

Search for Masonic Light

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Stewards of the Mysteries of God

“Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, we will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.” [1Corinthians 4, NKJV]

Many enter through the doors of Freemasonry, each for his own reason, but all vowing to seek for Light in Masonry. After three steps in Masonry (as an Entered Apprentice, as a Fellow Craft, and finally as a Master Mason) what the new Master Mason has is a "Lost Word" and an insatiable thirst for Light--to improve his mind and knowledge in Masonry. He is likely been told that the Master Mason Degree confers all the light that can be conferred in a lodge of Master Masons. This is true, but it is also misleading.

Masonic ritual defines Freemasonry as “a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.” It expresses profound ideas and gives precise standards by which we can govern individual actions in every field of human activity. In Masonry, we are surrounded by material symbols representing abstract concepts, yet we rarely seem to try and look beneath the surface for the abstract meaning. We look, but do not see the moral lesson intended. Those that seek light and don't find it, usually become inactive in Masonry or demit entirely.

So, having gone through the first Degrees of Freemasonry and asking for “Light, More Light and Further Light in Masonry” and having been brought to Light in those three degrees, what exactly was the light you received?

By careful attention to the ceremonies and lectures, you find the Holy Bible symbolizes God’s will for man, the Square signifies morality and righteousness, and the Compasses represents spirituality. The Square and Compasses, together, symbolize man’s journey through life to the eternal hereafter. The Holy Bible is the source of enlightenment that all Freemasons should seek; open on the Altar, its rays of truth, faith, and hope radiate outward throughout the lodge room, representing the will of God pouring forth upon the world. The Holy Bible is a symbol of Divine Truth in every form.

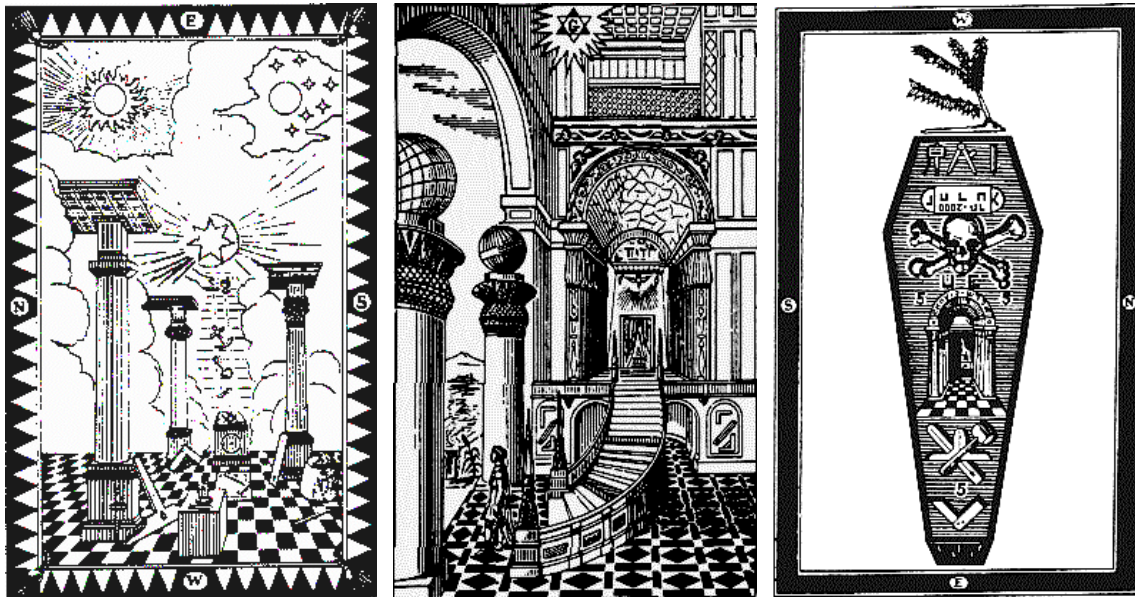
In a paper written by Very Worshipful Brother Norman McEvoy of the Grand Lodge of Prince Edward Island on “The Light of a Master Mason”, May 7, 2011, he referenced a statement by Albert Mackey, who influenced American Masonic thinking on the Ancient Mysteries and Symbolism, in his ***Encyclopedia of Masonry***, “The connection of material light with the emblematic mental illumination was prominently exhibited in all the ancient systems of religion and esoteric systems.” In other words, Mackey believed the greatest objective of Masonry is the pursuit of Truth and that Masonic labors should lead toward Divine Truth.

Walter Leslie Wilmshurst (1867-1939), a Masonic free thinker and seeker of truth, devoted his time and talent to the fields of philosophy, comparative religion and psychology. His books ***The Meaning of Masonry*** and ***The Masonic Initiation*** discloses the purpose of modern Freemasonry and states the true body of teaching and practice concerning the esoteric meanings of Masonic ritual. He strongly emphasized the greater system of spiritual doctrine contained in the rituals. His message is as relevant to today as it was in the 1920’s: “The Craft is in danger of becoming primarily a social and charitable organization—Truth, the most difficult principle to recognize and thus the most difficult to achieve.”

When asked if Freemasonry is esoteric, Illustrious Brother Arturo de Hoyos answered “Yes, no, maybe.” In a Masonic content, the word *esoteric* is usually taken to mean that our ceremonies and rituals allude to realities and/or truths not generally understood, or which may have a spiritual component to them. Some deny any esoteric influences—our ceremonies and ritual are just symbolic; others claim esoteric influences are the main part of Freemasonry.

The matter is open to interpretation. The important thing is to be well-educated and understand what is known.¹

Early tracing boards of the first three degrees emblematically represent the Structure of the Order, Masonic representation of King Solomon's Temple, and the Ritual Reenactment of the Assassination at the Building in Solomon's Temple. In the First-Degree, they are represented



Tracing Boards of the First Three Degrees in Masonry, John Harris, c. 1820²

by the Working Tools and actions related to the physical world of the Apprentice. The Second-Degree is wholly symbolic and emphasize the educational aspects of the physical and spiritual world of the Fellow Craft and leads to Third-Degree as “They went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third.”³ The tracing board of the Third-Degree communicates the Hiram Legend and embodies the doctrine of the “Fall of Man”. Earlier Masonic scholars were interested in Classical Philosophy and their viewpoints on Judeo-Christian monotheism and the Hermetic/Kabbalistic Tradition influenced Masonic Tracing Boards.

¹ Arturo de Hoyos, 33^o GC, *Esotericism is a Matter of Degrees*, Scottish Rite Journal, March/April 2017

² MacNulty, W. Kirk, *Kabbalah and Freemasonry*, originally presented at a conference on *Kabbalah ad its Influence on the English Mystical Tradition*, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, England, 1999

³1 Kings, 6:8, NKJV

The *Rite of Intrusting* is symbolically to bring an initiate from darkness to light—it symbolizes a rebirth, a new awakening, a new chapter of one’s life. It is an important period in Masonic ceremonies when the candidate is about to receive a full communication of the mysteries he is entitled to. This Symbolism of *Light is symbolic* of God and all things good in the world; it symbolizes innocence, purity, and cleaning. Secret things of Masonry are not given all at once, but in gradual progression. It begins with the communication of LIGHT, “*In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth, and the Earth was without form and void, and darkness rested upon the face of the deep, and God said: "Let there be light!" And there was light.*”⁴ It is the preparation for the development of the mysteries which are to follow and must be considered as one of the most important symbols in the whole science of masonic symbolism. It is so important that it influences the whole Masonic system; Lux, or Light, signify the sublime doctrine of Divine Truth by which Masonic labors are to be attained and illuminated in his pilgrimage of life.

Philosophers typically divide knowledge into three categories: personal, procedural, and propositional. In the ancient Mystery School traditions, the three types of knowledge, each is exemplified by one of the three degrees of Masonry.⁵

Episteme (*eh-pee-STAY-may*) is “knowledge through the craft.” It is gained by working with your hands. In the First-Degree the Entered Apprentice is taught to use Masonic tools for more noble and glorious purposes in divesting his heart and conscience of the vices and superfluities of life thereby purifying his body. Of all the Masonic tools, those of the First-Degree, specifically the Gavel, are the only ones we apply in a physical manner for ourselves. It is through this “hands-on” knowledge that we can become more in touch with our physical selves, and with the physical aspect of our soul, to purify it. The tools of the Fellow Craft and Master Mason Degrees are applied in a more metaphorical manner such as “admonishing” us or “reminding” us rather directing us.

Mathesis (*MAH-thay-sis*) is knowledge gained through thought and reason; knowledge such as mathematics, science, philosophy, and so on. The Fellow Craft Degree is intensely concerned with scientific

⁴ Genesis 1-3, NKJV

⁵ Ian B. Tuten, *Three Types of Knowledge*, <https://www.facebook.com/THELAUDABLEPURSUIT>, March 18, 2015

knowledge; we are taught the seven liberal arts and sciences to raise our minds to a higher level. The psyche is the part of our being centered in the brain – it is knowledge and reason that separates us from other creatures – an aspect that makes us uniquely human.

Pathesis (*PAH-thay-sis*) is knowledge through emotion, perhaps the purest form of knowledge, one that cannot be put into words. It is the *feeling* you feel when going through the degree – these things change you as a person; is perhaps the purest form of knowledge, one that cannot be put into words. This form of knowledge is what the Greco-Egyptian mystery schools were centered around, and what we still focus on today in our Fraternity and the certain truths that are so sublime that they cannot be put into words.

The umbrella term used to refer to the knowledge types collectively is Gnostics, referring to the Divine Knowledge that we spend our entire lives searching for. In practice, a material must be broken down into its basic parts before it can be purified and brought back together as a more perfect whole. The same aspect applies to us as men and Masons. The three degrees of Masonry teach us to separate our thoughts and, through doing so, to separate the very parts of our soul, to purify them on their own so that they may be recombined into a more perfect whole. Our entire lives are to be spent in the purification state – for truly we will not see ourselves brought together into a purified whole until we cross through to that Lodge Eternal.

Light, therefore, became synonymous with truth and knowledge, and *darkness* with falsehood and ignorance. And, the Masonic principle of Truth teaches us to search for wisdom and understanding, but the pursuit of knowledge requires high moral standards in their own lives. We are to regard the Sacred Volume of Law and to consider it as our unerring standard of Truth and justice, just as we are taught of our duty we owe to God. Masonry teaches also us to be faithful to our responsibilities to God, Country, and our fellow man, his family and himself. We are taught that **Truth** is a divine attribute and the foundation of every virtue and **Justice** is the standard that enables us to render unto every man his just due, without distinction. Reason dictates that we search through the various "Universal Truths" and "Common Beliefs" to find Truth.

Master Masons have the duty to be forward-thinking men of strong moral and ethical quality, to weigh their actions between their own convictions, cultivate their own character, and render service to others. The lessons of the first three degrees should be directional milestones for every Master Mason's lifetime journey on the highway of life: purity of Honor, Integrity and Duty.

Let me leave you with some words from Albert Pike:

*"To make honor and duty the steady beacon-lights that shall guide your life-vessel over the stormy seas of time; to do that which it is right to do, not because it will ensure you success, or bring with it a reward, or gain the applause of men, or be "the best policy," more prudent or more advisable; but because it is right, and therefore ought to be done; to war incessantly against error, intolerance, ignorance, and vice, and yet to pity those who err, to be tolerant even of intolerance, to teach the ignorant, and to labor to reclaim the vicious—these are some of the duties of a Mason."*⁶

It takes time for a Mason to understand the words being spoken. Most times a newly initiated Master Mason doesn't have any feeling for the degree he has passed through until he has seen the degree repeated a few times. After a while, the words may make sense. To some, they never do, and the words simply symbolize an initiation with gibberish to make it sound good. To others, those that begin to understand Masonic light, new vistas open and the mason becomes instilled to seek further light in Masonry



So, Mote It Be!

⁶ Albert Pike, *Morals ad Dogma*, The Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America, p. 219, 1966

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