

A Basic Masonic Education Course

THE ENTERED APPRENTICE DEGREE – PART 2

THE CANDIDATE'S FIRST REQUIREMENT: Among the first requirements of the Apprentice is that he shall offer himself as a rough stone to be shaped under Masonic laws and influences in the world of the Brotherhood of Masonry. Unless he is willing, in all sincerity, to abide by his obligations and the laws which define, regulate and control the brotherly life, he will be out of harmony with the Fraternity, unable to find a foothold in the world he seeks to enter. All of our ritual, symbols, emblems, allegories and ceremonies, in the richness and variety of their meaning, point in the same direction. Unless an Apprentice understands and accepts them, he will fail to comprehend Masonic teaching. Finally, he must develop a spirit of industry, because Freemasonry requires that those who want to know more about Masonry, spend their time learning.

THE CANDIDATE MUST FIRST BE PREPARED IN HIS HEART: As a man thinketh, so is he; but as he purposes in his heart, so will his life be. The heart is the center of man's affections and desires. If he is clean within, his life will reflect that condition—but, the reverse is also true. We are concerned with the building of character. Working toward this goal must begin within the heart; for, if your heart is not ready, we cannot expect to make an impression on your mind. Therefore, each candidate, who comes seeking light, must be prepared in his heart.

DULY AND TRULY PREPARED: Being duly and truly prepared refers to the wearing of special garments furnished by the Lodge to emphasize our concern with man's internal qualifications, rather than his worldly wealth and honors. By wearing the garments of humility, the candidate signifies the sincerity of his intentions.

THE HOODWINK: The Hoodwink represents the darkness in which the uninitiated stands regarding Masonry. It is removed at the moment of enlightenment, suggesting that we do not create the great things of life, such as goodness, truth and beauty, but find them. They always exist, regardless of the blindness of any individual.

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 Masonry may have in store. The subsequent release after taking the obligation indicates this symbol is no longer needed, since the candidate has assumed the definite and irrevocable pledge of the Degree.

THE ENTRANCE: As an Entered Apprentice takes his first step into the Lodge room, he enters into a new world, the world of Masonry. He leaves the darkness, destitution and helplessness of the world for the light and warmth of this new existence. This is the great meaning of the Degree. 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 RECEPTION: The reception of the candidate into the Lodge room (this is where the Senior Deacon stops you just inside the door and tells you the significance of how and why he is receiving you into the Lodge.) is intended to symbolize the fact that the obligations which he will assume are solemn and that there is a symbolic penalty if these are violated.

It also reminds man that his every act has a consequence, either in the form of a reward or a penalty. Man reapeth as he soweth.

THE HOLY SAINTS JOHN: 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 coming from this mythical Lodge, he proves that he hails from a "just and legally constituted Lodge."

FORM OF A LODGE: The form of a Lodge is an oblong square, or a rectangle. It extends from East to West and between North and South. 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 -from which he dispenses light and instruction to all his brethren. Some Lodges may have the Master sitting in other actual compass locations, 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.

THE RITE OF PERAMBULATION: Perambulation means to walk around some central point or object. In Masonry, 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 enables the Brethren to observe that he is properly prepared. Perambulation should teach the Entered Apprentice that Freemasonry is a progressive science, and man may gather truth as he progresses. It also teaches that life is a progressive journey through which each must travel toward his ultimate destiny.

THE ALTAR: The central piece of furniture in the Lodge is the Altar; and, upon it, rest the three Great Lights of Masonry, the Holy Bible, Square and Compass. The Altar is symbolic of many things. Its location, in the center of the Lodge, symbolizes the place which God has in Masonry, and which he should have in every person's life. It is also a symbol of worship and faith. The candidate approaches the Altar in search of light and also 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. The principles for which the Three Great Lights stand should serve to guide everyone's thoughts and actions both in the Lodge and abroad in the world. The Altar supporting the Three Great Lights should remind each Brother who stands before it that "faith supports life itself".

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 remainder 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 possible 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 GREAT LIGHT OF FREEMASONRY: The Great Light of Freemasonry is the Volume of the Sacred Law (no matter what religion) and it is an indispensable part of the furniture of a Lodge. The Grand Lodges of the United States use the Holy Bible on their Altars. In other jurisdictions, the candidate may have his own sacred book substituted for the Bible. In some Lodges in other countries, the Altars of Masonry have more than one Book on them, and the candidate may choose the one on which he is to be obligated. No Lodge in California may stand officially open, unless the Holy Bible is opened upon its Altar with the Square and Compass displayed thereon. The open Bible 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 Compass signifies the duty which we owe to ourselves, and is a symbol of restraint, skill and knowledge. We might also properly regard the Compass as excluding beyond its circle that which is harmful or unworthy. The Square and Compass are recognized by the general public as the symbol of Freemasonry.

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 its secrets which deal with its modes of recognition and symbolic instruction. The candidate should understand the great truths which Masonry teaches are not secret, but the manner in which Freemasonry teaches these truths is considered secret.

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF THE OBLIGATION: The penalties incurred for willful violation of your Masonic Obligation will not be of a physical nature. The penalties that you recite at the conclusion of your Obligation are purely symbolic. This should have been explained in the preparatory address. The Mason who violates his Obligation will subject himself to Masonic discipline, which could include the loss of membership in the Lodge and the Fraternity, either by suspension or expulsion. He will also be subject to the scorn and contempt of all good Masons. The ancient oral penalties, already mentioned, are retained in our ritual to impress upon the mind of each Brother how serious a violation will be regarded by the members of the Fraternity. 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 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 to the Brethren. The Badge of a Mason signifies that Masons are workers and builders, not drones and destructionists.

THE RITE OF DESTITUTION: The symbolism of the Rite of Destitution reverts to those ancient times when men believed that the planets determined human fate and controlled human passions, and that there were metals by which each planet was itself controlled. In ancient initiations, candidates were compelled to leave all metals behind, lest they bring into the assembly disturbing planetary influences. While with us, this symbolism no longer has an astrological character. However, the old point about excluding disturbing influences remains. 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 Masonry, be destroyed.

THE NORTHEAST CORNER: The Northeast Corner is traditionally the place where the cornerstone of a building is laid. The Apprentice is, therefore, so placed to receive his first instruction on which to build his moral and Masonic edifice. As such, you are a cornerstone on which the Fraternity is to be erected. It is our hope and expectation that you will prove a solid foundation, true and tried, set four-Square on which our great fraternity may safely build. You are the future of Masonry.

THE WORKING TOOLS: The Working Tools, presented to the candidates, are 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 Masonry, the various Working Tools allocated to the three degrees, by their very presence, they declare that there is constructive work to be done; and by their nature, indicate the direction this work is to take.

THE CHARGE: In each Degree, at the end of the ceremony and instruction, the candidate is charged to perform his Masonic duties. The Charge given him explains these duties.

THE LECTURES: The Lectures given to the candidate by the Worshipful Master 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.

KING SOLOMON'S TEMPLE: The frequent references to King Solomon's Temple, in this and other Degrees, lead 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 PROFICIENCY: The series of questions and answers that you are requested to commit to memory following each Degree are intended to:

Teach each candidate the language of Freemasonry.

Fix in his mind the teachings of the Degree.

Impress upon his consciousness the different points of the Obligation he has assumed.

To enable him to prove, to his satisfaction and that of his Brethren, that he is a Mason.

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 father of the English Ritual was undoubtedly, William Preston. This Ritual has been

refined and polished without being basically changed in character in the nearly three centuries since Preston first used it in London. Prior to this, 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 the moral and spiritual values 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. Around 1813, the United Grand Lodge of England declared: "Ancient Craft Masonry consists of three degrees and no more...."

THE LANGUAGE OF FREEMASONRY: Why is the language of Freemasonry so different from that which we normally use? This question is often asked by the candidates. The Ritual of Freemasonry is a product of the early decades of the 18th century. It contains much of the language of that century 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, you will discover that the thoughts and teachings imparted cannot be put in fewer words and still retain their meaning.

THE EMBLEMS OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE MASON: The Entered apprentice should study all the Emblems of the Degree, for each is important and should be thoroughly understood by him. For example, the lamb is usually an emblem of innocence. The emblem suggests truth to the mind. The twenty-four inch gauge is an emblem of the twenty-four hours of the day. A wise use of time is suggested by this emblem. The common gavel reminds us that as rough ashlar (rough stones) our characters can be made into perfect ashlar (polished stones) by applying the teachings of Freemasonry in our daily thoughts and actions.

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 Officers to their feet, and three raps mean that all Brethren must stand. If everyone 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.

THE TYLER: The Tyler guards the avenues approaching the Lodge. A Lodge is said to be duly tyled 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 is one who 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 is the one who would forge a good dues card, or finds one and masquerades as the owner.) If a Brother comes to Lodge late and wants in, 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

THE LODGE PRAYER: No Lodge can be opened, stay open 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. 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 RIGHTS OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE MASON: These are very limited, since he cannot vote or hold office. He is, however, entitled to a Masonic funeral. The Entered Apprentice is not entitled to organized Masonic Charity, but it does not bar him from receiving assistance from a Mason, as an individual. He can attend a Lodge 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 has the right to apply for advancement to a higher degree. He may not receive the Degrees of Craft Masonry elsewhere without consent of the Lodge. In other words, if he should move and want to continue his work, he may request the Lodge Secretary to write the Secretary of the Lodge at his new location, informing him of your good standing and request that the new Lodge perform the remainder of the ritualistic work. Also, the Apprentice possesses modes of recognition by which he can make himself known to other Masons.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF AN ENTERED APPRENTICE MASON: 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 a secrecy about all its work in the Lodge: it meets behind closed doors; it throws over it its principles and teaching 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.

Grand Lodge of California 1991