice the arts of the builder no matter where they traveled, even in foreign countries. "Foreign countries", as used in Freemasonry, is a symbolic place and is not meant to refer to a certain geographical location. Freemasonry itself is a foreign country to every new member. If he is to travel in it, if he is to earn Master's wages, he must learn its language; understand its' customs; and study its' history. He must become a part of it to fully appreciate and enjoy its' privileges and pleasures. We, as Speculative Masons, still desire to travel in foreign countries; and some of us feel the urge strongly enough to study Masonry diligently, so we may receive proper instructions and be permitted to travel and receive Master's wages. Becoming a Master Mason gives each man the right to travel in foreign countries in Freemasonry. All you have to do is learn the work and keep yourself in good standing, in order to find Lodges everywhere open to you. By studying the writings of Freemasonry, you will find pleasant traveling. These areas include history, philosophy, and many other areas, leading to countless treasures, which each of you must discover for yourself. These are some of the rewards of each Master Mason who travels in foreign countries.

The Wages of a Master Mason

Our ancient, Operative Brethren performed manual labor and received wages which would contribute to their physical welfare. These nominal wages were Corn, Wine, and Oil. The wages of a Speculative Mason must come from within, as he is concerned with the moral, rather than the physical labor. The intangibles of love, friendship, respect,

opportunity, happy labor, and association, are the wages of a Master who earns them. Not all do earn them; and that is why the Senior Warden, in the opening of the Lodge, declares: "to pay the Craft their wages, if aught be due..."

The Three Ruffians

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

Low Twelve

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

The Five Points of Fellowship

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

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah

The lion has always been the symbol of might and royalty. It was the sign of the Tribe of Judah, because this was the royal tribe of the Hebrew Nation. All Kings of Judah were therefore called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. This was one of the titles of King Solomon. This was the literal meaning. The symbolic meaning of the name does not necessarily

refer to Jesus of Nazareth, but some could interpret it so. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah also describes a mediator of some of the ancient religions. There is no definite meaning to any Mason. He is left to his own description, and that is one of the reasons Masonry has had followers from all religions, over the centuries.

The Lost Word

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

The Setting Maul

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

The Sprig of Acacia

Hebrew people used to plant a sprig of acacia at the head of a grave for two purposes to mark the location of the grave, and to show their belief in immortality. Because of its evergreen nature, they believed it to be an emblem of both immortality and innocence. The true acacia is a thorny plant which abounds in Palestine. Both Jews and Egyptians believed that, because of its' hardness its' evergreen nature and its' ability to live in the face of despair it signified immortality. It is believed that the acacia was used to construct most of the furniture and the tabernacle in the Temple.

The Raising of a Candidate

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

There is a book called "Introduction to Freemasonry", that describes some of the lessons and purposes of the Degree; and the following are some of the lessons:

The Degree delves into the deepest recesses of man's nature. While it leads the initiate into the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple, it probes into the Holy of Holies in his heart. As a whole, the Degree is symbolic of that old age, by the wisdom of which we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent life, and die in the hope of a glorious immortality.

It teaches no creed, no dogma, no religion: only that there is a hope of immortality; and through God's mercy, we may live again. It teaches the power, and the powerlessness, of evil. For those of us who are happy, believing in the resurrection of the physical body, which Paul taught; then, the Degree assures us of all we wish.

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

The All-Seeing Eye

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

(The due guard and signs should be taught. Questions?)

THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF FREEMASONRY

The Rights of a Master Mason

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

1) Masonic Relief

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

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

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.

If you happen to become destitute while in a strange city, you can apply for assistance to a local Board of Relief, or through the Masonic Relief Association of the United States and Canada. They will contact your local Lodge and explain the situation to one of the Officers.

2) Masonic Visitation

Visitation of other Lodges is a right you acquire when you can prove yourself to be a Mason in good standing, and if no member of the Lodge you are visiting objects. In order to get into another Lodge, you should learn the memory work in each Degree (if you haven't already done so), and carry your paid-up dues card with you at all times.

You can gain visitation rights to another Lodge by two ways. First, by undergoing "strict trial or due examination"; or second by being vouched for by a Brother of the Lodge you are visiting.

Undergoing examination usually consists of showing your dues card; then the Worshipful Master appoints a Committee to examine you. After the examination the Committee will vouch for you in open Lodge.

3) The Right of Burial

Masonic Funeral Rites are conducted only at the request of some member of a Mason's immediate family. The choice belongs to the family, not to the Lodge. These Rites can be held in the church or at graveside.

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.

1) Lodge Attendance

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

2) The Responsibility of Balloting

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

The white balls are the affirmative, or favorable ballot; and the black cube is the negative, or unfavorable, ballot.

If you do not know of anything unfavorable against the petitioner then you should accept the word of the Investigating Committee and cast a favorable ballot. However, if you know of some reason to indicate the petitioner is unworthy, do not hesitate to use the black cube to protect the Lodge from undesirable members. As the ballot box is passed, examine your own motives, and hope that the ballot you are about to cast will do justice to the candidate, to Freemasonry, and to yourself. Only by doing so will we be able to continue

building a membership of worthy Brothers. If in doubt, vote in favor of the Lodge and Freemasonry.

The Right to Secrecy of the Ballot is guaranteed by Masonic Law, and custom allows each member to have perfect freedom in balloting on petitioners. No Brother should disclose how he voted, and no Brother shall inquire into how another Brother voted on a particular candidate.

3) The Responsibility to Examine Visitors

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

4) The Responsibility of Vouchers on Petitioners

Before endorsing the petition of anyone for initiation, you should take the time to discuss Masonry with the applicant. You should know why he wishes to become a Mason, what he expects, and what may be expected of him.

The Investigating Committee should explain much of this to him, but you, yourself, should be satisfied with his understanding, and know that he is of good moral character. The signing of the petition should be a source of great pleasure for you.

5) The Responsibility to Investigate Petitioners

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

Serving on the Investigating Committee should be regarded as a mark of special trust by those selected. Only those who can be counted on to make a complete and impartial inquiry into the petitioner's character, and determine his worthiness to become a Mason, should be selected.

6) The Financial Responsibilities of a Mason

These are twofold. First in the area of mandatory support, or Lodge dues. Second in the area of voluntary support, or of the Masonic Home and distressed, worthy Brothers. By paying dues, the Brother carries his share of the expense imposed by the Lodge. In

voluntary support, he must determine the extent of his participation, measuring the need against his ability.

Any Member failing to pay his dues for a period of more than twelve months is subject to summons by the Grand Lodge. He must "show cause" why he should not be suspended from membership.

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

A distressed Brother should inform the Worshipful Master or the Secretary of his situation. One of these Officers will take care of the situation; so no record is shown on the books, and no debt is accumulated. This is not Masonic Charity, but rather, Brotherly Love. It is felt that a Brother who finds himself unable to pay his dues has an obligation to make his situation known to the Worshipful Master or Secretary.

Lodge Membership

You become a member after being raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. Termination is accomplished in one of four ways — demit, suspension, expulsion, or death.

You can apply for a demit (or transfer to another Lodge) if you are currently a paid-up member and in good standing. You can also hold plural memberships in more than one Lodge. This is sometimes done when one Lodge raises you to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason; then you move to another area, and want to start in the chairs in the new Lodge. You must be a member of a Lodge in order to become an Officer of that Lodge. See the 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 through your lodge secretary.

If suspended for "unmasonic conduct" you may petition for reinstatement through the proper channels.

Entering or Retiring From a Lodge

First of all you should be there before Lodge opens to join in the fellowship. If circumstances will not warrant this, you should inform the Tyler, who will make the alarm and inform the Junior Deacon that the Brother is properly clothed and vouched for, and desires to enter. The Tyler should also let you know which degree is being worked on that night.

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

Deportment While in Lodge

Your deportment while the Lodge is open is governed by good taste. You should not engage in private conversations; nor through any other action, disrupt the business of the Lodge. Discussions in the Lodge are always a healthy sign and promote the interest of the Lodge if properly conducted. If you wish to speak, rise; after being recognized make your remarks, then sit. You should observe rules of propriety and refrain from mentioning personalities or disturbing the peace and harmony of the Lodge.

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

The Officers of a Lodge

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

Masonic Law

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

Masonic Offenses

What constitutes a Masonic offense?

- (1) All acts prohibited by the laws of the land, and involving moral turpitude.
- (2) Attempting to give the aid of Freemasonry in organized or individual form, to any lottery or gift enterprise, or the sale, purchase, or drawing of lottery tickets.

- (3) Using the phraseology or emblems of Freemasonry for advertising or other commercial purposes.
- (4) Attempting to thwart the legitimate work of the Lodge.
- (5) Expressing the opinion that a particular brother cast a black ball.
- (6) Disobedience of a Masonic summons.
- (7) Making application to or joining, another institution that requires your membership in this Lodge, except York and Scottish Rites, or Shrine.
- (8) Having liquor in the Lodge.

Willful failure to comply with any of these requirements is a Masonic offense, and you would be subject to disciplinary action, from which you could appeal.

The Grand Lodge

The Grand Lodge is the supreme governing body, and it is said that it derives its power from the Craft itself. We elect the Masters and Wardens of the individual Lodges; and they in turn, serve as the voting representatives of the Grand Lodge. Thus, the supreme body (or Grand Lodge) derives its power from the Craft.

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

It is legislative in making the laws governing the subordinate Lodges and every Mason in its jurisdiction.

It is judicial by sitting in judgment on all appeals made to it.

Finally, it is executive in that it determines the policies of the Craft and sees that they are executed.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Masonic Presidents

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

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

Masonic Jewelry

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

Schools of Instruction

You will hear about a School of Instruction every once in a while. Custodians from the Grand Lodge work with a local Lodge in a certain Degree and other nearby Lodges are invited so they can listen and learn.

Recommended Reading

There are many books on Masonry and Masonic subjects from which you can learn more about Masonry. Some of the books are available from the Lodge Secretary, and there are many available from the Grand Lodge in Lincoln. They have a toll-free number and will be glad to help you. We recommend that you continue your education as your time permits.

THE ORDERS AND RITES OF FREEMASONRY

You probably have already heard of the York Rite, or Scottish Rite, and the Shrine. These have been called "higher Degrees" of Masonry, but this is a misnomer if you are taught to believe them to be superior. You cannot attain a higher Degree than that of a Master Mason.

The York Rite and Scottish Rite are advanced Degrees, imparting further knowledge about Masonry. They are another steppingstone in your building your own Temple. You must be a Master Mason to qualify for either Rite.

The Scottish Rite is performed at the area Temple. Either Degree takes about two days to perform, and you will have attained the 32nd Degree of Masonry. The fee includes a ring, dinner, and other mementoes during the initiation.

After either of these Degrees have been attained, you are eligible to join the Shrine.

The Shrine is a fun-loving organization, properly called the Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, and its Temples usually carry Arabic names. Each of these temples is governed by a Potentate, who takes his orders from the Imperial Potentate, or National leader.

Shriners are the most visible part of the family of Masonry because of their participation in parades. Their charitable or philanthropic work is for crippled or burned children. There will be a local club that would be happy to put you to work.

Eastern Star — This is the "coed" portion of the Masonic family.

DeMolay — An organization for the younger boys.

Job's Daughters and Rainbow Girls — Organizations for the young girls.

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

QUESTIONS FOR THE MASTER MASON

1. What does this Degree symbolize for man?
2. What does the Lodge represent in this Degree?
3. To what do the symbols in this Degree refer?
4. There are three things that the candidate is reminded of by his preparation for initiation into the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason. Name them:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

5. Of what are you reminded by your reception at the door?
6. Explain the importance of the Obligation.
7. Explain clandestine lodges and clandestine Masons.
8. What is dotage?
9. What is a libertine?
10. What is the Masonic definition of "profane"?
11. Why are Signs, Tokens, and Words important to Masons?

12. Who was Hiram Abif?
13. What do we mean by "Foreign Countries" in Masonry?
14. If a Mason lives according to the edicts of the Lodge, what are his wages?
15. What are we trying to teach by the use of the Three Ruffians?
16. What is the Masonic definition of "Low Twelve"?
17. Define the symbolism of the Five Points of Fellowship.
18. Who is the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah"?

19. What are we searching for when we look for "The Lost Word"?
20. Why do we use the Setting Maul in our work?
21. Why do we use the Sprig of Acacia?
22. What are we symbolically trying to teach when we "Raise to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason"?
23. Define "The All-Seeing Eye".
24. What are the Rights of a Master Mason?
25. What are the Responsibilities of a Master Mason?

26. Balloting

- a. Who can vote in Lodge?
- b. Must you vote on every issue brought to a vote when you are attending Lodge?
- c. Can you leave Lodge prior to casting your ballot?
- d. When would you ever use a black cube in balloting?

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

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

29. What are the duties of the Investigating Committee in reference to new candidates?
30. What are the financial responsibilities of a Master Mason?
31. There are four ways membership in the Lodge can be terminated. Name and define them below.
- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

32. What is the procedure you must follow if you arrive at Lodge while it is in the process of opening?
33. After your entrance into the Lodge what is the procedure?
34. How do we normally signify our vote on matters brought before the regular meetings?
35. When do we use the written ballot?
36. Name the elected offices.
37. Name the appointed offices.
38. Who appoints the Officers in their appointed positions?

39. Before a Mason can become a Worshipful Master, he must have served as either one of two Officers. Name them.
40. We are governed by Masonic Law handed down to us by what body?
41. What are the eight possible Masonic Offenses?
- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

e.

f.

g.

h.

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

Master Mason Degree

Proficiency Examination

(To Be Conducted In Open Lodge)

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