

WHAT THE PETITIONER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MASONRY

WHO ARE MASONS?

Masonry is large and diversified enough, to provide what you are seeking. Masons are men who have joined together to improve themselves.

This is accomplished through the principle's and ceremonies of the fraternity. They endeavour to extend Masonic lessons into their daily lives in order to become positive influences in their homes, communities, nation and throughout the world.

They base their efforts on morality, justice, charity, truth and the laws of God. There are over 3 million Masons in the United States of America. Worldwide, membership encompasses millions of men who believe and support the same fundamental principles.

WHAT IS MASONRY?

What is modern Freemasonry? Masonry, as mentioned before, is many things to many people. Many years ago in England it was defined as "a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols." It is a course of moral instruction using both allegories and symbols to teach its lessons. The legends and myths of the old stone cutters and masons, many of them involved in building the great cathedrals of Europe, have been woven into an interesting and effective way to portray moral truths.

In Masonry, the old tools and ways of the craftsmen are used to help dramatically portray those moral truths. For example, the 24 inch gauge and the common gavel. Just as the ruler is used to measure distance, the modern Mason uses it as a reminder to manage one of his most precious resources: time. And, as the gavel is used to shape stones, so it is also the symbol for the necessity of all of us to work to perfect ourselves.

One modern definition is: "Freemasonry is an organized society of men, symbolically applying the principle of Operative Masonry and architecture to the science and art of character building." In other words, Masonry uses ageless methods and lessons to make each of us a better person.

Thus, Masonry:

- 1 has a basic philosophy of life that places the individual worth of each man high on its pedestal, and incorporates the great teachings of many ages to provide a way for individual study and thought.
2. has great respect for religion and promotes toleration and equal esteem for the religious opinions and beliefs of others.

3. provides a real working plan for making good men even better.
4. is a social organization.
5. has many important charitable projects.
6. has a rich worldwide history.
7. is a proven way to develop both public speaking and dramatic abilities, and provides an effective avenue for developing leadership.

WHAT MASONRY STANDS FOR

Masonry stands for some important principles and beliefs.

The primary doctrines of Freemasonry are Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth. Its cardinal virtues are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice. These principles or beliefs cover a broad field, actually supplying the pattern to meet every experience in human life.

Masonry is a strong supporter of constitutional government... of quality public education... of the freedom of religion and expression... of the equality of all men and women... of the need for strong moral character... and of meaningful charity. Masonry, and the organizations that are within the Masonic family, contribute millions of dollars every year to helping those with sight problems or aphasia, physically disabled children, speech & learning disorders, and those with severe burns. Local Lodges work to help their communities and individuals within those communities.

Masonry's charity is always given without regard to race, sex, religion, creed, or national origin.

THE MISSION OF FREEMASONRY

“The mission of Freemasonry is to promote a way of life that binds like minded men in a worldwide brotherhood that transcends all religious, ethnic, cultural, social and educational differences; by teaching the great principles of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth: and, by the outward expression of these, through its fellowship, its compassion and its concern, to find ways in which to serve God, family, country, neighbours and self.”

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FREEMASONRY?

Simply put, the overall purpose of Masonry is to provide a way to help each member become a better person. We do not propose to take a bad man and make him good; rather, our aim is to take the good man and make him better.

We try to place emphasis on the individual man by:

1. Strengthening his character.
2. Improving his moral and spiritual outlook.
3. Broadening his mental horizons.

We try to impress upon the minds of our members the principles of personal responsibility and morality; to give each member an understanding of and feeling for Freemasonry's character; and to have every member put these lessons into practice in his daily life. We try to build a better world by building better men to work in their own communities. Freemasonry believes in universal peace made possible by teaching its doctrine through the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God.

WHAT ARE LODGES?

A Lodge is a meeting place for Masons. This place may be used by Masons for regular business meetings, degrees, social activities, other Masonic groups, or even community activities. Lodge buildings are prominently marked, and are often recognized as special landmarks in most cities and towns of the United States as well as in Europe and countries in the free world.

ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY

We are not sure at what point in time our craft was born. Hundreds of Masons have investigated this question, but no conclusive answer has been found, and perhaps never will be. We do know that the earliest written record of the term "Master Mason" appears in the Regius manuscript, written about 1390 and now kept in the British Museum. Its mention of the "Master Mason" refers to the stone masons of the Middle Ages. The tools of the stonemason date back, of course, to the earliest periods of history and are lost in the mists of time. This is also true of the geometry and geometric symbols used in the craft of building.

There are other theories concerning the development of Freemasonry. Some are so absurd that they will not be mentioned here. The most favoured, after the one above, is that Freemasonry was developed by the Order of the Christian Knights Templar

when they were disbanded by a Papal Bull and forced to flee from France. Brother John J. Robinson was one, but not the first, who presented this theory in his excellent book “Born in Blood”.

Over the ages Freemasonry, as we now know it, slowly took form. It has evolved into a comprehensive and effective form of fraternal teaching of basic morals, truths and personal fulfilment. It ranks the development of the individual’s reasoning capabilities highly and encourages the questioning mind.

THE TWO TYPES OF MASONRY

There are actually two kinds of Masonry. One we call “Operative” and the other “Speculative”.

Operative Masonry can be traced back to the Middle Ages and beyond. Operative Masons, formed groups with Lodge structures similar to ours today. We have officers similar to theirs. Men were admitted only after they had served a number of years of apprenticeship, usually seven years. This is the origin of the first or Entered Apprentice degree. In Operative Masonry, Masons actually did the physical labour of building. They were the best at their craft, and they kept secret their methods of building.

When the organization became what is called Speculative Masonry, men were accepted into the Craft without being actual builders, that is, they were spiritual builders. Speculative Masonry adopts the terms and concepts, of the actual builders, but substitutes men for stone and mortar, and works toward self-improvement rather than the actual construction of buildings.

“FREE” AND “ACCEPTED” MASONS

How did the words “Free” and “Accepted” originate?

The ancient craftsmen were very skilled and their craft was considered to be indispensable to the welfare of both church and state. They were the men who built castles and cathedrals. 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 which was in line with their duties. No one could become an Apprentice unless he was free born.

The Masons organized into “guilds”, something akin to a trade union, and individual companies or groups of Masons contracted for specific construction projects. In the England of that time, various crafts (carpenters, distillers, pewterers, ironworkers, etc.) also organized into guilds, but most of the population worked under bond to the owners of the land on which they lived.

The word “Accepted” also goes back to the time of the Operative Mason.

During the later years of the Middle Ages, there were few educated outside the

monasteries of the church. The “accepted” mason was originally a man who, in a lodge operative in origin or still partly so in character, was for all practical purposes of membership accepted as a mason. From this practice grew in course of time the use of the words “accepted” and “adopted” to indicate a man who had been admitted into the inner fellowship of Symbolic Masons. Candidates were “accepted” into freemasonry no earlier than the mid-seventeenth century. We first meet the phrase “free and accepted” in 1722.

By the late 1600’s the demand for the type of architecture that lent itself to the guild type of operation was declining. Architecture itself was changing; and the number of men, as well as the number of operative lodges, were declining. Increasingly, Masonry adopted the legends and habits of the old operative lodges, for spiritual and moral purposes. As time went on, there became many more “Accepted” members than there were Operative members. Sometime in the eighteenth century, the “Accepted Masons” outnumbered the “Operative Masons” and Masonry became exclusively a speculative organization rather than an operative one.

ORIGIN OF THE GRAND LODGE

In 1717 four Lodges in London met together and decided to form a Grand Lodge, possibly for no other reason than to strengthen and preserve themselves. In 1723 they adopted a Constitution. Their success led to the establishment of still other Grand Lodges. In 1725 some of the Lodges in Ireland formed a Grand Lodge and a similar body was instituted in Scotland in 1736.

Moreover the original Grand Lodge in England did not remain without rivals, and at one time in the eighteenth century three Grand Lodges existed in England in addition to the one organized in 1717. Two of these died out without influencing the history of Masonry in general, but the third had a great part in the spread and popularizing of Masonry throughout the world. It called itself the “Ancient” or “An- tient” Grand Lodge. Members of the other Grand Lodge were as a consequence called “Moderns”. The two surviving Grand Lodges were long and vigorous rivals, but they finally united in 1813 into the present United Grand Lodge of England. Thus, from one of these two Grand Bodies in England, or from those of Ireland or Scotland, all other Grand Lodges in the world today are descended. Titles of Grand Lodges in the United States also vary. Some Grand Lodges are called A. F. & A. M. which means Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. The most commonly used title, like that used in the U.S.A. is F. & A. M., or Free and Accepted Masons. The Grand Lodge of South Carolina is an exception in that it is A.F.M.

Masonry was established in France sometime between 1718 and 1725. The first lodge in Spain was established in 1728. A lodge was established in Prague (The Czech Republic) in 1729, in Calcutta (India) in 1728 and in Naples (Italy) in 1731. Masonry came to Poland in 1734 and Sweden in 1735.

The growth of Freemasonry and its ideals and beliefs came not without opposition. Masons are taught that all men are equal - we meet upon the level. Individual freedom of thought and action, as well as morality and ethics, are the concepts and ideals upon which our order is founded. The teachings are a condemnation of autocratic government, who in turn condemn Freemasonry.

WHAT WE ARE NOT

We are not a secret society!

A secret society is generally one that wraps itself in a cloak of absolute secrecy. That means no one knows who the members are, where they meet what they do or what they stand for.

That is not Masonry at all! Masonry may have “secrets,” but it is not a secret society. Masonic secrets are few in number, and deal with the general method of initiation, the ways we recognize each other, and very little else. These parts of the ritual, which are called the esoteric side of Masonry, have been handed down by word of mouth for centuries.

Masonry's purposes, ideals, and principles may be learned by anyone who inquires. There are numerous books on these subjects which are available to the public. Masonry often has public notices in the newspapers, and our members are usually numbered among the more prominent citizens in the community.

We are not a Religion!

Masonry, as an organization, is understanding and tolerant of all religious thoughts.

Masonry has no specific creed, no promise of salvation, no dogma, no priesthood.

There are no requirements as to religious preference in becoming a Mason. Masonry does ask you to state your belief and trust in a Supreme Being. Nonsectarian Prayers are a common part of all our ceremonies, but are not offered to a specific deity.

Masonic ritual does incorporate lessons and examples from the Bible, but they are given as representative illustrations.

Masonry does not require you to belong to a church, synagogue or mosque although many Masons are very active in their religious organizations, and among our members are leaders of many denominations.

Freemasonry accepts your right to belong to any church or religious organization of your choice and does not infringe on that right. Neither does Masonry try to be a substitute for your church.

Masonry wants to unite men for the purpose of brotherhood; not as an organized religion. Masonry is considered the greatest supporter of religion. It continuously encourages its members to be active in the faith of their choice

WHAT WE DO NOT DO

Sectarian religion and partisan politics are not discussed in Lodge, and there are very good reasons why. When we meet in a Lodge, 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 may follow his own convictions. Our objective is to unite men, not to divide them. These two subjects can cause honest differences of opinion which might well cause friction among Brothers. No member running for political office has any right to expect the support of any other member because of Lodge affiliation. This does not mean, however, that matters which concern themselves with the nature of government or individual freedoms are not proper concerns of Masons as good citizens.

There will be subjects concerning the Lodge's business that have to be discussed. These discussions should be kept within the bounds of propriety, and everyone should show tolerance for the opinion of the other. Every Master wants harmony in his Lodge; and, once a matter has been put to vote in the Lodge, and a decision made, the decision should be accepted by all members regardless of how they voted.

Masonry teaches 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 honourable manner. Anyone who serves in political office should not act politically as a Freemason; nor, in the name of Freemasonry in exercising his rights.

To sum up: As a Mason you will never introduce into the Craft any controversial sectarian or political question; and in your life as a member of the state you will ever be loyal to the demands of good citizenship.

MASONIC ORGANIZATIONS

You have asked to join the Masonic Lodge, or “Symbolic Lodge”, or “Blue Lodge”. It is the base of all other organizations that require Masonic affiliation, one or more of which you, or a member of your family, may want to join sometime in the future.

We are not sure where the name “Blue Lodge” originated, one theory is because blue is generally regarded as the colour used to characterize friendship. Colours have a large place in the traditions of the Craft. Today it is generally agreed that the American usage is derived from English Freemasonry. We know that the United Grand Lodge of England, in choosing the colours of its clothing was guided mainly by the colours associated with the Noble Orders of the Garter and the Bath. When the Most Noble Order of the Garter was instituted by Edward III in 1348, its colour was light blue. Freemasonry's colours were not derived from ancient symbolism. The clothing of three groups of degrees is related to mainly three colours; the Craft of symbolic degrees with blue; the Royal Arch with crimson; and other degrees with

green, white and other colours, including black. Worldwide, in many cultures, blue symbolizes immortality, eternity, fidelity, prudence and goodness. In Freemasonry in particular, blue is symbolic of universal brotherhood and friendship and “instructs us that in the mind of a Mason, those virtues should be as extensive as the blue arch of Heaven itself. “

Two of the organizations, the York Rite and the Scottish Rite, expand on the teachings of the Blue Lodge, or basic Masonry, and further explain its meaning. The Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, commonly called the Shrine, is not formally connected with Masonry, but has, as its own requirement, the restriction of its membership to members of the York Rite and/or Scottish Rite. This organization is socially-oriented, and has as its major project the funding and operation of nearly two dozen hospitals for crippled and burned children.

The Order of the Eastern Star, White Shrine of Jerusalem and the Amaranth admit both men and women. Research Lodges do academic study on Masonry.

The Masonic Service Association, whose headquarters is in Silver Spring, MD, issues Masonic publications and sponsors visits to patients at our Veterans hospitals.

There are several organizations. The International Order of De Molay (For young men) and Jobs Daughters, The International Order of Rainbow Girls for young people. In addition, the Mystic Order of Veiled Prophets of the Enchanted Realm (Grotto), Tall Cedars of Lebanon and many other concordant and appendant Masonic bodies in the United States of America will welcome you and your family as members once you become a Master Mason. All you will need is the time, finances and energy to participate.

WHAT TO EXPECT

All of the ceremonies of Masonry are serious and performed in a dignified manner. There is no horseplay, no hazing.

Enter the Lodge with an attitude which will help you appreciate the serious and solemn ceremonies that you will experience.

The degrees, or teaching lessons, are done in the form of short plays, in which you play a part, prompted by a guide. The language is beautiful, and the content both meaningful and interesting.

When you receive each degree it is suggested that you dress respectfully, as in a business setting. When you arrive at the Lodge for your degree you will be asked to wait a short time in an outer room while the Lodge prepares to conduct the degree. A small committee will meet with you formally. You will be asked a series of questions to ascertain your motives and confirm your free choice in joining our Fraternity. You will then be prepared to receive the degree by temporarily exchanging your street clothes for the plain garment of a candidate.

The degree itself will be given by a team of Masons. Listen to the content of what is

being said. These are spiritual lessons given with great dignity.

You should have no worries about entering a Masonic Lodge. The degrees are simply lessons and you will be treated as the friend and brother that you are becoming.

THE LANDMARKS

Before the development of modern surveying and of the system of recording the position, shape and size of a piece of land by public authorities, how to establish the permanent boundaries of a farm, field, lot or other parcel of ground was a difficult and often a perplexing problem. Almost the only method men could devise was to fix upon some feature, such as a hill, stream, rock, or even a tree, and to draw a line from it to some other such feature, and so on, thus establishing the limits beyond which, a man's property could not, or should not, go. These more or less permanent markers were called Landmarks, a word that explains itself. In addition, it is easy to understand why the destruction or removal of a Landmark was deemed so serious an offense; it meant robbing a man of his property - therefore, the ancient saying, "Remove not a neighbor's Landmark."

Freemasonry has honored this term as a name for one of the most important of all its basic laws, namely, that there are in the Craft certain principles, practices, traditions, usages of laws, which cannot be changed by any Mason, Lodge or Grand Lodge. It is this we mean when we speak of "The Ancient Landmarks," a phrase you will hear often during your Masonic career. Let us see if we can understand that phrase, at least in its larger meaning.

Freemasonry has an identity, a character of its own. Some things in it can be abolished, changed or modified, without destroying that identity - that is, after the change is made Freemasonry continues to be what it was before. But there are changes which, if they were made, would destroy Freemasonry itself - that is, it would cease to have its own identity and would become something else.

Let us give you a simple illustration. Here is a glass of water. We can divide that water into smaller and smaller portions, until at last we reach the molecule, but all the time it will continue to be water; if, however, and not stopping there, we next divide the molecule we shall no longer have water but a gas, either hydrogen or oxygen. There is a point beyond which the fluid cannot be changed without losing its identity.

This is a picture of the idea of the Landmarks. They signify that in Masonry which is essential to its identity. To do away with them is to do away with Masonry. Let us, therefore, in a rough way, define the doctrine of Landmarks as follows:

"Whatever is found necessary to maintain the identity and secure the perpetuity of Freemasonry has the power of a Landmark."

You now see why even a Grand Lodge of the Fraternity itself as a whole cannot change these Landmarks! If a Grand Lodge were to change them, it would destroy itself because there would no longer be any Masonry left and there cannot be a Grand Lodge of Masonry if there were no Masonry.

It is impossible to make up a list of the Landmarks, but there are a few examples at hand which will help make the meaning clear. We shall call your attention to a number of specimens of these, reminding you as I do that they are specimens only and not intended to be exhaustive.

Freemasonry began six or seven hundred years ago with the Operative Masons of Europe and Britain. Many of their arts, practices, customs, symbols and emblems became permanently embodied in the very nature of Masonry. If all that we inherited from Operative Masonry could be abolished, not only would it destroy our connections with our own history, but at the same time would change our Fraternity out of all recognition. Here is something with the power of a Landmark.

Many things in Masonry are kept secret from the outside world, being deemed sacred to its own membership. This secrecy is not a theatrical pose to gratify a desire for mystification, but is so essential to the very nature of the Craft that we could not even conceive Masonry without it. Gone would be the Ritual, Initiation, the Obligations, the modes of recognition and all that home-like privacy which makes Lodge life so delightful. Secrecy, therefore, has the power of a Landmark.

Ever since it began, Masonry has admitted adult men only to membership. A boy under age could not be held accountable to his Obligations; and if women were admitted it would call for such a recasting of our system from top to bottom that little of it would remain standing.

Each petitioner is required to possess certain qualifications, must be sound in limb, well recommended, of good character, free born, of mature age; if these qualifications were removed, men of every sort would flock in, men not mentally or morally capable of living the Masonic life; the result would be no Masonry to live. However, it is not sufficient for a petitioner to be well qualified in order to gain admittance to our mysteries; he must also pass through the rites of Initiation. This also has been an integral part of our Fraternity from the very beginning, and is so vital to it that the whole system presupposes it throughout. Eliminate Initiation and it is possible that some kind of society would remain, but it would not be the society of Freemasonry.

Another equally essential factor is the secret, unanimous Ballot; since it is the principal purpose of the Craft to bring men together into brotherly relations; it is necessary that such candidates as are admitted shall not disturb harmony among the members; the Ballot is so carefully designed to guard against this that if a single

member is convinced that a given petitioner will be a disturbing influence his one vote has the power to exclude.

The Ritual embraces the Work, Lectures and Ceremonies made use of in the teaching of the principles, morals and purposes of Masonry. Symbols, emblems and allegories are freely employed to emphasize and dramatize these teachings. Perhaps no other of the Craft's "permanent markers" exceeds the Ritual in the essentialness of its basic identity.

The sovereignty of Grand Lodge, the corresponding sovereignty of the Lodge, within its own jurisdiction and the sovereignty of the unwritten law are a similar necessity; for without such sovereignty anarchy would ensue, and the Fraternity would be battered to pieces by the discordant forces generated within itself.

Every Mason must have respect for and obedience to the civil law; no Mason may engage in broils or rebellions; no political discussion can be brought into our assemblies. Were this abolished, our organization would be taken captive by some political or social party and would perish at the first radical turnover of political power; and while it lasted, it would be the servant of some power outside itself without the ability to regulate and control its own existence.

To the same effect is the ancient law forbidding that a candidate or Brother shall be questioned as to his particular mode of religious faith and that no sectarian matters shall intrude within a Lodge. Just as it would mean the ultimate destruction of Freemasonry if it were to make itself over into the hands of a political party, so would it mean its death sooner or later to surrender itself to one particular religious Faith or belief.

The last example might be described as the crowning Landmark of all. Belief in God, with the Altar at the center of the Lodge and having the Holy Book of Law opened upon it, belief in Immortality, belief in prayer - here is the religious basis of Freemasonry, and when the word "basis" is used it is meant in its most literal sense. If this spiritual life were destroyed, our Fraternity would degenerate into a mere social club, a thing at the opposite pole from what it now is.

You are not yet a Mason. If you have the good fortune to become a member of a Lodge, and if thereafter you progress in Masonic knowledge and experience, as we trust you will, you will then win an understanding of this subject in a more technical manner, and you will have the advantage of seeing it from the inside instead of from the outside. But at your present stage, the subject is of the utmost importance to you, and that for this reason: it makes plain to you that Freemasonry is clearly conscious of what belongs to its own proper nature. It guards against every possible influence and cherishes that nature continually; the petitioner who comes into its membership must

accept it as he finds it or not at all. There is no way to change Freemasonry to suit the tastes, foibles, prejudices or opinions of the candidate; it is the candidate who must change himself to conform to it. To become a Mason, therefore, you must stand ready with all sincerity to give wholehearted assent to its teachings and principles, obedience to its laws and regulations and observance to its Ancient Landmarks.

THE TENETS:

Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love

The principal or chief Tenets of Freemasonry are Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love. It is necessary not to overlook "principal," for it signifies that while it is on these three teachings that our Fraternity lays the greatest emphasis, yet there are other teachings of almost equal importance, and in any discussion of our subject, those others must not be lost sight of.

By a "Tenet" is meant some teaching so obviously true, so universally accepted, that we believe it without question and always take it for granted. Examples of such teachings lie everywhere about us. Good health is better than illness; a truthful man is more dependable than a liar; it is better to save money than to waste it; an industrious man is more useful than an idle one; a wise man is a more able counselor than a foolish one; education is to be preferred to ignorance - these are but a few of the countless examples of teaching that no intelligent man can possibly call into question. Everyone takes them for granted. They are Tenets.

When we turn to the Principal Tenets of our own Fraternity, we are immediately struck by an interesting fact: Freemasonry considers Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love to be teachings of this kind! It holds them to be true in a sense that no man can question them; they are obvious, and self-evident.

We wonder if you have always considered them to be so? Is it not a common thing for men to consider Brotherly Love, for example, to be such a thing that, while it might be highly desirable, it is not practicable, and is therefore nothing but a floating vision to be dreamed of but never possessed? It is challenging for Freemasonry to call such things "Tenets," for it means that they are not only true, but plainly and obviously and necessarily true. Unless you can grasp this fact, unless you can see for yourself that the teachings of Freemasonry are realities, self-evident realities, and not visionary ideals, you will never be able to understand Masonic teachings. For Freemasonry does not tell us that Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love ought to be true, that it would be better for us all if they were true -- it tells us that they are true. They are tremendous realities in human life, and it is as impossible to question their existence, as it is to

question the existence of the ground under our feet, or the sun over our heads. The question is not whether we shall believe in them or not, for we cannot help but believe in them; the question is, what are we going to do about them?

Let us now reflect a moment upon the Principal Tenets, beginning with Friendship. Someone has said that Masonry teaches how to make friends by teaching how to be a friend. Man, being the social creature that he is, cannot find happiness by himself and therefore seeks it in the companionship of others. Unfortunately, the right kind of happiness is not always sought, for what is happiness to one individual may be something entirely different to another. While Masonry claims no monopoly on good men, it is a fact that you are coming into it of your own free will, and it is also true that ample investigation has been made among those who know you well as to your character and standing. Therefore, the very fact that you have been accepted and are present here is evidence that our Lodge believes that the friendships of Masonry will appeal to you and that the friendly spirit you have to offer will be acceptable to it. Sincerity, loyalty, tolerance, sympathy, belief, interest, devotedness, tenderness, unselfishness -- even sacrifice, are some of the ingredients of true Friendship. Masonry teaches all these virtues and points ever to the fact that true Friendship, the kind of Friendship that abides, the kind of Friendship that can sweeten our relations with those about us, is always a mutual relationship.

Morals, good morals, are those accepted standards of behavior by which any action is measured to determine its fitness for practice. Morality by the same token, is the exercise of those accepted standards. With these definitions, it becomes clear that Morality is the use of good morals in our daily lives. Morality is not a matter of compunction. The man, who acts always within the moral law, or within the bounds of propriety, solely because he fears to act otherwise, may be fooling himself and seldom others. Thus such a man becomes a kind of dual personality - one side of him wishing to act properly as a matter of principle, the other side restrained from immorality only by fear. It is the precepts that makes for morality and conduct, which establishes it. There is no such thing as Masonic Morality, as indicating a separate or exclusive code of conduct. Masonry offers no set of specific morals nor does any particular moral originate in it. Masonry teaches the practice of all good morals, leaving the interpretation of right and wrong to the individual conscience. That Masonry abides deeply in the practice of Morality will be evident to you as you progress through its Degrees.

What is Brotherly Love? Manifestly, it means that we place on another man the highest possible valuation as a friend, a companion, an associate, a neighbor, a fellow. Merely to be with him, merely to spend hours in his company, to have the privilege of working at his side, is all we ask. We do not ask that from our relationship we shall make money, or further our business interests, or achieve some other form of selfish

gain. Our relationship with such a one is its own excuse for being, its own justification, its own reward. All of us know that this Brotherly Love is one of the supreme goods without which life is a lonely, unhappy, ugly kind of thing. This is not a hope or a dream, but a fact - as real as day and night or as the law of gravity. Freemasonry builds on that fact, takes it for granted, provides opportunities for us to have such fellowship, encourages us to understand and to practice it, and to make it one of the laws of our existence; it is, in short, and in literal truth, one of its Principal Tenets.

As we stated in the beginning, Friendship, Morality, and Brotherly Love are the Principal Tenets of Masonry. There are other Tenets, teachings of a truth and necessity so obvious that argument is never necessary to sustain them. We urge you to ponder the teachings of the Craft as you progress from Degree to Degree with this in mind. You may not find that any of them are novel or exciting. Novelty, however, while it may at times have its own interest, is not to be compared in value with the knowledge that the truths on which Freemasonry is founded are eternal. They are never new, neither are they ever old; time cannot wither nor custom stale their infinite variety, the freshness of Immortality is on them because they never die, in them is a ceaseless inspiration and an inexhaustible appeal. They are Tenets of Freemasonry because always and everywhere they have been Tenets of human life.

THE QUALIFICATIONS

Inasmuch as the Ballot Box decided once and for all that you possessed the qualifications required of a petitioner you may question the need of your giving any further heed to this subject. The reply to your question is that it is only in part that the qualifications exist merely as a test of a petitioner's fitness to become a Mason; in a larger and more important sense they determine also a man's fitness to remain a Mason after he has been elected to membership. They are the qualifications of a Mason, not merely of a man who desires to become a Mason, they always remain in force, at least most of them do, and therefore, we have not outgrown them when we have passed the ordeal of the Ballot.

The word "qualifications" defines itself. It derives from a Latin term meaning "value." The Anglo-Saxon term for the same idea was "worth," from which we have "worthful" and "worshipful." By a petitioner's qualifications is consequently meant what values or worths he may possess to fit him for a place in the fellowship of Masons.

These values are of two kinds, internal and external. The internal qualifications divide themselves also under two main heads. One of these is that a petitioner must come of "his own free will and accord." That is, he must come unsolicited and not in deference to any pressure due to ulterior motives of any kind; the necessary corollary of this -

and here already we observe how the qualifications may remain in force throughout a Mason's career - is that no Mason shall solicit a man to petition for membership.

The other internal qualification is that a petitioner shall come "uninfluenced by mercenary motives." What this means is obvious: he is not to expect that in the Fraternity he will find business, professional or financial gain for himself, and by the same token no Brother already in membership has any right to solicit such favors from him. Both of these qualifications are described as "internal" because they have to do with motives, and only a man himself can know what his motives are.

The external qualifications may, for sake of convenience, be divided under several heads:

1. **The Physical.** A petitioner must not be a woman, a child, or a eunuch. This is one of the Ancient Landmarks of the Craft.

He must also be of lawful age, which in our own usage is eighteen years, because no person can undertake all Masonic Obligations except he has reached the years of discretion and is legally responsible for his acts. This rules out "a young man under age;" it also rules out "an old man in his dotage," for in the latter case dotage means the loss of those powers by which a man is able to recognize and discharge his responsibilities.
2. **The Mental.** The mental qualifications are not expressly defined, though a number of Grand Lodges go so far as to demand that a petitioner shall be able to read and write. But they are clearly implied, and as such are as binding as though explicitly expressed. Much is taught a Mason; much is demanded of him; it is impossible for him to understand such teachings, or to meet the demands, unless he possesses at least average intellectual abilities.
3. **Civil Qualifications.** By this, Civil Qualifications are meant all that have to do with citizenship and with a man's life as a neighbor, as a member of his community. Under this head it is required that he be a free man. This means that he is in the true sense his own master, free to discharge his Masonic duties without interference from outside. Also, it is required that he be "under the tongue of good report," that is, he must possess a sound reputation among those who know him best. Of even greater importance is it that he be a good citizen, one who obeys the law, who is obedient, as the Old Charges express it, "to the Civil Magistrates," and who keeps himself from embroilment in rebellion and mobs in defiance of the claims of public order.
4. **Moral and Religious.** It is an Ancient Landmark that a Mason must be "a good and true man," a man "of honor and honesty," who governs himself by the Compasses, tries himself by the Square and tests himself by the Plumb. So imperious is the Fraternity's moral requirement that to think of a Mason as not devoted to integrity and rectitude of character is a contradiction in terms.

In religion, it is required of a petitioner that he believes in God, in Immortality, and that he use the Volume of God's Sacred Law as a rule and guide to his faith. At the same time it is required that he practice tolerance that he shall not be questioned as to the peculiar form or mode of his faith and shall not question his Brethren.

There are qualifications of another kind, such as those governing residence of petitioners and those that required a member to pay his own share of the dues and taxes lawfully levied upon him. However, the internal and external qualifications, which I have described, give us in the true sense of the word the qualifications demanded of every petitioner and member.

In conclusion, I ask you to observe carefully one all-important point. In this list of qualifications, we have a portrait of the Mason drawn by the Fraternity itself, and that portrait is official. How necessary it is to you to grasp this fact in your endeavor to arrive at a true understanding of Freemasonry, it would be impossible for me to exaggerate.

A Mason must be a man of such bodily equipment as will enable him to satisfy the demands of the work; of mental competency; of years of responsibility and discretion; of sound character and reputation; a good citizen; a man of well-founded religious faith; his own master, free from external control; devoted to the claims of Brotherhood; acceptable to the membership of the Craft.

Who may be Masons?

Men who satisfy the requirements of that description.

What is Freemasonry?

A fellowship of such men devoted to the ideals of such manhood.

What are the ideals and teachings of Freemasonry?

All such truths, ideals, and realities that describe, interpret, uphold, satisfy and foster such manhood.

What is the purpose of Freemasonry?

To find such men, to develop such men, and to bring them together into a Fraternity devoted to the life of such men.

You will see from this, with a clearness beyond possibility of misunderstanding, how the qualifications stand at the center of the Craft, expressing its standards, describing who may be Masons in reality and setting before us the goal of all Masonic endeavor. It is not sufficient that a man shall possess such qualifications for the mere purpose of petitioning for membership; they are required of us all, all of the time, so long as we shall remain in the Craft.

FREEMASONRY'S ATTITUDE TO POLITICS AND RELIGION

One of the most important of all our Landmarks is that which forbids us to participate, as Masons, in any form of religious or political sectarianism. We cannot question a candidate as to his peculiar beliefs in religion or politics; we cannot discuss such matters in any of our assemblies, and we cannot take any kind of public action with regard to them in the name of the Craft. A candidate must pledge himself to a belief in God and to a belief in Immortality, and he must reverence the Volume of Sacred Law as a rule and guide for his life. The Doctrinal interpretation he may place on these beliefs must, however, be left entirely to him. So also he must pledge himself to good citizenship, but his choice of a political party through which he works for the realization of his ideal of citizenship must be left entirely to him.

The Fraternity's attitude toward all such sectarianism is more than a negative one. It goes further than merely to say, "Hands off." It is rather a positive one, for it definitely prohibits all Masons from sectarian controversies in all forms. Such controversies are un-Masonic -- that is, they are an outright violation of written Masonic Law, and subject a member to severe discipline.

It is not difficult to understand the reason for this Landmark. Freemasonry exists for the sake of, is dedicated and devoted to, the life of Brotherhood. Brotherhood means that many of us, men drawn from all walks of life, with a great variety of racial characteristics and religious and political opinions, are brought together, and kept together, in a relationship of friendship, harmony, and goodwill. To maintain that harmony it is necessary that whatever passions and prejudices might divide us into opposing groups, feuds, schisms or conflicting cliques, must be kept out. It is notorious that nothing is more likely to divide and alienate men than religious and political sectarianism. For this reason, sectarianism is prohibited because the needs and the welfare of Brotherhood demand it.

Freemasonry thus prohibits sectarianism within its own membership. But what, you may now wish to ask, is its attitude toward that sectarianism in the outside world which leads men to make war on Freemasonry itself. What is a Mason to do in response to attacks from outside? This question is a pertinent one. During its whole history, the Fraternity has been subject to attacks from without. In our own country, a hundred years ago a coalition of certain churches with a national political party undertook to stamp Masonry out of existence. In addition, down through the years governments have outlawed it by governmental action. In all probability, our Craft will always have such enmities to deal with, as does every other organization.

Our attitude toward such attacks is to ignore them. We do not fight back. We take the

position that if some man (or group of men) disagrees with the teachings of Freemasonry that is his own private affair and does not concern us. We do nothing to invite, or to warrant such attacks, therefore, they are no affairs of ours. Our faith in the truth and right of Freemasonry is so well founded that we are certain it needs to do nothing except go on being itself in order to silence sooner or later any charges that may be made against it by any kind of enemies.

This sums up what we may describe as Freemasonry's negative attitude toward religious and political sectarianism, but it also has a positive attitude toward religion and politics, and it is to this that we next turn your attention.

The positive attitude in its most general sense takes the form of the great Masonic ideal of Toleration. Tolerance has always been one of the main teachings of our Order. What do we mean by tolerance? We do not mean that one belief is as true as another; or as valuable as another, we do not advocate a general indifference to all beliefs; nor do we hold that all differences of opinion should be melted down into a drab gray of compromise. As believers in toleration, we take the opposite position; we believe that one belief is truer than another, that one opinion is better grounded than another; and we want the truth to prevail. However, we know that the truth can never emerge unless each man is left free to see the facts for himself, to think for himself, to speak for himself, to confront life's realities for himself. Let each human mind have a fair deal; let it be left free to observe the world for itself. This, we believe, is the one way in which the truth about any of the great subjects of human life will ever be found. Tolerance, therefore, is a positive and constructive thing; it encourages each man to think for himself, because not otherwise shall men learn in the long run to think the same things. In all our assemblies we try to deal with one another, in so far as religious and political opinions may be concerned, in this spirit of fair play; we may disagree, but we try not to be disagreeable.

However, Freemasonry's attitude is even more definite than this.

First, in regards to religion, it has been said above that Freemasonry is dedicated to, and devoted to, Brotherhood. But this Brotherhood rests on a basis of religion. Every Mason must believe in God and in the immortality of the soul. The Volume of Sacred Law must be open on every Lodge Altar. A candidate takes his Obligations upon his knees. Before engaging in any important undertaking, a Mason seeks aid and guidance through prayer from the Great Architect of the Universe. This is religious, but it is not a religion. It is faith - but it is not a faith confined to any one creed. It is worship - but it is not a worship chained to any one Altar. In the great words of the First Book of Constitutions, it is the religion "in which all good men agree." It is the ground, which underlies all religions, all churches, all creeds, all sects. Once Masons stand together on that ground they may afterwards proceed to build for themselves this church or that, may incline to one

doctrinal interpretation or another; the Fraternity does not interfere with them in so doing, but it insists that whatever be their private opinions they shall stand on that ground.

Second, as regards politics, politics means the discussion and determination of matters of public policy. Shall a government maintain a large army and navy or a small one? Shall it charge a tariff on goods shipped into it from abroad? Shall it have a strong central government, or a weak one? Shall it allow freedom of thought and speech, or not? Shall it grant religious freedom, or shall it set up a state church and compel all citizens to belong to it? How shall it impose and collect its taxes?

Each question of this kind is a question of national policy, and therefore of politics, consequently matters of politics are of the utmost importance and concern to any nation. Every citizen, if he is a good citizen, will bring to bear on such questions his best judgment and will do whatever his duty demands toward putting into effect such policies as are determined on.

This is good citizenship and Masonry demands of every member that he be a good citizen. Just as we saw that the religion of Masonry is that common ground which underlies all religious parties, so is this good citizenship the common ground under all political parties. A Mason may adhere to this political party or to that; may hold one opinion about the tariff or another; may believe in a large navy or a small one; no one can interfere with him in so doing; but whatever be his party or his opinion, he must be a good citizen, law-abiding, faithful to the nation, loyal to the civil powers, as quick to do his public duties as to do his private duties.

To sum up: As a Mason you will never introduce into the Craft any controversial sectarian question; you will pay no heed to those from without who may attack the Fraternity; you will adhere to that religion in which all good men agree, and in your life as a member of the Commonwealth you will be loyal to the demands of good citizenship.

YOUR DUTIES AS A MASON

You will become a full member of the fraternity when you have received the three degrees, proved your proficiency in each of them, and signed the by-laws of your Lodge. In assuming the obligations of the degrees and signing the by-laws, you enter into an agreement with the Lodge, wherein you bind yourself to perform certain duties, and the Lodge binds itself to protect you in certain rights and privileges.

Always your duties will be loyalty to Masonry, faithfulness to your superior officers, and obedience to Masonic laws. These are fundamental conditions of membership.

As a Mason, it will be your duty to maintain membership in some Lodge. If necessary

or expedient you may transfer your membership to another Lodge. Membership in a Lodge necessarily requires some monetary obligation. Dues should be paid promptly as an imperative condition of membership. While the Lodge is not an organized charity, it teaches love and charity for all mankind and especially for Brother Masons, their widows and orphans. It will therefore be your duty to stand ready to lend a helping hand to a Brother Mason in sickness or distress, and to aid in the charities of the Lodge, after you become a Master Mason so far as your conscience will guide and your means permit.

If you are a Master Mason and present at your Lodge when a ballot is taken on a petition for degree, you must vote. Voting on a petition for membership is not a right or privilege to be exercised at your choice, but an obligation and a duty. This is only another way of saying that the responsibility for deciding who shall be Masons rests on every member. You may be summoned by the Worshipful Master to attend a meeting of your Lodge for some special purpose, or to discharge some duty required of you as a Mason and, unless circumstances at the time make it impossible, it will be your duty to obey.

A Lodge differs from any other organization in many fundamental respects; duties and obligations may not be laid down or taken up at pleasure and membership is not a mere gesture of honour or an idle privilege. A member may not stand aside until an opportunity occurs to secure something from it for his own selfish purpose, nor may he evade his responsibilities by shifting his burdens to more willing shoulders. The Mystic Tie that binds him to his fellows holds him fast.

When among strangers you will have certain means of recognition by which to prove yourself to another Mason and to prove him to you, to enable you to establish Fraternal relations with men whom you might never have met. To know that wherever you go in the world and whatever your financial or social position, you will find Brothers ready to extend to you the hand of fellowship, is one of the greatest of all the privileges of membership.

YOUR REWARDS AS A MASON

If you go through the degrees, receive the work, decide that Freemasonry is a fine institution and then do nothing about the teachings presented to you, then you are wasting our time as well as your time and money. If you recognize the opportunity which is yours, take the various doctrines and truths presented to you, study them, analyses them, contemplate their meanings, and apply them to your own life, then your investment of time and money will be richly rewarded.

Do not adopt a double standard of conduct, whereby you apply Freemasonry to a part of your life, but feel that it doesn't apply to other phases. The thoughtful Freemason will apply the teaching of our Institution to each and every phase of his life, and we sincerely hope that you will see fit to follow such a practice. This great opportunity for

self-improvement is one that you should grasp to such an extent that the principles of Freemasonry will eventually spread through every facet of your life; when you do you will have allowed Freemasonry to become one of the greatest of your personal experiences.

As a member of a Lodge you will be eligible for any office in it. It will be your right to visit other Lodges in this or other Grand Jurisdictions, provided always that the Worshipful Master is willing to admit you after you have been properly identified. In case of sickness or distress you have the right to apply for relief, but is strictly at the discretion of the Lodge to grant.

These statements are not exhaustive. We have just touched the fringe of a great theme, but it is our hope, with such light as may have been given you, that you will go forward -with a livelier understanding of what Masonry will mean to you and also of what you mean to Masonry.