

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

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Greetings Brethren,

Another year has almost passed and here we are at the festive season. Wishing all our readers and your families, wherever you are in the world, a most joyous Christmas.

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Three Irregular Steps

An Explanation of the three irregular steps in the first degree of Freemasonry

To understand the significance and meaning of the three irregular steps in the first degree we need to set the scene. Consider the following points and see if you agree that they will cause any man to be anxious, concerned and fearful to some extent:

The Candidate knows that he is about to endure a rite of passage into a society of men he really wants to join.

He knows nothing of what is about to happen.

He is probably feeling humiliation at being in a state of semi-undress.

He cannot see because of the blind-fold.

He is probably having grave doubts about the whole experience but having come this far is unwilling to back out – although it has been known and some do.

He hears the knock and the doors open and he hears the voices of people inside the Lodge. The doors close and he is still outside feeling confused.

The doors open again and he is

At this point his heart is probably thumping, he is probably feeling really confused and doesn't know what is happening to him.

He finds he is dependent on his guide (the Junior Deacon) who he may not know or trust at this stage.

He is questioned and his guide whispers words in his ear and he copies these words as his answers to the questions.

Then follows a series of events where he is guided around and hears people talking about him and what he is there for. He gets use to being lead by the hand in a firm way.

Then he hears someone addressing the Worshipful Master and hears a reply and a series of questions and again a friendly voice prompts him with answers. Then he hears the WM telling the SW to direct the Deacons to instruct him in the proper steps and gets lead off again on another blind journey.

He is told to stop or at least his guide stops him and now whispers in his ear how to position his feet at right angles and tells him to take a step forward. How do you think the Candidate feels right now? He has been pushed and pulled about all around the Lodge, which he cannot see, heard people speaking about him and now he is told to step forward. He is probably thinking – WHERE? – WHY?

When he has done this and feels that nothing bad has happened because of this step, he is asked to take another a little longer and because he learning to trust his guide – he does take another, slightly longer step.

The third step is even longer and represents the enormous step into Freemasonry where he arrives at the pedestal (even though he does not know this yet) where he is about to take his Sol-
emn Obligation and become a Freemason.

Some masons attach significance to the fact that there are three steps – they say the number represents the three degrees. It is more probable that there are three steps and three degrees because the number three was and still is regarded as significant in many ways to do with human life. In the original Masonic ceremonies there were only two degrees, that of Apprentice and that of Fellow of the Craft. A freemason was not regarded as a Master Mason until he had been installed in the Chair of his Lodge.

Another modern add-on is the belief that the steps should be 9 inches, 12 inches and 15 inches representing a right-angled triangle. This is a misconception and was never laid down in the original ritual books.

The Three Doors to Freemasonry

I have recently been asked two interesting questions.

One - about the Wardens being called the guardians of the Lodge.

The Wardens are guardians because one of their duties is to try Candidates in open Lodge to prove to the assembled members that the Candidate is who he says he is, and not a cowan.

The other about the three doors to a Lodge. Here is what I think.....

The three Doors to a Lodge are: one physical, one spiritual and one intellectual.

The physical door is the physical entrance to the Lodge on which a man knocks 3 times when he is ready to be initiated.

The intellectual door is opened in the mind by my own free will, uninfluenced by mercenary or other unworthy motive, offering myself as a Candidate for the mysteries and privileges of Ancient Freemasonry.

The spiritual door is opened in my heart by the help of God being free and of good report. Later in masonry this spiritual foundation will be built upon by study and practice of the 3 spiritual virtues of Faith, Hope, Charity and reinforced further by Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice.

George Allan

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Fidelity - A Theme Within The Craft Degrees

By V.W. Bro. Graeme Martin Grand Lecturer, The Ashley Lodge No 28, Rangiora

In this discussion I didn't want to focus on the number of times the word fidelity appears in the Craft ritual that this approach is not useful. In reality Fidelity is a theme so ingrained in the ritual and our learning I have found it hard to limit the use of ritual to illustrate fidelity. I run the risk of incorporating so much of the ritual that this paper could start to look like the ritual itself. I haven't quoted page numbers where ritual has been, but used suffice to say the book has been used extensively and I hope in a way that is interesting and will spark comment on my interpretation. A series of points of progressive learning have been placed in our ritual in order to prepare us for a progression of knowledge.

Fidelity as a concept has been placed there in order to support this progressive learning process. In a form of replication of the test of fidelity I have placed a number of questions through-out this paper which I hope you will find useful. Fidelity is at first measured by other members of your lodge, but we slowly develop that capacity ourselves. "By this exemplary conduct, you will convince the world that merit has been your title to our privileges, and that on you our favours have not been undeservedly bestowed."

Fidelity is the whetstone on which we are judged. The favours bestowed are the processes ingrained in us by adhering to a ritual that will improve us. The points of learning that we have considered the so called "ss." are not just a means of identification but a measure of our preparation within our mind and heart while our life journey is undertaken. Fidelity is a tool that promotes the learning and discipline necessary. It is used to eventually focus a freemason inwards toward self judgement and self discipline. The outward trappings of status and personal regard from others are not as important as his own honour and virtue which is measured by himself. Virtually every part of the ritual is teaching us an important tenet or standard of behaviour. This checking process and its placement in Freemasonry is the central theme for this paper.

First we must start by understanding what fidelity means and where it is illustrated in the ritual. It would be superficial if we just looked for use of the word itself, but instead we need to look for how the concept is used in the ritual as that has many interpretations. In addition we have to look at our motives and behaviours, in and out of a lodge, to get a better understanding of that use.

Questions

1. Where do the signs of fidelity appear in our ritual?
2. Can you think of any places in the ritual where a story or parable illustrating a value linked to fidelity is placed?
3. What other tests of fidelity appear in the ritual? Fidelity is more than a few of signs or spoken phrases, it about a range of actions on which we are judged and to reflect on and better understand ourselves. To gain a better understanding of the word we need to look at its wider meaning. We need then to look for the signs, tokens and words and the concepts they represent. There are so many places where this concept is used that I have found it hard to limit their use in this paper. There are just too many values we assimilate and if I include all of them this paper will become too long. The beauty of our Masonic system is that it is not doctrinal but allows the freemason to dwell upon universal expectations of the right behaviour but leaves open the path for achieving our own personal destination or eventual reunification with God. An abridged definition from The American Dictionary of the English Language we have:

Fidelity (noun)

1. Faithfulness to obligations, duties, or observances.

2. Exact correspondence with fact or with a given quality, condition, or event; accuracy. Synonyms for fidelity: allegiance, fealty, loyalty. It is interesting to note that all these nouns promote faithfulness to an idea. Fidelity or faithfulness implies the unfailing fulfilment of one's duties and obligations and strict adherence to vows or promises. Every Mason in New Zealand does this in many ways in every degree obligation. These obligations require that the candidate not pass on any signs, tokens and words to anyone who is not yet ready to receive them.

These methods of recognition in themselves may have provided a living for the operative mason but now in our day they have a different purpose. They restrict learning to a series of steps giving time for a candidate to learn important values. This is a process of checking is now illustrated. Externally Communicated Standards of Fidelity If we think that faithfulness is a similar concept to us taking responsibility for all our actions then we have this illustrated in the Mark Master Degree ritual; "Every action will always bear our mark, that we can never escape responsibility for every single act of omission or commission and that the mansion of our daily living will stand the storms and stresses of life, if our labour has been faithfully true." Like the Entered Apprentice and the Fellow-craft degrees our responsibilities are outlined in a series of charges similar to the above.

Our fidelity will be checked by people other than ourselves - our lodge members and members of society in general will measure our faithfulness to our duties. Fealty is a useful substitute word for fidelity, so what do we have to be faithful to and pledge to uphold. We swear fealty to the Constitution of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand and our Lodge bye-laws. We have to show fidelity to The Antient Charges of Freemasonry. These rules while in force are designed to regulate our behaviour and define what is acceptable. Unacceptable actions therefore would be a contravention of fidelity. Finally if loyalty is to be used as a substitute for fidelity then loyalty to our family, our Masonic brethren, our community and our country will be used as a measure.

Loyalty implies consistency of purpose, strength of will when it may be difficult and possibly even in a time when there may be a physical or mental cost to who is being measured. Material well being should not be an important measure of the quality of a freemason. The external delivery of Masonic standards of behaviour is most commonly found in the ritual of the degrees in masonry. These standards are set in the test questions, O. and charges. These values become acquired through repetition and observation and given a period of time for reflection to the careful listener they become internalised values are practiced.

The freemason learns to regulate and measure his own actions. Internal Setting of Standards of Fidelity As the freemason progresses through Freemasonry these standards become focussed on what the candidate feels is important from his own internal values. The candidate begins to takes more personal responsibility for their own learning, what is perhaps missing from their life and as a result, fidelity becomes attached to a personal code of conduct throughout a mason's life with an end in view.

Questions

1. From an external view will your fidelity to the tenets of the Craft measure up against those of H. A.?

2. How is fidelity being in the third degree? Fidelity as a Progression of Learning (Body – Mind – Soul) To start the degree system itself provides a learning focus for each candidate. It would be useful to look at the messages contained in each degree as those are by which our fidelity will be measured.

Question

1. What are the obligations, what are our duties, what allegiances are owed and what do we have to observe? The answers to these questions will provide a means of measuring a candidate's progress as well as a benchmark for continuous learning through reflection. This ritual delivery focuses on standards that bench mark our progress. However as the members progress through the Craft Degrees there is an increasing expectation that members measure their own progress. Is the candidate ready to rake the next degree; fidelity is the measuring stick of that readiness.

Question

1. How should we measure when a candidate is ready to take the next degree? In the First Degree fidelity is measured in the physical world terms (it measures the Entered Apprentice's relationship with the body of mankind). One good example of how we are taught to regulate our lives is given in the first degree where we are told; "Your fidelity must be exemplified by a strict observance of the Constitutions of the Fraternity, by adhering to the Ancient Landmarks of the Order by never attempting to exhort, or otherwise duly obtain the secrets of a superior degree; and by refraining from recommending anyone to a participation in our secrets unless you have strong grounds for believing that by a similar Fidelity, he will reflect honour on your choice." (First Degree Charge After Initiation)

The Craft uses this charge to convey to the initiate the duties they have to themselves, the craft and the country in which they reside. The candidate also learns they have a duty to earn a living and represent themselves as a good citizen of the community. They have a duty to improve themselves by making their mind ready to knock off the impure and the excrescences of base wants and to prepare themselves for the process of refinement to come. This Entered Apprentice Degree represents the mason's interactions with the world around them. It is not a passive world but is a dynamic world of interaction. The w. ts. exemplify this change process. The c g. and c. will be applied to the rough ashlar of the human body and the 24 i. g. will remind the apprentice of his obligation to his job, the society in which he resides and his God. The new freemason is also reminded his duty is foremost to his family. The Entered Apprentice and his family will receive that which nourishes the body and keeps them alive. His wage will be in the real world of c. and o. From his continued existence there is a hope for personal improvement but that will only come after the fidelity check of the test questions of the first degree and his continued observation of his obligations.

The Peter Principle

The Peter Principle is a concept in management developed by Laurence Peter, which observes that people in a hierarchy tend to rise to their "level of incompetence". In other words, a person is promoted based on their success in previous jobs until they reach a level at which they are no longer competent. The phrase was introduced in the 1969 book *The Peter Principle* and became popular as an explanation of the shortcomings of promotion in hierarchical organizations.

MASONIC LEXICON—Part 5

Peculiar Many English words have changed their meanings over time, in some cases to such an extent that modern readers can completely misunderstand what the writer intended. There are two notorious examples in the Book of Common Prayer, in which 'let' means 'hinder' or 'obstruct', and 'prevent' means 'go ahead of', or 'usher'. 'Peculiar' is well on its way to a similar fate. In common usage now it means 'odd' or 'strange', but it is still sometimes used in its earlier sense. For example, there is an old joke about the schoolboy who was asked to name an animal peculiar to the arctic and replied that the hippopotamus would be very peculiar in the arctic. The schoolboy was using the word in its nowadays common sense, but the questioner was using it in its older sense, in which it meant 'particular' or 'special'. There are a number of churches in England which are known as 'Royal peculiars', for example, Westminster Abbey, and Battle Abbey. They are so known because they are not under the control of the bishop in whose diocese they are situated, but under the direct control of the Crown. And so 'a peculiar system of morality' does not mean a weird one, but a special, and indeed, a specially good, one.

Porchway This appears to be a purely Masonic word. It is a fancy version of 'porch', formed on the pattern of 'hallway', 'pathway', 'passageway', and so on.

Precept (From Latin praecipere 'to advise, instruct') An authoritative command to do something; an injunction as to moral conduct; a maxim. In the Charge after Passing, the new Fellowcraft is told the he is 'to enforce by precept and example the tenets of the system'. So he is to instruct others in what what our principles are, and he is to follow them himself in an exemplary manner.

Repository A place in which things can be stored for safety.

Rite (From Latin ritus 'a religious usage') A formal (especially religious) procedure or act; a general use or practice, especially in religion. It is an example of the habit of Freemasons of borrowing religious terms for their own purposes. Since this habit is bound to increase the suspicion the Freemasonry is a religion one might wonder whether it is a particularly good idea.

Saltire The jewel of the Secretary is described as 'two pens in saltire', and that of the Inner Guard as 'two swords in saltire'. The expression 'in saltire' is from heraldry and refers to a cross shaped like the letter 'X', of which the St Andrew's Cross is a well known example. Curiously, the Latin word from which, via Norman-French, it is derived, saltatorium, refers to dancing!

Sanctum sanctorum In the VSL, we read in the First Book of Kings that the innermost part of Temple was called 'The Most Holy Place'. Here rested the Ark of the Covenant, between the wings of the cherubim. 'Most Holy Place' is the meaning of its Hebrew name. In the Greek version of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint (meaning 'seventy'), because tradition has it that seventy translators produced it), which was compiled some time (probably over a long period) between 285 and 132 BC the Most Holy Place was called hagia hagian, 'The Holy of Holies', and since the first Latin version of the Bible was a direct translation from the Greek, the Most Holy Place was called sanctum sanctorum, 'Holy of Holies'. There is not much excuse for the ritual to use the Latin sanctum sanctorum, but it does.

The Working Tools of a Cowan

I present to you the Working Tools of a Cowan to Masonry

The **angle** is to come up with a new one to damage the Craft



The **Spanner** is to throw into the works to destroy all the Craft holds dear.

The **screws** are to tighten, to make life harder for the Craft.



The **dividers** have obvious use (in former days associated with the Craft!)

/But as we

But as we are not 'anyone else in the world', we apply these tools to our morals , in this opposite sense.

The **Angle** being right, points out to us, that although aware of our own truths, we need to be charitable to those who are not able to accept our Masonic precepts and principles.

The **Spanner** teaches us to tighten the bonds that exist between ourselves and our creator.

The **Screws** will help us to fix our gratitude for the bounty of the GAOTU.

The **Dividers** remind us that even when separated by the seven seas from the country whence we derived our birth, we will always find comfort in the brotherhood and the first landmark—a belief in the Supreme Being.

Thus the working tools of a cowan teach us ever to bear in mind that non-Masonic tools, if skillfully employed by qualified craftsmen, will assist in working towards that innocence and friendship and peace and harmony which at all times characterise a Mason.

With acknowledgement to SRA 76 and thanks to M Gandoff, Old Strodians Lodge #7803.

SUN

In our lodges the sun is represented in one case by the blazing star in the centre of the square pavement. A further reference to the sun occurs in the initiation ceremony when brethren are informed that there are three lesser lights in Freemasonry, one of which is the sun which is situated in the south on the Junior Warden's pedestal.

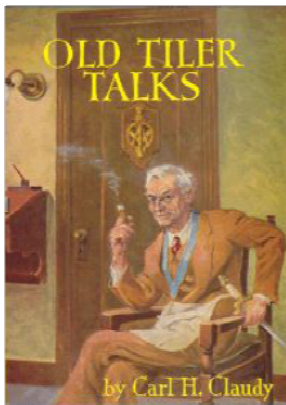
In the Installation ceremony the Master is told that just as the sun 'diffuses light and luster upon all within its sphere', so he should act in a similar way in communicating light and instruction to his brethren.

The sun and also the moon are preserved in Freemasonry as emblems of wisdom, power and goodness of the Supreme Being who made the one to rule the day and the other to govern the night.

We also have other symbolical references to the sun in our lodges. The Master is said to represent the rising of the sun, and then passing in a clockwise direction around our lodges, the Junior Warden in the south marks the sun at its meridian (noon) and the Senior Warden in the west marking the setting sun. Clockwise perambulation in our lodges is related to this symbolism.

In particular, it is said that just as the sun rises in the east to enliven the day, so the Master is placed in the east to open his lodge.

The learned Masonic scholar, Dr. Oliver, saw the sun as providing light, both physical and moral, as it rose in the east where the Master is located, and considered that it was proper for brethren to enter lodges facing the east to gain mental illumination as they engaged upon philosophical considerations.



Old Tiler Talks— THOSE DISCLOSURES

"I have just visited the Masonic library," began the New Brother, excitedly, "and I am much distressed."

"It is a shame," answered the Old Tiler, sympathetically. "It is the best we can do, as we can only afford just so much and so we haven't all the books we want. Even so there is a lot of good reading there and..."

"That isn't the trouble!" cried the New Brother. "What worries me is the apathetic attitude of the authorities of Masonry who permit so many books to be written about our secrets! I skimmed through some and all a man not a member of the lodge need do is read a few and he will know more Masonry than I do!"

"That is probably true!" smiled the Old Tiler. "But what of it? He will then be a well-informed man. You will remain ill-informed. Surely it is better to have well-informed profanes and ill-informed Masons than have both profane and Mason badly informed!"

"But the profane will learn our secrets! Where will we be when we have no secrets? How can Grand Lodge authorities allow brethren to publish what they have sworn never to reveal?"

"Oh! what makes you think these books contain secrets?"

"Why, I read them! There was one book which had an account of the great lights, and another which talked about J***** and B***, and another which referred to the drama of Hiram Abif, and another which quoted old obligations at length to show the genesis of Masonic obligations and..."

"You are somewhat in the dark regarding the secrets of Freemasonry," observed the Old Tiler. "You can read of J*** and B***, and Hiram in the Bible and the old obligations were printed long before they were incorporated in Freemasonry. The secrets of Freemasonry are not disclosed in the printed works of Masonic students. You are not to reveal anything not proper to be made known. You are not to describe the Masonic initiation. You are not to divulge the modes of recognition. But nowhere in any obligation of any degree in Freemasonry will you find any prohibition against teaching the principles of Masonry, or explaining the symbolism by which Masonry reveals her gentle teachings.**

"In books learned Masons have expounded for you and me something of the meaning of Freemasonry; what it is all about, what it teaches, why it exists, what it can accomplish. It is not necessary to make a secret out of knowledge. It is not necessary that Masonry keep to herself the philosophy of conduct, morality, upright living, brotherhood, she has developed.

That is for the world to read if it will. The pity of it is that so few will; that so many rob themselves of their Masonic birthright and refuse to read what has been written for them. "Masonry is a far greater subject than most members of the fraternity know. The majority of us take the three degrees and stop. Not for us is there symbolism. Not for us is there an intimate intertwining between our order and the wise men, the knowledge of the past. Not for us is Masonry a welding together of the underlying principles which animate all religion, with the dogma left out. Not for us is there a literature, a tradition, a history. We let it all go by the board, content to wear a pin and pay dues and vote for a new Master...and call ourselves Masons.

"But a few of us in every lodge are not satisfied merely to be members; we want to be Masons in our minds as well as the records of the lodge. So we read and study. And once in a blue moon is born a Pike or a Pound, a Haywood or a Newton, a Mackey or a McBride, who interprets through the greatness of his vision that you and I may catch at least a glimpse of the vastness which is Freemasonry.

"They do that in books, but none tells what he has sworn never to reveal... why should he? But he explains the meaning of that which is hidden, so that we who have the key may understand. The trouble with our Masonic books is not that they tell which should not be told, but that we are not rich enough in our lodge to buy enough of the expositions of Freemasonry to educate all our brethren.

"Go back to that library. Take one or two books home with you. Read and reflect. When you find the Masonic author who has violated his obligation, show it to me, because I am an old, old man and I have heard of this forsworn author all my life, but I have never found him!"

"I'm going," answered the New Brother, "I wish I had more sense!"

"I don't!" came the smiling answer. "If you knew much there'd be no point in talking to you, and think of the fun we'd both lose!"





Lodge Birthdays

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News from the South

Our post-Pam project (Library) at Suango School, Mele requires some maintenance which the Lodge is happy to provide for the village schoolchildren.

The prospective new team of officers are aware of their responsibilities and have started to learn their respective ritual.

Humour

Two blokes living in the Australian outback saw a couple of jobs advertised by the Queen of England. She was looking for footmen, to walk beside her carriage.

They applied and were very happy to be flown to London for an interview with Her Majesty.

She says to them: "Because my footmen must wear long white stockings, I must see your ankles to be sure they are not swollen or misshapen."

After they show her their ankles, the Queen says: "It is also important that you don't have knobby knees, so I need to see your knees too."

Once she has seen their knees, she says: "Now everything appears to be in shape, so I just need to see your testimonials."

Nine years later, when the pair are finally released from prison, one of the blokes says to the other: "I reckon, if we just had a bit more education we would have got that job!"

