

## A Basic Masonic Education Course

### The Degree Of Master Mason

**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 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 the abode of God to the Hebrew people. According to Scripture, 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. 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 and faith.

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. However, it is important to the principles of Masonry, that each man shall seek his own method of achieving this goal. 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. The first two Degrees center around the art of architecture. Their purpose is to teach you, in the first, to be a builder of yourself; in the second, a builder of society. The symbols in the Degree of Master Mason refer to life, its tragedy, and its ultimate triumph. Although its background continues to be architecture, and its action takes place in and about the Temple, it is a spiritual symbol of life and death. Its principal teaching is immortality.

**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:** At 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. It is necessary that the Obligation is known and understood in order that it can be enjoyed and obeyed.

**CLANDESTINE LODGE AND CLANDESTINE MASON:** A clandestine Lodge is one that has not been issued a charter from a duly recognized Grand Lodge and, therefore, you may not visit such a Lodge. One who belongs to one of these Lodges is a clandestine Mason and therefore, not entitled to visit your Lodge. A Master Mason from a regular Lodge should also not conduct Masonic related discussions with a clandestine Mason.

**MASONIC DEFINITION OF NON-AGE, DOTAGE AND FOOL:** In the jurisdiction of California, non-age refers in this Degree to one who is not yet 21 years of age. Dotage is a condition associated with old age, and is marked by juvenile desires, loss of memory and failure of judgement. Being old does not bar someone from seeking 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.

**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 and 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, masonry embraces many organizations which includes women.

**SIGNS, TOKENS AND WORDS:** We feel they 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 signs at all times, in order to properly show your respect for the dignity of our 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 uses 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 1st Book of Kings, Chapter 7, Verses 13 & 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 & 14. The word Abif means "his 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 the legend of Hiram Abif, we are taught the magnificent lessons of fidelity.

**THE THREE GRAND MASTERS:** The three Grand Masters mentioned often in our rituals concerning the building of the Temple are: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram 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 the 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.

**THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON:** 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 967 B.C., or as others say about 1012 B.C., and finished almost eight years later, around 960 B.C., or as given by the chronology of some, about 1005 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 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. In those days, people thought that God dwelled with man 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, is 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 desires to reside. 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 in 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 992 B.C., or according to the chronology of others, about 1036 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. Masonic tradition teaches us that he was sent by King Hiram to assist King Solomon in building the Temple.

**TO TRAVEL TO 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 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, it self, 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 diligently study Masonry, so we may receive proper instructions and be permitted 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 Mason who earns them. Not everyone earns them; and that is why the Senior Warden, in the opening of the Lodge, declares: "To pay the Craft their wages, if any be due..."

**THE THREE RUFFIANS:** There are many symbolic explanations for the appearance of these three ruffians in our ritualistic work. Their attempt to obtain the secrets not rightfully theirs, and the dire consequences of their acts, are symbolic of many things. Trying to obtain a knowledge of Divine Truth by some means other than a reward for faithfulness, makes the culprit both a thief and a murderer. Each of us is reminded that rewards must be earned, rather than obtained by violence or devious means. The Ruffians are also symbols of the enemies we, each one, have within us our own ignorance, passions and attitudes, which we have "come here to control and 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 communication with his fellow man. Man's affection is the next area attacked; for, those who control a people also force the families to comply with their orders. Finally man's reason is attacked; because your enemies will always seek to destroy your mind, as the final step to enslavement.

**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 time of the night.

**THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH:** The lion has always been the symbol of might and royalty. It was the sign of the Tribe of Judah, because this was the royal tribe of the Hebrew Nation. All Kings of Judah were, therefore, called the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. This was also one of the titles of King Solomon. This was the literal meaning. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah also describes a mediator of some of the ancient religions. There is no definite meaning to any individual Mason. He is left to his own description, and that is one of the reasons, over the centuries, that Masonry has had followers from all religions.

**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. Having the power of speech is perhaps the most noble attribute of man, because he can communicate his thoughts to his fellows—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 teach the true Word, but rather, a substitute. Thus, we are reminded that, in this life, we may approach an approximation of truth. Each man must seek the True Word through his own individual chosen faith.

**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. 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, faith and fortitude, you have received only partial light and have seen nothing but a drama and a moral. This Degree seeks to answer the age-old question put forth by Job—"If a man die, shall he live again?".

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

It teaches no creed, no dogma, no doctrine, 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, then the Degree assures us of all we wish. The ceremony is not physical, but one of inner life; the home of the spirit where each man thinks the secret thought he tells no one.

**EMBLEMS OF THE THIRD DEGREE:** If we consider our ritual the "Meat" of Masonry, our actions and deeds as Masons the "Potatoes" of Masonry, then we must call our emblems the "Gravy" of Masonry. They add substance, flavor and meaning to our daily lives. One

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

In THE THREE PILLARS we have the three great supports of Masonry—Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. THE THREE STEPS remind us of how Youth, Manhood and old Age is each an entity in itself, each possessing its own duties and problems, and each calling for its own philosophy. THE POT OF INCENSE teaches that, to be pure and blameless in our inner lives is more acceptable to God than anything else, because that which a man really is, is of vastly greater importance than that which he appears to be. THE BEE HIVE recommends the practice of that virtue of Industry and teaches us that we should be industrious, never sitting down while our fellow creatures are in need of assistance. And that he who does not seek to improve himself is not worthy of our protection as Masons. THE BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS GUARDED BY THE TYLER'S SWORD is the emblem of law and order, and reminds us that our moral and spiritual character is grounded in law and morality as much as is government and nature. It teaches that no man can live a satisfactory life who lives lawlessly. THE SWORD POINTING TO A NAKED HEART discovers that one of the most rigorous of these laws is justice, and that if a man be unjust in his heart, the inevitable results of injustice will find him out. THE ALL SEEING EYE shows that we live and move and have our being in God; that we are constantly in His Presence, wherever or whatever we are doing. Every Freemason should keep in mind that the thing 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 judgement time. THE ANCHOR AND THE ARK stand for that sense of security and stability of a life grounded in truth and faith, without which sense there can be no happiness. THE FORTY-SEVENTH PROBLEM OF EUCLID is an emblem of the arts and sciences; by them we are reminded that next to sinfulness, the most dangerous enemy of life is ignorance. In THE HOURGLASS we have the emblem of the fleeting quality of life. THE SCYTHE reminds us that the passing of time will end our lives as well as our work, and if ever we are to become what we ought to be, we must not delay.

## THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF FREEMASONRY

THE RIGHTS OF A MASTER MASON: These consist of Masonic Relief, Masonic Visitation, and Masonic Burial.

MASONIC RELIEF: Masonic Relief may be applied for 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 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.

MASONIC VISITATION: Visitation of other Lodges is a privilege 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—by undergoing "strict trial or due examination", or 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.

**THE RIGHT OF BURIAL:** The Masonic Funeral Service is conducted only at the request of a Brother or some member of a Mason's immediate family. The choice belongs to the family, not to the Lodge. This service can be held in a church, the Lodge room, funeral parlor or grave site.

**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.

**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 his membership. This should be your inducement to attend Lodge as often as possible and to join in the fellowship which makes up Freemasonry.

**BALLOTING:** Only Members in good standing of the Lodge have a right to ballot. No member present can be excused from balloting on any petitioner before the Lodge. 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, for strictly Masonic—not personal reasons, a black cube should be cast to protect the Lodge from undesirable members. As you approach the ballot box, examine your own motives and be sure that the ballot you are about to cast will do justice to the candidate and Freemasonry. The Right to Secrecy of the Ballot is guaranteed by Masonic Law, and custom allows each member to have perfect freedom in balloting on petitioners. No Brother should disclose how he voted and no Brother shall inquire into how another Brother voted on a particular candidate.

**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 in that degree in which the Lodge is at labor. The Worshipful Master may call upon any member of the Lodge to serve on the examining committee.

**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.

**INVESTIGATE PETITIONERS:** This responsibility belongs to every member of the Lodge, and should not be taken lightly, if your own Lodge is to scrutinize those who seek to enter the Lodge and to be protected against undesirable candidates. 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. The members of the Investigating Committee are known only to the petitioner and to the Worshipful Master who appointed them.

**FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:** These are twofold. First in the area of mandatory support—the payment of annual dues. Second, in the area of voluntary support contributions to the Masonic Home Endowment Fund, distressed worthy Brothers, and other Masonic organizations as you desire. 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 suspension. 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 or dual memberships in more than one Lodge. This is sometimes done when one Lodge raises you to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason; and, then, you move to another area and want to become active in a new Lodge. You must be a member of the Lodge in order to become an officer. Plural Membership refers to being a member of more than one Lodge in this Jurisdiction (California); and Dual Membership refers to being a member in this jurisdiction and in Lodges of other Jurisdictions. See your Lodge Secretary for proper handling of the paperwork.

You can be suspended for nonpayment of dues or "unmasonic conduct". If suspended for nonpayment of dues, you can apply for reinstatement. At any time, you may pay back dues for the year of nonpayment, plus the current year. If suspended for "unmasonic conduct", you may petition for reinstatement through the proper procedures and channels. If convicted of un-masonic conduct by trial, the trial board may direct expulsion from the order. The verdict can be appealed to the Grand Lodge. A Mason suspended or expelled from a Lodge is automatically denied membership in all Masonic organizations. When a Member is listed as deceased, his name is removed as an active member. The unused portion of his dues is pro-rated and returned to his estate.

**ENTERING OR RETIRING FROM A LODGE:** First of all, you should be present before Lodge opens to join in the fellowship. If circumstances do not permit this, you should inform the Tyler, who will make the alarm and inform the Junior Deacon that a Brother is properly clothed, vouched for and desires to enter. At the time of your entrance, the Tyler should let you know the degree in which the Lodge is at labor. If the Lodge is already open, the Tyler should knock three times on the door. When the Master gives his permission to enter, you should approach the Altar; salute the Master, using the due guard and sign for the Degree in which they are at labor and then be seated.

**DEPARTMENT WHILE IN THE 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; and, after being recognized, give the due guard and sign and make your remarks. Once completed, you may then be seated. 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 saying aye or nay. When petitions are balloted on, the ballot box is used. At the annual meeting for election of officers, a written ballot is utilized.

**THE OFFICERS OF A LODGE:** The Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary and Treasurer are elected by the membership each year. The Worshipful Master appoints the Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Chaplain, Marshal, Senior and Junior Stewards, Tyler and Organist. Any member of the Lodge, when certified in the Ritual of the Grand Lodge may hold any of the elective offices to which the members of the Lodge see fit to elect him.

**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. California Lodges are governed by the California Masonic Code (CMC), a copy of which may be found in the Secretary's office.

## THE GRAND LODGE AND YOU

As a new candidate of your Lodge, you undoubtedly will hear the term "Grand Lodge" often mentioned, and consequently a brief explanation is in order as to what a Grand Lodge is, how it functions and what its relationship is to your Lodge and yourself.

Freemasonry exists in every civilized nation throughout the world where some form of democratic government is practiced. It is organized into individual Lodges which owe allegiance to a Grand Lodge which is the supreme Masonic authority in a specific country, state or territory. It is through a particular Grand Lodge that a Lodge has received its charter which permits that Lodge to initiate, pass and raise those men who have applied for membership and who have been accepted for this honor. Without a Grand Lodge no Lodge can exist and of course, conversely, without Lodges, no Grand Lodge can exist.

In some instances, the Masonic authority of a Grand Lodge encompasses an entire nation, such as in England, Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand, the Philippines, Japan, the

Netherlands and Italy, just to name a few. In other instances it encompasses a state, territory or province such as in the United States, Canada, Australia, Mexico, Brazil and Germany, again just to name a few. Where such a Grand Lodge exists, it may charter however many Lodges it deems appropriate and no other Grand Lodge may infringe upon its authority and territory, without appropriate consent.

There are certain basic regulations to which all regular Grand Lodges, no matter where in the world located, must subscribe. If they do not practice these regulations, they cannot be officially recognized by those Grand Lodges which do practice these regulations. A Grand Lodge which cannot be recognized by another regular Grand Lodge is considered to be clandestine or irregular, even though it is established in a country, state, or territory where no Grand Lodge exists. Should a recognized Grand Lodge cease to practice those regulations which caused recognition in the first instance, such recognition may be withdrawn and no further Masonic communication would be held between those respective Grand Lodges.

What exactly are the regulations which determine whether or not a regular Grand Lodge affords recognition to one just established and one who seeks such recognition? They vary somewhat from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, but the fundamental test for recognition is as follows:

Legitimacy of origin.

Exclusive territorial jurisdiction.

Adherence to the Ancient Landmarks of Masonry; specifically an unalterable and continuing belief in God, the Volume of Sacred Law as an indispensable part of the furniture of the Lodge and the prohibition of the discussion of religion and politics.

Hiramic Legend.

No more than the three Degrees.

Masonic protocol usually dictates that an exchange of representatives takes place on the formal recognition of one Grand Lodge by another. This results in a member residing in one jurisdiction representing the other jurisdiction and vice-versa. These representatives, as a general rule, are in correspondence with the jurisdiction they represent. They bring items of Masonic interest pertaining to the jurisdiction they represent to the attention of their own Grand Lodge. In this manner, Masonic interchange is established and promoted between jurisdictions.

Let us now confine our discussion to the Grand Lodge of California, which is the supreme Masonic authority in the State of California. Our Grand Lodge was organized in April of 1850, five months before California was admitted to the Union as a State. At that time there were but three regularly chartered Lodges in California and two which were working under dispensation. In other words, there were organized Lodges that had not as yet received a charter from a Grand Lodge. The three which had charters had received these from three other Grand Lodges and the two working under dispensation, likewise were under dispensation from two other Grand Lodges, so there were five sovereign Grand Lodges represented within the territory of California.

There is an unwritten law in American Freemasonry which claims that whenever there are three or more chartered Lodges within a state, province or territory and no Grand Lodge has been established within that state, province or territory, those Lodges have an inalienable right to meet in convention and form their own Grand Lodge. This was the situation in California in 1850 and thus the Grand Lodge of California was formed. Subsequent to its

formation and organization, the two Lodges working under dispensation from two other Grand Lodges were granted charters and became a part of the Grand Lodge of California. Eventually, the few Lodges which existed in Hawaii petitioned the Grand Lodge of California and were granted charters and also became a part of the Grand Lodge of California. From the initial three Lodges, we now have today some 480 Lodges in California. On May 20, 1989, the Lodges in Hawaii formed their own Grand Lodge.

Each sovereign Masonic Grand Lodge may be structured to suit itself, develop its own ritual and conduct its business in any manner it may deem proper. No Grand Lodge interferes with another in any of these areas. It may adopt its own rules and regulations, and it is expected that all other Grand Lodges with whom it is in amity, or with whom it has accorded recognition, will observe and respect these rules and regulations. There should be no friction between Grand Lodges, and should something develop between them which cannot be settled amicably, then any Grand Lodge, by appropriate action, may withdraw recognition from the other and the other then becomes clandestine in the eyes of the Grand Lodge which has withdrawn recognition. This may be likened to one country breaking diplomatic recognition with another.

The Grand Lodge is composed of 28 Grand Lodge Officers, the chief executive officer being the Grand Master. Seven of these 28 Officers are elected each year by vote of the members of the Grand Lodge, and 21 are appointed by the incoming Grand Master. All Masters and Wardens of each of the duly chartered Lodges are also members of the Grand Lodge as are all Past Masters of all the Lodges in our Jurisdiction. Once a year, on the second Monday in October, these members assemble in the California Masonic Memorial Temple in San Francisco and meet for the transaction of business. This is referred to as the "Annual Communication" of the Grand Lodge. All Master Masons in good standing may register and attend the Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge. All matters of business which have been presented for consideration are discussed and voted upon and, depending on the results of the voting, are either adopted, rejected or carried over for disposition at the following Annual communication.

Any legislation which would amend the California Masonic Code, which is our law book, must receive a 5/6 affirmative vote for adoption. If such legislation receives at least a majority affirmative vote, but less than the required 5/6 vote, it is automatically carried over to the following year, at which time it requires a 2/3 affirmative vote to be adopted. Matters which do not amend the law of Grand Lodge require a simple majority affirmative vote for adoption. Many such matters of legislation which are adopted directly affect your lodge and all other Lodges and therefore, affect you and the other members of your Lodge.

Each Grand Lodge Officer, excepting the Grand Tyler, is entitled to vote in Grand Lodge as is each Past elected Grand Officer and each Lodge Master and Warden. Past Masters of the Lodges are entitled to one vote on a collective basis; thus each Lodge in our jurisdiction is entitled to four votes, one for the Master one for each of the two Wardens and one for its Past Masters as a group.

During the term of the Grand Master, he is called upon, from time to time, to interpret various regulations as contained in the California Masonic Code. No book of law can provide for every contingency and therefore, interpretations of law must be made. The Grand Master may consult with the Jurisprudence Committee through its chairman and render a decision in the matter at hand. Once this decision is rendered it becomes law, and all Masons within the Jurisdiction are expected to obey it. This may seem to be

somewhat dictatorial, but such decisions are subject to the approval of the Grand Lodge at its Annual Communication. If such approval is obtained, the decision is entered in our Code and becomes a permanent part of the law until such time as it may be reversed by a succeeding Grand Master and the reversal upheld by Grand Lodge. If this should happen, the decision is removed from the Code and is no longer a part of the law.

During the course of each Annual Communication, the Grand Master delivers a message on the State of the Fraternity. Contained in this Message are his decisions made during his term of office and also several recommendations which he presents to Grand Lodge for what he believes to be for the good of the Fraternity. These recommendations must also be approved by the Grand Lodge. If any Grand Master's decision or recommendation purports to amend our law, then it requires a 5/6 affirmative vote to be adopted. If either does not change the law, then a simple majority affirmative vote will suffice for approval.

In matters of ritual, the Jurisdiction is divided into six geographical Divisions. Each Division is under the supervision of an Assistant Grand Lecturer, one of the appointed Grand Lodge Officers. These six Assistant Grand Lecturers receive instruction in the ritual from the Grand Lecturer and in turn hold Schools of Instruction for the Inspectors assigned to their particular Division. The Inspectors in turn instruct that ritual to the officers and candidates' coaches of the Lodges assigned to their respective District. Through their individual Schools of Instructions, which generally are held on a monthly basis and thus a uniformity of work is achieved throughout the Jurisdiction.

Another important and vital element in our Grand Lodge structure is the corps of Inspectors. The Inspectors are Past Masters of various Lodges who are assigned several Lodges, usually four, and their responsibilities are two fold: to instruct in the adopted ritual of the Grand Lodge, as taught by the Grand Lecturer and to advise and assist each Lodge in its Leadership Training and the proper administration of its affairs.

No organization can properly function without committees and a Grand Lodge is no different in this regard. Within the structure of the Grand Lodge of California there are currently 46 committees and 5 boards, each of which performs certain assigned functions and basically carries out the programs of the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge. Each has a Chairman or Board President. 21 of the 46 Committees are standing committees and are mandated by law. The others are special committees which are established by and function at the will and pleasure of the Grand Master. The five boards are referred to as constitutional boards and are also provided for by law. All members are appointed by the Grand Master and serve at his will and pleasure.

There is much more to relate about the Grand Lodge, but the above will hopefully provide you with some insight as to its organization, structure, functions, etc. As you continue on your Masonic journey, you will become more familiar with the relationship between your Lodge and the Grand Lodge, and you will appreciate the entire structure and operation of Freemasonry in this jurisdiction. For the present, it is most important that you understand that you have an obligation to continue with your Degrees and become a Master Mason member of your Lodge. Thereafter, to continue to recognize the supremacy of the Grand Lodge which has chartered your Lodge and caused it to exist. You are also reminded that it is your obligation to obey all of the laws adopted by the Grand Lodge which is the direct relationship between the Grand Lodge and you.

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. 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 stepping stone in building your own Temple. You must be a Master Mason to qualify for either Rite. After you have completed the Degree requirements of either the York or Scottish Rites, you will have attained the 32nd Degree and 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 and their charitable or philanthropic work for crippled or burned children.

The Eastern Star, the Order of Amaranth and the White Shrine of Jerusalem are the "coed" portion of the Masonic Family.

DeMolay is an organization for young men from the ages 13–21.

The International Order of Job's Daughters and International Order of Rainbow for Girls are organizations for young ladies between 11–21.

All of these and more form the family of Masonry, and all work with essentially the same goals for the people involved. All Masonic organizations in the State of California are required to obey the laws and regulations of the Grand Lodge.

Grand Lodge of California 1991