

The Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Ohio



A Basic Masonic Education Course
For Entered Apprentices
With Questions

Prepared by
The Committee on Masonic Education and Information
of
THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF OHIO

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THE ENTERED APPRENTICE

This manual does not disclose any of the esoteric portions of the ritual of the Grand Lodge of Ohio. The contents of this manual therefore may be discussed with, and read by, any person interested in acquiring knowledge about Freemasonry.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

The intent of this manual is basically twofold: first, to provide the new member of Freemasonry with more information about the Fraternity, its structure, practices and symbolism; and secondly, to offer suggestive approaches for further research if one is so inclined. We feel that there is not only a great need for this type of information but also a great desire for it as well. Masonic education begins with the study of the rituals themselves. After that, the newly made Mason is given references for personal study. For some this is enough, but for others it is not. This manual provides the next logical step for the student of the mysteries of Freemasonry. It is not our purpose here to repeat what is contained within our rituals or in other sources but to stimulate the mind and provoke further research by offering a variety of approaches to consider.

FREEMASONRY DEFINED

Freemasonry cannot be defined in a few sentences or pat answers. One of the most common definitions is that it is a system of morality, veiled in allegory (or a story) and illustrated by symbols. This is true, but Freemasonry is more than that. While it is certainly a course of moral instruction that uses both allegories and symbols to teach its lessons, Freemasonry is also an organized society of men, a fraternity. It uses symbols derived from operative stonemasonry and architecture but not exclusively. Much of its symbolism is also taken from Biblical sources, especially the stories surrounding the building of King Solomon's Temple. Great stress is placed upon the development of moral and ethical virtues and the building of character, with Truth being the guiding principle of our lives. Thus, Brotherhood and charity are natural outcomes which further define what we are. In other words, we are using proven methods to enhance the lives and spirits of our members in a tangible way.

There are also aspects of Freemasonry that enrich our lives and spirits in an intangible way. This part of Freemasonry is harder to define but is just as real. There is something very profound about Freemasonry. It seems to speak to a hidden part of oneself that responds with a deep reverence and respect. The deeper one takes his studies of the rites and symbols of Freemasonry, the richer his Masonic life becomes.

In his poem, "*When is a Man a Mason?*" the Rev. Joseph Fort Newton captured the essence of what it means to be a Freemason:

"When he can look out over the rivers, the hills, and the far horizon with a profound sense of his own littleness in the vast scheme of things, and yet have faith, hope, and courage—which are the root of every virtue. When he knows that down in his heart every man is as noble, as vile, as divine, as diabolic, and as lonely as himself, and seeks to know, to forgive, and to love his fellowman. When he knows how to sympathize with men in their sorrows yea even in their sins—knowing that each man fights a hard fight against many odds. When he has learned how to make friends and how to keep them and above all how to keep friends with himself. When he loves flowers, can hunt birds without a gun, and feels the thrill of an old forgotten joy when he hears the laugh of a little child. When he can be happy and high-minded amid the meaner drudgeries of life. When star-crowned trees and the glint of sunlight on flowing waters subdue him like the thought of one much loved and long dead. When no voice of distress reaches his ears in vain, and no hand seeks his aid without response.

When he finds good in every faith that helps any man to lay hold of divine things and sees majestic meanings in life, whatever the name of that faith may be. When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something beyond mud, and into the face of the most forlorn fellow mortal and see something beyond sin. When he knows how to pray, how to love and how to hope. When he has kept faith with himself, with his fellowman, and with his God; in his hands a sword for evil, in his heart a bit of a song-glad to live, but not afraid to die! Such a man has found the only real secret of Freemasonry, and the one which it is trying to give to all the world."

THE PURPOSE OF FREEMASONRY

What is the purpose of Freemasonry? One of its most basic purposes is to make good men even better. We try to place emphasis on the individual man by strengthening his character, improving his moral and spiritual outlook, and broadening his mental horizons. We try to impress upon the minds of our members the principles of personal responsibility and morality, encouraging each member to practice in his daily life the lessons taught through symbolic ceremonies in the Lodge. One of the universal doctrines of Freemasonry is the belief in the "Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God". The importance of this belief is established by each Mason as he practices the three principle tenets of Freemasonry: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

Freemasonry is also the custodian of a tradition of initiation. It is the duty of every Freemason to preserve and perpetuate this tradition for future ages. This is a heavy responsibility and should give pause to any who would seek to make changes in the body of the Craft, except those with the highest motives and deepest understanding of the principles involved.

ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY

TRANSITION FROM OPERATIVE TO SPECULATIVE

What is the difference between "Operative" and "Speculative" Masonry? *Operative* refers to the time in our history when Masons actually performed the physical labor of building. They were the best at their craft, and they kept secret their methods of building. *Speculative* refers to the period of time when men were accepted into the Craft as "non-operative" members. They were not "physical builders", but "builders of character" instead.

We are unable to accurately pinpoint the time when we transitioned from operative to speculative masonry. The change was gradual and probably, stretched over a period of more than 50 years. It began early in the 1600's and may have begun with the acceptance of patrons into the operative Lodges. Other members, who were not interested in becoming stonemasons, followed the patrons. Those who were admitted by consent of the operative masons became "Accepted Masons". Membership was desired because of the spiritual, social and cultural advantages. During this time, our Craft grew rapidly in numbers.

The decline of Gothic architecture and the reduced demands for great building projects greatly lowered the number of skilled operative craftsmen needed to carry on construction during this period. If we had not become Speculative Masons, our Craft would have been faced with extinction. Many of the institutions of that day did pass into oblivion; but by becoming Speculative, the Craft has grown to a point never envisioned by its founders. Much of this growth can be attributed to the formation of the premier Grand Lodge of England, when four old Lodges in London held a meeting

at the Goose and Gridiron Tavern in June of 1717. At this meeting, a Brother by the name of Anthony Page Sayer was elected Grand Master. From there, Freemasonry quickly spread over much of the world, and other grand Lodges were established.

KING SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

The frequent references to King Solomon's Temple in this and other Degrees, has led to the false conclusion that the Fraternity was founded by him. Freemasonry became an organized craft many years after the reign of Solomon. However, our ritual is based upon Masonic legends connected with both Solomon and the Temple at Jerusalem, which has helped enrich the symbolism. The Biblical passages regarding the Temple can be found in the First Book of Kings, Chapters 5 to 8, and the First Book of Chronicles, beginning in the second chapter.

THE ORIGIN OF OUR RITUAL

Where and when did the ritual work originate? The origin of our ritual cannot be traced much beyond the years of the 18th century, or around 1700. The ritual of Freemasonry was a continuation of the practices and customs of the day-to-day work of the Operative Freemason. The emphasis gradually shifted from the practical to moral and spiritual virtues as the Accepted Masons began to outnumber the Operative Brethren in the Lodges. In early Speculative Masonry, there may have been but one degree and a Master's part. After a few years, three Degrees were used.

ORIGIN OF THE FIRST GRAND LODGE

By the first part of the 18th century, there were many Lodges in England. By the year 1716, most of the Lodges had only non-operative members. In December of 1716, on St. John's Day, a number of members met in London and had an informal meeting. As a result of this meeting the members of the four Lodges met again in London on June 24, 1717 on St. John the Baptist's Day and formed the first Grand Lodge. This became one of the most important dates in Masonic history, because it marked the start of modern Freemasonry as we know it today. With the exception of a few Lodges, every regular Masonic Lodge today was granted a charter or warrant from a Grand Lodge, and every one ultimately traces its origins back to Grand Lodges in England, Scotland, or Ireland. Every Grand Lodge has a certain territorial jurisdiction, or an area to represent. In the United States, every State, and the District of Columbia, is governed by a Grand Lodge.

GRAND LODGE TITLES

Titles of Grand Lodges in the United States also vary. Some are called A. F. & A. M., which means Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. The other most commonly used title is F. & A. M., or Free and Accepted Masons. The reason for this difference is that in England, when Grand Lodges first started, there was a rivalry between two different factions. One faction adopted the title "Ancient" and the other were called "Modern". This carried over to the United States, where Grand Lodges were styled either A.F. & A.M. or F. & A.M. However, because of the complex situation of charters in the U.S., there is currently no logical connection between either of the terms and the origins of American Grand Lodges. In Ohio we use the title Free and Accepted Masons, which was adopted from the Grand Lodge of Kentucky.

THE TITLE “FREE AND ACCEPTED”

How did the term “Free and Accepted” originate? Ancient craftsmen were very skilled, and their craft was considered to be indispensable to the welfare of both “Church” and “State.” For this reason, they were not placed under the same restrictions as were other workers - they were “free” to do their work, travel and live their lives in a manner befitting their importance. In England during the middle Ages this freedom was rare. Most workers were under bond to the owners of the land on which they worked. Our legendary history carries this freedom for the Operative Mason back to the year 946, in York, England.

The word “Accepted” also goes back to the time of the operative mason. During the latter years of the middle Ages, there were few educated men outside the monasteries of the world. Naturally, men wanted to become Freemasons to obtain the advantages the craft had to offer. These men did not necessarily want to build buildings; they wanted to belong to the organization. These were “Accepted” Masons, rather than operative masons. This practice probably originated when some of the people for whom the craftsmen were working asked to be admitted. This was an important transition for the Craft, because the secrets of the building trades were becoming more widely known, architecture was changing and membership was declining. By becoming “Speculative,” the Craft grew rapidly. As time went on, there became many more “Accepted” members than there were operative members, and eventually we became a Speculative rather than an operative organization.

IS FREEMASONRY A SECRET SOCIETY?

The answer is no. A secret society is one in which the membership is concealed, the meeting places are kept secret, and knowledge of its organization and principles is unknown to the public. True, we have a few secrets in Freemasonry: a part of our ritual, our modes of recognition and the business of the Lodge. Portions of our ritual have been handed down within Freemasonry for centuries and form a part of our tradition. However, our purposes, ideals and principles may be learned by anyone who inquires. There are numerous books on these subjects available to the public. All printed Masonic information, with the exception of our esoteric work, may be freely discussed in public. As Masons, we wear lapel pins and other Masonic jewelry, march in parades with our distinctive aprons, advertise the time and place of our meetings and openly sponsor charities. We can hardly be called a secret society. We do prefer to keep our rites confidential, because keeping them sacred and solemn can only enhance their initiatory value.

It should also be mentioned that the true secrets of Freemasonry are contained within the repository of the faithful breast and cannot be revealed to those who are not duly and truly prepared to receive them.

IS FREEMASONRY A RELIGION?

Again, the answer is no. Because of the nature of the teachings of Freemasonry, we require our Candidates to acknowledge a belief in the existence and perfection of God. Otherwise, the ceremonies would be meaningless. However, there is no requirement that one belong to a particular religion or a particular church. That choice is a personal decision. It is the opinion of our Order that membership in our Fraternity will only enhance a man's experience in whatever religious community he chooses to belong. An atheist cannot become a Mason, because he cannot express a belief in a Supreme Being.

Masonic ideals are not set forth in written creeds. For the most part, the individual Mason must interpret the rituals for himself and come to whatever understanding will satisfy his own mind and conscience, allowing others to do likewise. This is an example of Masonic tolerance, one of the primary principles of the Craft. It is one of our founding principles and can be traced all the way back to Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1723 and 1738, which forbade all sectarian discussion in our assemblies [See MM: REGULARITY AND RECOGNITION]. There is no Masonic dogma. Our Order seeks only to unite good men for the purpose of Brotherhood - not to promote a specific religion or in anyway interfere with a man's practice of his Faith.

Can a Catholic become a Mason? There is nothing within Freemasonry that prohibits a Catholic from becoming a member. There are many misunderstandings by the public, and sometimes even our own members, concerning this issue. These misunderstandings have led to many false conclusions and created barriers where none exist so far as Freemasonry is concerned.

There are in fact some religious sects that frown upon membership in various fraternal organizations. The viewpoint may be supported more enthusiastically in some locales than others. Freemasonry like many others which have rituals that are not viewed as public is often mistakenly listed in this category.

THE USE OF SYMBOLISM AND ALLEGORY

Freemasonry makes extensive use of symbolism and allegory. A general study of symbolism is recommended to every Mason. Research into the historical uses and meanings of symbols utilized in the rituals, as well as a comparative study of mythology, provides a sure foundation for Masonic education. Especially recommended to Masonic researchers is a working knowledge of the stories from the Bible. Whenever a person or story is explicitly mentioned or alluded to in the rituals of our Fraternity, it is our task to find out why.

In Freemasonry, the Lodge is the center of activity. It is symbolically the Temple of Solomon. All degree work (ritual) and advancement is done within the symbolic Temple.

Being Masons, we might expect that the symbolism of stones would be important. The importance of stone symbolism is pervasive in religious thought. We can find references connecting stones with the gods back to the remotest times. It has been considered by some religious historians as being an archetypal image representing absolute reality. Stones possess the qualities of stability, solidity, and everlastingness which is also qualities attributed to the gods. There are numerous references to stones throughout the Bible which allude to a link between the stone, the sacred, and spirituality. In *Isaiah 28:16* we read: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: ..." In *Psalm 118:22* we find: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner." Also, in *Revelation 2:17* we read: "To him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that received it." We also read (*Genesis 28:11*) that when Jacob had his vision of the angels and the ladder reaching to heaven; he used a stone as a pillow. After he awoke: "Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow and set it up for a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-El (God's House)."

THE ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE

QUALIFICATIONS OF A PETITIONER

The qualifications to be a Mason are clear and distinct. There are physical, moral and spiritual qualifications. In Ohio the petitioner must be a man of at least 19 years of age. He must be free of any previous felonious criminal convictions and be of good moral character. He must also believe in the existence and perfection of God.

The physical qualifications are necessary because the person must be free to make his own life decisions and be responsible for himself. The moral qualifications are self-evident for the viability of any Brotherhood and the lofty ideals of our society. The spiritual qualification informs the entire structure of Freemasonry.

THE SECRET BALLOT

After a man has applied for Masonic membership, and his background has been thoroughly investigated, the Lodge members vote by secret ballot to accept or to reject him for membership.

Freemasonry's secret ballot is another of its ancient customs. It has been rather aptly said that when a petitioner is voted upon for Masonic membership he undergoes the "Ordeal of the Secret Ballot". To be elected, he must receive an affirmative vote from each and every member present at that meeting. Just one member out of all present - there could be twenty, or fifty, or a hundred members in attendance - can drop the black cube and deny him membership. When you consider the moral yardstick by which Masons measure membership applicants and that only one negative vote can reject a petitioner, it would seem reasonable to assume that a large proportion of petitioners would be rejected for membership. However, that is not the case. Many, many more are elected than are rejected. That fact is testimony to the generally good judgment of those who recommend applicants, and it also indicates that the fraternity, by and large, attracts good men.

Much has been said and written, pro and con, about the secret ballot. Some argue, not without logic, that it is not fair for just one member out of all those who may be present at a meeting to be able to deny a petitioner membership. Others argue, also logically, that if even one member knows something negative about a petitioner, then that one member should have the right and the opportunity to prevent the entrance into Freemasonry of one he feels would bring discredit to it.

It goes without saying that a member who rejects a petitioner for mere petty reasons having nothing to do with moral fitness occasionally abuses the secret ballot, but such instances are rare and in almost every election the good man is elected to membership.

It is also undeniable that despite the requirements as to recommendation, as to background investigation, and as to unanimous secret ballot, an occasional undesirable person attains Masonic membership. Again, though, these instances are relatively rare. It should be remembered that if a member ever acts contrary to the rules and regulations of Freemasonry, he can be suspended or expelled from membership.

PREPARATION FOR INITIATION

Ideally, the Candidate should find his way to the door of Freemasonry on his own. If a man senses the stirrings in his heart for a deeper understanding of life than that he has heretofore found, he will seek until he finds the Fraternity. This turning of the heart is really the beginning of his initiation. Therefore, each Candidate who comes seeking light is said to be first prepared in his heart.

While Freemasonry is not a religion, its ceremonies are of a serious nature, dignified in their presentation and impart teachings that, if properly understood, obligate a man to lead a better life. To get the greatest good from the ceremonies, a Candidate should first prepare his mind to understand and absorb these teachings. The Candidate should pay strict attention to every part of the ceremony, in order that he may gain some understanding of the teachings of Freemasonry. The methods we use in teaching may be new and unusual to the Candidate, but these methods have been used for many centuries and have not changed significantly since they originated. Finally, he should remember that every Mason in the Lodge room is his friend and Brother.

DULY AND TRULY PREPARED

Being duly and truly prepared refers to the wearing of simple garments furnished by the Lodge to emphasize our concern with man's internal qualifications, rather than his worldly wealth and honors. By wearing these garments, the Candidate signifies the sincerity of his intentions.

The Candidate is not to bring into the Lodge room his passions or prejudices, lest that harmony, which is one of the chief concerns of Freemasonry, be destroyed. Being duly and truly prepared also refers to the state of a man's heart and soul as he seeks admission into our Order. "Seek and ye shall find. Ask and it shall be given unto you. Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

There are other factors involved in the preparation of the Candidate that we will address in the next degree.

THE HOODWINK

The symbolism of the Hoodwink is twofold: first, it emphasizes the veil of secrecy and silence surrounding the mysteries of Freemasonry; secondly, it represents the mystical darkness, or ignorance, of the uninitiated. It is removed at the appropriate time; that is, when the Candidate is in the proper attitude to receive Light.

THE CABLE-TOW

The Cable-Tow is a rope such as would be used to tow or restrain. It is also generally regarded as a symbol of the voluntary and complete acceptance of, and pledged compliance with, whatever Freemasonry may have in store. The length of the Cable-Tow is frequently referred to in the language of Freemasonry, but many of the new Brethren do not understand its meaning. Formerly, a Cable-Tow was deemed to be the distance one could travel in an hour, which was assumed to be about three miles. In Ohio this is any reasonable distance from which a summons may be answered, health and business permitting. Each Mason is bound to all other Masons by a tie as long and as strong as he himself determines his ability will permit. One may also consider the idea of the silver cord (*Ecclesiastes 12:6*) and the Cable-Tow.

ENTERING THE LODGE

As an Entered Apprentice takes his first step into the Lodge room, he enters into a New World: the world of Freemasonry. He leaves the darkness, destitution and helplessness of the world for the light and warmth of this new existence. It is not an idle formality, but a genuine experience, the beginning of a new career in which duties, rights and privileges are real. If a Candidate is not to be an Apprentice in name only, he must stand ready to do the work upon his own nature that will make him a different man. Members are called craftsmen because they are workmen. Lodges are quarries because they are scenes of toil. Freemasonry offers no privileges or rewards except to those who earn them; it places working tools not playthings in the hands of its Members. To become a Mason is a solemn and serious undertaking. Once the step is taken, it may well change the course of a man's life.

THE METHOD OF RECEPTION

The reception of the Candidate into the Lodge room is intended to symbolize the fact that our rituals are serious and confidential and that there are consequences for violating this confidence. It also reminds a man that his every act has a consequence, either in the form of a reward or a penalty. The method of reception also points out the value of a certain virtue needed to gain admission into the mysteries of Freemasonry.

PRAYER IN LODGE

No Lodge can be opened or be closed without prayer, which is offered by the Master or Chaplain. The prayer is universal in nature, and not peculiar to any one religion or faith. But the act of invoking the blessings of Deity is a central Masonic practice. At the end of prayer, each member responds with the words "So Mote it Be", which means in Modern English, "So may it ever be".

THE PRACTICE OF CIRCUMAMBULATION

Circumambulation means to walk around some central point or object. In Freemasonry, the act is performed in a clockwise manner, patterned after the movement of the sun as it is seen from the earth, moving from East to West, by way of the South. The Candidate's journey around the Altar also enables the Brethren to observe that he is properly prepared. Circumambulation is an ancient practice found all over the world. Much the same idea as the labyrinth, it portrays the path of initiation as that of a journey. In another sense, it symbolically aligns one to a proper relationship with the order of the universe. There are references to circuitous routes in *Psalms 26:6* and *Job 22:14*, and one may remember the action at Jericho.

KNEELING AT THE ALTAR

The central piece of furniture in the Lodge is the Altar. The Altar is symbolic of many things. As a temple symbolizes the presence of Deity, the altar symbolizes the point of contact. Its location in the center of the Lodge also symbolizes the place which God has in Freemasonry, and which He should have in every Mason's life. It is also a symbol of worship and faith. The Candidate approaches the Altar in search of light and assumes his obligations there. In the presence of God and

his Brethren, he offers himself to the service of the Supreme Architect of the Universe and to mankind in general. The Altar is the point on which life in our Masonic Lodges is focused and it should be accorded the highest respect.

The wisdom of the Master is said to be drawn from the Holy Book upon the Altar. Thus, one should never cross between the Master in the East and the Altar when a Lodge is in session. The only exception to this is during the conferral of degrees.

THE OBLIGATION

The Obligation is the heart of the Degree; for when it is assumed by the Candidate, he has solemnly bound himself to Freemasonry and assumed certain duties which are his for the rest of his life. The taking of the Obligation is visible and audible evidence of the Candidate's sincerity of purpose. The Obligation has a two-fold purpose. In addition to binding the Candidate to Freemasonry and its duties, it also protects the Fraternity against someone revealing the modes of recognition and symbolic instruction. The Candidate should understand that the great truths which Freemasonry teaches are not secret, but the manner in which Freemasonry teaches these truths is considered secret.

The ancient penalties are retained in our ritual to impress upon the mind of each Brother how serious a violation will be regarded by members of the Fraternity. These penalties are only symbolic. The Obligations were voluntarily assumed, and every means possible is used to impress the new Mason with the solemnity and the necessity for faithful performance of them.

THE THREE GREAT LIGHTS OF MASONRY

The Three Great Lights of Masonry are the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses. The Volume of the Sacred Law (no matter what religion) is an indispensable part of a Lodge. The Grand Lodges of the United States use the Holy Bible as the V.S.L. on their Altars. In our jurisdiction, a Candidate should always have his own sacred book present on the Altar with the Bible during his degree ceremonies. In Lodges in other countries, other sacred texts are placed on the Altar in place of the Holy Bible. The open Bible or Holy Book signifies that we should regulate our conduct according to its teachings because it is the rule and guide of our faith and is a symbol of man's acknowledgment of his relation to Deity.

The Square is a symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. To "act on the square" is to act honestly. The Compasses signifies the propitious use of action and is a symbol of restraint, skill and knowledge. We might also properly regard the Compasses as excluding beyond its circle that which is harmful or unworthy. The general public recognizes the square and compasses as the symbol of Freemasonry.

The symbolism of the square and compasses is seen in many ancient carvings and artwork. A stonemason's square has been seen to represent the earth, while the compasses has related to the arc of heaven. Thus their union has represented the union of heaven and earth. The Volume of Sacred Law can also represent God's communication to man through scripture and inspired writings.

This triple symbol can also be seen as representing God's expression through the creation of heaven and earth.

The Three Great Lights are also consistent with the three-tier system of Freemasonry. One way of interpreting the triple symbolism is seeing human nature as divided into three parts – body, mind, and soul with a Degree for each part. In the same way, the Three Great Lights are the guiding principals of the three natures: the Square to the body, the Compasses to the mind, and the Volume of Sacred Law for the soul.

PRESNTATION OF THE LAMBSKIN APRON

The Apron is at once an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. By innocence is meant clean thinking and clean living, a loyal obedience to the laws of the Craft and sincere good will. The Badge of a Mason signifies, among other things, that Masons are workers and builders.

Other aspects of this most visible vesture of our Fraternity should be mentioned. The lamb has always been a symbol of innocence and sacrifice. There are two senses in which innocence is being used here. Innocence in one sense is free from moral defect. The other sense used is that of being new born.

The Masonic Apron is made up of two parts: a square and a triangle, representing four and three respectively. The symbolism of these numbers, as well as their sum, should be studied in connection with the form of the apron in the different degrees. Finally, it should be mentioned that the word Candidate comes from the Latin *candidatus*, which means, “clothed in white.”

WORKING TOOLS OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE

The Working Tools presented to the Candidate were those used by the ancient operative craftsman in the erection of the building on which he was working. To the Speculative Mason, these represent the moral habits and forces by which man shapes and reshapes the essence of his human nature. By these symbolic tools, he also fits his own behavior to society and community. While they do not contain the whole philosophy of Freemasonry, the various Working Tools allocated to the three degrees, by their very presence, declare that there is constructive work to be done; and by their nature, indicate the direction this work is to take.

The Working Tools of this degree are specified as the twenty-four inch gauge and the common gavel. The symbolic description of these tools is provided in the ritual so there is no need to repeat that here. It is interesting that one tool (gauge) is used passively and the other (gavel) is used actively. One is a tool of measurement and calculation, while the other is one of force. One tool decides what to keep, while the other gets rid of the rest.

THE NORTHEAST CORNER

The Northeast Corner is traditionally the place where the cornerstone (the first stone) of a building is laid. The Apprentice is thus placed, because from here he will erect his own symbolic temple by the principles of Freemasonry.

Other considerations on the northeast corner are the following. The north in Freemasonry is attributed to darkness and the east to light. Therefore, the northeast is a place midway between darkness and light. Being midway, it is also symbolic of equilibrium. Furthermore, this spot representing equal light and darkness corresponds with the point of the Spring Equinox when the

nighttime is equal to the daytime. There is some evidence that the lambskin apron was presented to the Candidate at one time in the northeast corner of the Lodge.

It needs to be mentioned that there is a seeming contradiction of this symbolism with physical reality. If we imagine the Lodge's boundaries to be the eastern and western horizons, with the north and south walls being the Tropic of Cancer and Capricorn (where the sun reaches its northern and southern limits), then the day that the sun rises in the northeast corner of the "Lodge" is the Summer Solstice near St. John the Baptist's Day. Sometimes symbolism overlaps, but in many cases it is a hint at a deeper meaning.

THE LECTURE OF THIS DEGREE

The Lectures given to the Candidate by the Worshipful Master or by some appointed Brother are intended to elaborate certain phases of the ritual, giving a broader explanation of the ceremonies in order for the Candidate to understand the lessons of Freemasonry. The four cardinal virtues of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice are explained here as well as the three tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

The Lodge is dedicated to Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist. Freemasonry long ago chose as its patron saints John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. By doing this, the Brethren arrived at the conclusion that their patron saints belonged to a Lodge and that it must have been in the city in which they lived - Jerusalem. By this tradition, all Lodges symbolically come from one at Jerusalem. By tradition, also, every Mason hails from such a Lodge. By claiming to come from this mythical Lodge, he proves that he hails from a "just and legally constituted Lodge."

The form of a Lodge is an oblong square, or a rectangle. It extends from East to West (horizon to horizon) and between North and South. The covering of the Lodge is the canopy of heaven. It is not a coincidence that the two major patrons of the Masonic Lodge have their birthdays near the Summer and the Winter Solstice where the sun reaches its most northern and southern limits.

The East in a Masonic Lodge does not necessarily mean the actual point of the compass. The East in the Lodge is the station of the Worshipful Master whence he dispenses light and instruction to all his Brethren. Some Lodges may actually have the Master sitting in another compass location, but the important point is that the Master is always symbolically located in the East and the other symbolic points of the West, South and North are located in proper relation to the station of the Master. Further instruction is given in the long form of the lecture regarding the Supports of the Lodge: the three pillars of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, which also relate to the three immovable Jewels of the Lodge: the Square, Plumb and Level, which still further relate to the three principal Officers and three Lesser Lights of the Lodge.

The three movable Jewels of the Lodge consist of the Rough and Perfect Ashlars and the Trestleboard. The Rough and Perfect Ashlars are precise symbols of the process of initiation. In a Hermetic sense, the Rough Ashlar is the *prima material*, while the Perfect Ashlar is the Philosopher's Stone. The Ornaments of the Lodge consist of the Mosaic Pavement, the Indented Tassel, and the Blazing Star. We walk in a world of opposites: good and evil, night and day, hot and cold, love and hate. The Mosaic Pavement symbolizes this fact. Again, all of these symbols should be studied further to find out what they conceal and what they reveal.

THE CHARGE

At the end of the ceremony and instruction in each degree, the Candidate is charged to perform his Masonic duties. The Charge given him explains these duties especially in their relation to the particular Degree. These Charges should not be ignored as mere conventionalities.

MASONIC DECORUM AND ADVANCEMENT

THE PROFICIENCY EXAM

The Proficiency Exam is a series of questions and answers which the Candidate is required to commit to memory prior to being advanced to the next degree. Among other things, it is intended to:

- (1) Teach each Candidate the language of Freemasonry.
- (2) Fix in his memory the teachings and structure of the Degree.
- (3) Impress upon his consciousness the different points of the Obligation.
- (4) Give each Candidate an ancient method to contemplate the meanings behind the degree.
- (5) Give the new Candidate a point of contact with an established member.

According to our rules, the Lodge determines if a Candidate is proficient in a degree and therefore eligible to be advanced to the next degree. There is a short form of the proficiency exam available for Lodges to use if they deem it necessary.

THE LANGUAGE OF FREEMASONRY

Why is the language of Freemasonry so different from that which we normally use? This question is often asked by new members of our Fraternity. The ritual of Freemasonry is a product of the early decades of the 18th century. It contains much of the language of that time period and other words and phrases from the very old work have been incorporated. This is why the language is written and spoken as it is. If the time and effort is spent to study the words of our ritual, one will discover that the thoughts and teachings imparted cannot be put in fewer words and still retain their meaning.

WHEN TO RISE AND WHEN TO BE SEATED

The gavel in the hands of the Master of a Lodge is one of the symbols of authority by which he governs. When the gavel is sounded once in the East at the beginning of Lodge, the Brethren must come to order. Two raps call the principle Officers to their feet, and three raps mean that all Brethren must stand. If everyone is standing, one rap seats everyone in the Lodge. If the Worshipful Master addresses you by name, arise, face the East, give the due guard and sign of the degree and listen to his instructions. If you wish to speak, arise and wait until the Master recognizes you. Give the due guard and sign of the degree, and then address your remarks to him.

SUBJECTS NOT PROPER FOR DISCUSSION IN LODGE

Sectarian religious or partisan political discussions should not be held in Lodge during or after a meeting or at any Masonic gathering, and there are good reasons for this. When we meet as

Masons, we are all on a common level and are not subject to the classes and distinctions of the outside world. Each Brother is entitled to his own beliefs and convictions. Our objective is to unite men, not to divide them. These subjects create honest differences of opinion that might well cause friction between members.

There will also be subjects concerning the Lodge's business that should not be discussed. All deliberations should be kept within the bounds of propriety and everyone should show tolerance for the opinion of others. Every Master wants harmony in his Lodge. Once a matter has been put to vote in the Lodge and a decision is made, all members, regardless of how they voted, should accept the decision. We try to teach every Mason to be a good citizen and to perform his civic duties.

We do not try to keep anyone from expressing his opinion or from serving his city, county, state, or nation, in an honorable manner. Anyone who serves in political office should not act politically as a Freemason, nor use the name of Freemasonry in exercising his political rights, such as showing affiliation with any Lodge in his campaign advertising.

THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER

Why is the presiding officer of the Lodge called Worshipful? This is an Old English word meaning, "worthy of respect." Since he is chosen by the Brethren, they deem him to have sufficient wisdom, integrity and Masonic knowledge to govern the Lodge properly. Why is the Worshipful Master's station in the East? In the world of nature, the sun rises in the East to shed light and luster on earth. In a like manner, it is the province of the Master to be the source of Masonic knowledge for his Brethren as they "approach the East in search of light." Why does the Master wear a hat in the Lodge? He wears the hat, and the rest of the Brethren remain uncovered, for several reasons. Keeping the head covered while others are uncovered has long been a symbol of superior rank. Men, as a mark of respect, usually uncover in the presence of those they deem to be of superior rank. Also, it is symbolic in that the Worshipful Master wears a hat because King Solomon wore a crown as a mark of dignity. The title Master is not unlike the Master of a ship or one who has received a Masters Degree in his chosen discipline. He is capable of teaching his subject - thus imparting "light" or knowledge.

THE TYLER

The Tyler guards the avenues approaching the Lodge. A Lodge is said to be "duly tiled" when the necessary precautions have been taken to guard against intrusion by Cowans, eavesdroppers or other unauthorized persons. (A cowan is one who tries to masquerade as a Mason. He has not done the work but says he has in order to gain admittance. An eavesdropper is one who tries to steal the secrets of our Society. He would forge a dues card or may find one and try to masquerade as the owner.) If a Brother comes to Lodge late and wants to join the meeting, the Tyler sees that he is properly clothed and then vouches for him as qualified to enter. It is the duty of the Tyler to inform the Junior Deacon when a qualified Brother wishes to enter the Lodge and to let the Brethren know in which Degree the Lodge is working.

NO HORSEPLAY OR HAZING

There is no place for horseplay or hazing during our ceremonies and the Candidate can be assured that there will be none. The rituals are serious and solemn, and we try to teach moral lessons with great dignity. Anything, which is told to the Candidate in a joking manner, serves only

to desecrate the honorable purposes of Freemasonry. The Candidate should have no apprehension about entering a Lodge. He is always entering a society of friends and Brothers where he will be treated with dignity and decorum at all times.

THE HEART OF THE MASONIC FAMILY

Freemasonry is not just another fraternity or association of men banded together for social, political or economic advantages. Our foundation is built on a philosophy of friendship and Brotherly love. We also make many worthwhile contributions to our society and community. For example, the Grand Lodge of Ohio manages four magnificent total care homes in Springfield, Medina and Waterville for our aged Brethren, their wives, widows, children and orphans.

THE RIGHTS OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE

These are very limited, since he cannot vote or hold office. He may have a Masonic funeral if permission is granted to his Lodge by the Grand Master. The Entered Apprentice is not entitled to organized Masonic Charity, but this does not bar him from receiving assistance from a Mason, as an individual. He can attend a Lodge when opened in the Entered Apprentice degree or while an Entered Apprentice Degree is being presented. He has a right to be instructed in his work and in matters pertaining to his degree. If charged with violating his obligation, he is entitled to a trial. He is entitled to apply for advancement to the Second Degree, when proficient in the Entered Apprentice Degree. He may not receive the degrees of Craft Freemasonry elsewhere without consent of the Lodge. Also, the Apprentice possesses modes of recognition by which he can make himself known to other Masons.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE

An Entered Apprentice Mason has very few actual Lodge responsibilities. He must keep secret everything entrusted to him, conduct himself with proper decorum and diligently work to learn his proficiency and as much about the Craft as possible. He should not be content with learning the words letter-perfect, but should study the meanings also. If he cannot interpret these for himself, he should seek help from others. Complete faithfulness to his obligations and implicit obedience to the charge are among his important and lasting responsibilities. Freemasonry preserves secrecy about all its work in the Lodge: it meets behind closed doors; it throws over its principles and teachings a garment of symbolism and ritual; its Art is a mystery; a great wall separates it from the world. Nor is its work easy to understand. If this be true, we urgently advise you not to be content with the letter and outward form of this, your beginning period, but to apply yourself with freedom, fervency and zeal to the sincere and thorough mastering of our Royal Art.

MASONIC GLOSSARY - ENTERED APPRENTICE

Appertaining	belonging to, or connected with, as a rightful part or attribute; relating to
Cable Tow	a twisted rope, usually of cotton or synthetic material, used symbolically to bind or make fast; originally a particularly strong rope
Cardinal	of basic importance; main; primary; essential; principal
Circumscribe	to draw a line around; to limit in range of activity definitely and clearly
Circumspection	carefulness in considering all circumstances and possible consequences
Divested	to deprive or take away from; to undress or remove clothing, ornaments or equipment
Due	proper; according to accepted standards or procedures Engrave to cut figures or letters into wood or metal
Equivocation	to avoid committing oneself to what one says; uncertainty; uncertain or questioning disposition or mind
Fellow	a member of a group having common characteristics; an associate; an equal in rank or power or character
Fortitude	strength of mind that enables a person to encounter danger, or bear pain or adversity, with courage
Guttural	of, or having to do with, or involving the throat
Hele, Hale	to hide or conceal; to cover; to keep out of view Hoodwink a blindfold
Intrinsic	belonging to a thing by its very nature; the essential nature or constitution of a thing; inherent; in and of itself
Invest	to give; to furnish; to clothe
Inviolate	not broken or disregarded; not told to others; respected
Light	knowledge or understanding
Manual	of, or having to do with, or involving the hands
Mystery	the secret or specialized practices or ritual peculiar to an occupation or a body of people; rites or secrets known only to those initiated

Passions	great emotion; the emotions as distinguished from reason; powerful or compelling feelings or desires
Pectoral	in, on, or of the chest
Pedal	of, or relating to, the foot or feet
Precepts	a principle or instruction intended especially as a general rule of action
Prudence	the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason; skill and good judgment in the management of affairs or the use of resources; caution or circumspection as to danger or risk
Saints John	Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist, the two ancient patron saints of Freemasonry
Shod	wearing footgear, with shoes on
Subdue	to bring under control especially by an exertion of the will; to reduce the intensity or degree of; tone down
Superfluity	excess; unnecessary; immoderate, especially living habits or desires
Superfluous	exceeding what is needed; excess; extra; not needed; unnecessary
Temperance	moderation in action, thought or feeling; self-restraint; a habitual moderation in the indulgence of the appetites or passions; moderation in, or abstinence from, the use of intoxicating substances
Vouchsafe	to grant or furnish; to give by way of reply
Warden	an official having care or charge of some administrative aspect or an organization or some special supervisory duties; a British term used in the Episcopal Church and at various colleges and in government functions
Worshipful	notable; distinguished; worthy of respect; a British term used as a title for various persons or groups of rank or distinction

Basic Education Course Questions

Use of the Questions for the Entered Apprentice

The questions on the following pages can be handed out to the Candidate along with the other materials. The Candidate should be asked to look through them and the Mentor should indicate that he will go through them with the Candidate at a later date.

The discussion of these questions should be as a conference between the mentor and the Candidate rather than as a quiz. The idea of this portion is to direct and stimulate the Candidate's interest and not be a test of his knowledge.

If that in the opinion of the Mentor, it is felt that the use of this section would be a detractor rather than a learning instrument it may be omitted.

Questions for the Entered Apprentice

1. What does Freemasonry mean to you? What are its purposes, aims and ideals?
2. What is the difference between OPERATIVE Masonry and SPECULATIVE Masonry? Are we today Operative, Speculative or both?
3. Where and when did Freemasonry originate? From what date do we trace our modern origins? What occurred on this date?
4. What is the meaning of the titles A. F. & A. M. and F. & A.M.? In Ohio, which title do we use?
5. Is Freemasonry a religion? Why or why not?
6. Is Freemasonry considered a Secret Society? Why or why not?
7. Allegorically, in what historical location is the degree work of our Lodges meant to take place? Why is this place so important?
8. Giving your own opinion, why do you believe that only one who believes in a Supreme Being may become a Mason?
9. What are the qualifications to become a Mason under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Ohio?
10. What percentage of a Lodge must vote favorably upon an application for it to be accepted?
11. What do we mean when we say that a Candidate must be first prepared in his heart?
12. What is the meaning of "duly and truly prepared"?
13. What is the symbolism of the Hoodwink?
14. What is the symbolism of the Cable-Tow?
15. How is the Candidate received upon first entering a Lodge and what is it meant to convey?
16. What is the purpose of circumambulating (walking in a circle around) the Lodge room during the ceremony of initiation?
17. Who are the Holy Saints John and what is their importance in Freemasonry?
18. What are the Three Great Lights of Masonry and why are they placed in the center of the Lodge?
19. What does the open Volume of the Sacred Law (VSL) upon the Altar signify, and which Holy Book(s) do we use in Ohio?
20. Give the meaning of the Square.

21. Give the meaning of the Compasses.
22. Of what significance is the Obligation?
23. Even though the physical penalties mentioned in the Obligation are symbolic, why are they retained in the ritual work?
24. Of what is the Lambskin Apron an emblem? What does it signify?
25. What are the Working Tools of an Entered Apprentice Mason? After reading what the ritual has to say about them, what, in your own words, do you think they mean for us? Consider the difference between Operative and Speculative Masonry.
26. The North is a place of darkness. The East symbolizes the rising Sun or the dawn of illumination. Why is the Entered Apprentice placed in the North-East corner of the Lodge?
27. Name the Four Cardinal Virtues.
28. What are the Three Great Supports of Freemasonry? To which Officers are they attributed?
29. What is the difference between a Rough Ashlar and a Perfect Ashlar? Why is this symbol considered by some to be the most important symbol in all of Freemasonry?
30. Give an example of one symbol from the Entered Apprentice Degree and describe its meaning. Look below the surface and try to see what universal principles it is meant to communicate.
31. What has been your experience of Freemasonry thus far? Has it met your expectations? Why or why not?