

The Discoverer

The Monthly Newsletter of The Lodge of Discovery

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Greetings Brethren,

Here we are at the start of another year.
Wishing all our readers a very Happy and healthy new Year.

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Membership e-mail address list
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The Forgotten Grand Principle

If there is one phrase that irritates me in Freemasonry it is when the junior warden stands up at the festive board to propose the toast to the visitors and refers to this as one of the most important toasts of the evening because 'visiting is what Freemasonry is all about'.

Those few words highlight to me one of the real problems in Freemasonry: we do not know what Freemasonry is all about.

I am not saying that visiting a lodge does not have an important role in Freemasonry; it does, but this role is linked to supporting the lodge and developing one's inner self. The presence of visitors swells the numbers and helps the lodge to create that energy which is so important at the initiation, passing or raising of a candidate and the continual witnessing of the degrees helps to imprint the sublime messages contained within those ceremonies on our minds.

As a young mason, initiated at the age of 25, I remember feeling disillusioned with Freemasonry as there did not seem to be anything more to it than just trying to reproduce a word-perfect ceremony consisting of obscure and outdated words and having a good time at the festive board. So many of us will have spent an inordinate amount of time lying in the bath, walking the dog or pacing up and down in the kitchen, trying to learn the words of the ritual and get them in the right order, but how many of us can honestly say we really understand why we have three degrees and what deeper message the ceremonies of initiation, passing and raising is supposed to convey to a candidate?

It was a visit to a German lodge that made me realise that there was something else to Freemasonry. The ceremony started not with the Master opening the lodge but with the Brethren preparing themselves for the ceremony by quietly meditating, while a pianist played some beautiful classical piece in the background. No one spoke and by the time the Master opened the lodge, the atmosphere was so highly charged with energy that the hairs on the back of my neck were standing on end.

Then we witnessed a highly moving and word-perfect ceremony delivered with feeling and emotion. Word-perfect because the book was open in front of them should they have required a prompt and delivered with feeling and emotion because they had learnt the ceremony and, more importantly, understood the spiritual or deeper message they were supposed to convey. Even today, I can remember nearly every part of that ceremony and it spurred me on to try and understand the philosophy of Freemasonry and its deeper, hidden meanings.

We are told that our order is founded on three grand principles – 'Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth' – and, for me, the key to the philosophy of Freemasonry is found in that last principle – Truth.

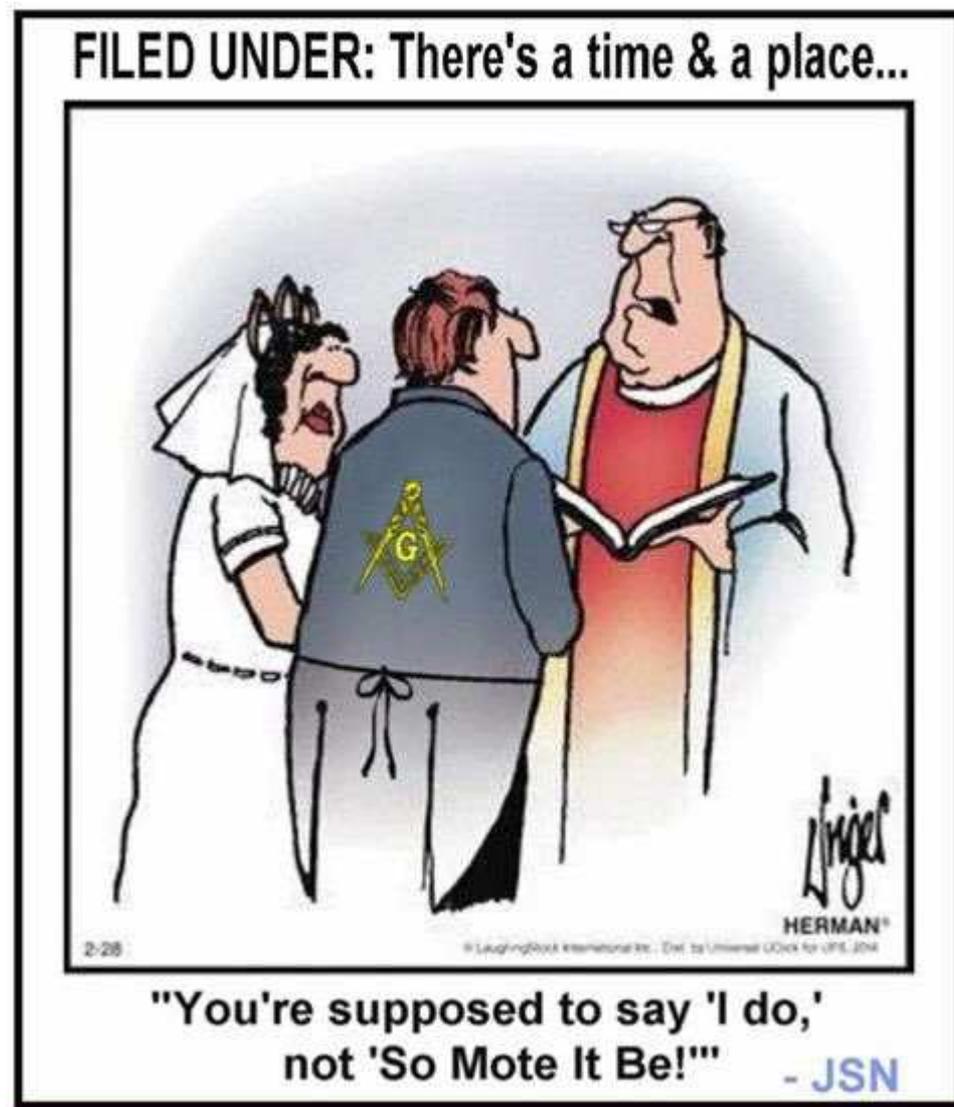
So what is 'Truth'? It is the knowledge of yourself and through that knowledge you are able to discover your own potential and prepare your mind to reach a higher level of spiritual consciousness. Initiation is the start of that journey to awaken those hitherto dormant higher faculties and enables a candidate to recover those genuine secrets that are buried within the centre or the innermost part of our soul.

Our potential is our real nature and is something beyond words, judgement or intellectual analysis. Even if we studied the words in the rituals for years we would not arrive at this state of knowledge and understanding. Through words alone it is difficult to enter into real knowledge: we need experience.

That experience comes from our ceremonies and it is important that we create that energy I described above. To do this we need to ensure that our members understand the underlying philosophy of Freemasonry and are able to translate its symbolism and connect with its deeper meanings for themselves. Too often today our ceremonies are just a set of mumbled words, at best well delivered and without deviation from the script.

If we do not 'spiritualise' our ceremonies then Freemasonry will continue to become more and more of a philanthropic and social organisation just like Rotary or Round Table. The difference between us and them is three degrees and we should learn to value and understand the nature of that difference and not forget that as a person awakens 'Truth' within themselves then the other grand principles of Freemasonry - 'Brotherly Love' and 'Relief' - will flow naturally anyway.

Kai Hughes Grand Orator United Grand Lodge of England



Seven Greatest Mistakes of Freemasonry

Ritual Without Meaning.

Too many times, we are more concerned about performing the ritual perfectly without understanding what it means. Ritual for the sake of tradition is worthless. Ritual for the sake of enlightenment is valuable. An understanding of the ritual's meaning is far more important than just memorizing it.

Fellowship Without Frivolity.

Whenever Masons decide to hold a function for fellowship, a discussion typically ensues about how to make the function have the smallest impact on the lodge's finances and the wallets of the members. This results in paper plates, meagre meals, boring and less well attended events. To spend money wisely in order to make fellowship a grand time is wise for the lodge that wants to be successful. Also we do not have to be slaves to form, endlessly repeating the same toasts and replies – we should reward individuality and creativity in order to keep our meetings alive and fun!

Quantity Without Quality.

A lodge with seven great men that believe in the Masonic ideals and actively strive to improve themselves—and therefore the lodge—is far better off than a lodge with one hundred men that show up to lodge just to be seen.

Education Without Philosophy.

Many times, we think of Masonic education as being a lesson on the local lodge's history, a famous Mason, the history of the world wide fraternity, or how to do the ritual properly. But if no philosophy is covered in Masonic education, then little self-improvement is accomplished. Discussing Masonic lessons in terms of philosophy, ideas, and a man's conduct is what truly transforms men into Masons. It is important to share & discuss topics that are foreign to a lodge's membership and it is sometimes even necessary to challenge our preconceived ideologies through Masonic education.

Charity Without Connection.

Big charities often require that fund raisers be conducted and large checks written to the people that actually perform the charity. This type of charity offers no self-improvement because it has no real connection to us or our life. If we extend our hands to our needed Brethren and devote our own skills and time to their problems, then we are engaging in true, meaningful charity.

Frugality Without Discretion.

Frugality is not a tenet of Freemasonry, a cardinal virtue, or a Landmark. It is acceptable for the lodge to spend its funds on worthwhile activities that will enhance the Masonic experience of its Brethren. Not everything should be done in the cheapest way, a habit to which we have become accustomed.

Leadership Without Competence.

A man does not deserve to be master of the lodge, solely because he has spent a certain amount of years attending meetings or because he is next in line. We, on occasion, elect our leaders without any regard for the skills that they possess in order to function in that capacity. We should only elect competent and qualified men to preside over us.

Written by VWor. Bro. Shawn Momen PGSwd.B Bayside District Co-ordinator and published online in November 2018 and published in Freemasons Victoria "Inside Freemasonry"

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DID YOU KNOW?

Question: What is the significance of supporting the L...A... in the angle of a Square during the Obligation of a F.C.?

Answer. Primarily, I suggest that this detail is a direct reminder of something which he learns later in the ceremony, i.e. the incident in Exodus, XVII, verses 11 and 12, when Moses prayed fervently to the Almighty that Joshua might complete the overthrow of His enemies. If you read that chapter, you will read how Moses became weary and his arms were supported until the Amalekites were defeated. There is another aspect of the question that may appeal to you, especially if your ritual on this point is the same as ours in England. Early in the ceremony the W.M. asks, "How does he hope to obtain those privileges?" and the I.G. answers, "By the help of God, the assistance of the Sq., and the benefit of the...". From this point onwards, the Sq. plays a considerable part in the ceremony, e.g.

1. At the moment of admission
2. Posture during the OB.
3. Posture during the entrusting with Sns. etc. (There are five squares in this section alone.)
4. At the S.E. corner
5. In the explanation of the Tools.

As to the symbolism, I know nothing better than the simple words we use in the ritual: The Sq. teaches us to regulate our lives and actions according to Masonic line and rule... The Sq. teaches morality...

MASONIC LEXICON—Part 6

Skirret This is another of those words which are widely, in fact almost universally, mispronounced in our Lodges. It surely does not take a very sharp eye to notice that the first vowel is an `i', and the second an `e', so it cannot be pronounced `skerrit', yet far too many do. The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology says that it is `of unknown origin'. Various suggestions have been made which indicate that it may be of Scottish, or Northern English origin. The Great Oxford Dictionary of the English Language lists `skirr', meaning `a grating, rasping, whirring sound', and it may be that `skirret' is derived from that. All of the examples in the Great Oxford are from Masonic sources, the earliest from 1825. These examples, and the definitions in the Great Oxford and the Shorter Oxford are clearly derived from the explanation in the Third Degree Working Tools: an implement which acts on a centre pin, whence a line is drawn to mark out the ground. So it is a spool, or cord holder, rotating freely on a spindle. The loose end of the cord is attached to a short stake which, in use, is driven into the ground at one end of the intended line. The spindle is driven into the ground at the other end of the intended line, keeping the line taut.

Solicitations - proper & improper. `Proper' solicitation is when an experienced Brother suggests to a friend, who is in every way eligible, that his admission to the Order might open up for him an increased or even a new sphere of usefulness; that his avenues of knowledge might be increased; that the friendship he already enjoys with many Masons would be much more enjoyable, strengthened by the Masonic tie. `Improper' solicitation is asking a person to become a Freemason, or putting pressure on him so to do.

Speculative At various places in the ritual we find these, or similar, words: `not Operative, but rather Free and Accepted, or Speculative: For Freemasons now, `Speculative' usually means `non-operative'. The adjective `speculative' is derived from the verb `speculate' (From Latin specular `to spy out, watch, etc'). Most commonly take part or invest in, a business enterprise or transaction of a risky nature in the expectation of considerable gain', which meaning it had acquired by 1785. But originally it meant, amongst other things, `to contemplate; to theorise upon', and it was this sense which was current when the ritual was being compiled. Such records as we have of early Speculative Lodges indicate that they took the admonition `to study the liberal arts and sciences' rather more seriously than Freemasons do today, and appear to have speculated on philosophical and scientific matters quite regularly, so the word ought to be taken to allude to that, too.

Sublunary In the explanation of the Working Tools of the Third Degree there is a reference to `this sublunary abode'. Prior to the assertion by Copernicus in 1543 of his `new system', which placed the sun at the centre of the universe, it was supposed that the earth was (more or less) the centre of everything, and that the heavens consisted of a series of crystal spheres, which rotated at various speeds (the outer faster than the inner), and to which were attached the heavenly bodies. The innermost sphere carried the moon, and so `sublunary' (i.e. under the moon) meant inside the innermost sphere of the heavens. Since the only body inside the innermost sphere is the earth, `this sublunary abode' just means `earthly'. Note, by the way, that even in classical antiquity it was known that the earth was spherical (or nearly so), and so Columbus was never under the misapprehension that he might sail off the edge of the earth. Even in the Bible we read `the round world, and they that dwell therein'. Of course much earlier the shape of the earth was not known.

Rays of Masonry

“What is your membership worth?”

Have you ever paused to consider what your Masonic membership is worth to you- not in dollars, but in the things that dollars cannot buy?

Was there ever a passport into more wonderful friendships than that represented by your membership in Masonry? Has the thought occurred to you that you extend your hand in fellowship and understanding, and it is received not by a limited group, but by millions?

Do we give thought to the strength and inspiration that we receive from the lessons of Masonry, and how those lessons enrich our lives, and broaden our vision? Yes, they even make possible an education, the like of which is not possible through any other course of instruction.

Have you ever thought how Masonry makes you tolerant of the other fellow's faults and weaknesses because Love has brought Wisdom from the Great Light of Freemasonry?

Have you ever thought of the privileges of service that Masonry offers- the happiness derived from such service and sacrifice?

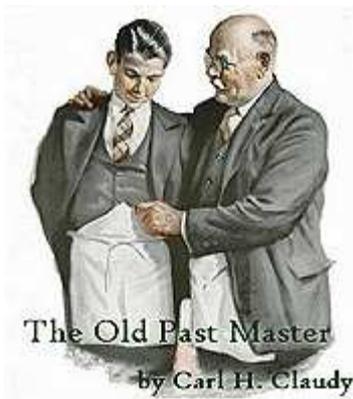
When we entered the portals of Masonry we had certain qualifications necessary to become a Mason, but do we take stock of ourselves and find that we have grown spiritually and mentally over years that we have worked in Masonry?

Have you ever looked upon the face of a brother who is about to receive a button for 50 years of service to Masonry? What do you suppose Masonry has meant to that brother?

Let us take our Masonic membership to our heart. Let us thank God for the privilege of our Masonic membership.

Dewey Wollstein 1953.





Old Past Master—A MASON'S CHRISTMAS

"I don't believe in a Christmas celebration by the lodge. I don't think we ought to have one, or be asked to contribute to one or in any way engage in Christmas festivities."

"The Junior Mason spoke emphatically and with marked disapproval of the little ante-room group nearby, making happy plans for Yule-tide.

"That's very interesting," commented the Old Past Master. I like to hear points of view unfamiliar to me. Would you mind telling me why?"

"Of course not, It's very simple. Masonry is not Christian. King Solomon, of course, wasn't a Christian, nor were either of the Hiram's. Masonry admits to her ranks any good man of faith; Christian, Jewish, Mohammedan, Buddhist... it makes no difference, so he has a Faith. Then, as a lodge, we celebrate a holiday belonging to one faith. Now I personally am a Christian, and of course I celebrate Christmas. But my brother across the way is a Jew, who does not recognize Christianity. To ask him to spend his proportion of lodge funds in celebrating the birth of a Leader in Whom he does not believe would be exactly like asking me to celebrate, with my proportion of lodge money, the birth of Confucius. Of course, I have only one vote and the majority rules, but when it comes to personal contributions to a Masonic Christmas celebration, my hands will never come out of my pockets."

He shoved them deeper in as he spoke to emphasize his intention not to spend.

"Hum!" answered the Old Past Master. "So you think your Jewish brother across the way doesn't recognize Christianity? Don't you mean he doesn't recognize Christ as the Son of God? Wait a minute... Oh, Brother Samuels," The Old Past Master called across the ante-room. "Here a minute, will you?"

The Jewish brother rose and came forward.

"I just wanted to ask you if you are in favor or against the lodge Christmas celebration?" asked the Old Past Master.

"Me? I am in favor of it, of course, both for the lodge appropriation and the individual contribution."

"Thank you," nodded the Old Past Master. Then as the Jewish brother went back to his seat, he turned to the Junior Mason.

"You see, my son, our Jewish friend is not narrow. He does not believe in Christ as the Redeemer, but he recognizes that he lives in a country largely Christian, and belongs to a lodge largely Christian. To him the Christmas celebration is not one of His birthday, but of the spirit of joyousness and love which we mean when we sing, at Christmas time 'Peace on earth, good will towards men!' If you argue that 'peace' is only a Christian word, he might even quote to you the words of One who said 'I bring you not Peace, but a Sword.'

"Now let me explain something to you. The Jew has just as much right to refuse to recognize Christ as the Son of God, as you have to refuse to consider Mohammed the Prophet the followers of Allah say he is. But as an educated man, you must know that Mohammed was a good man, a devout leader, a wise teacher. As an educated man, you admit that the religion founded by Buddha has much in it that is good, and you admit that Confucius was a wise and just leader. Were you in the land where the birthdays of any of these were celebrated, would you refuse your part in the people's joy in their Leader, simply because you followed another? I trust not. Well, neither do our Jewish brethren or our Mohammedan brethren, desire to be left out of our celebration. They may not believe in the Divinity of Him we, as Christians, follow, but if they are good men and good Masons... they are perfectly willing to admit that the religion we follow is as good for us as theirs is for them, and to join with us in celebrating the day which is to us the glad day of all the year.

"Believe me, boy, Christmas doesn't mean Christ's birthday to many a man who calls himself Christian. It is not because of joy the He was born that many a good man celebrates Christmas. It is because his neighbor celebrates it, because it is a time of joy for little ones, because it is a day when he can express his thanks to his God that he is allowed to have a wife and family and children and friends and a lodge, because of that very 'peace on earth' spirit which is no more the property of the Gentile than the Jew, the Chinese or the Mohammedan.

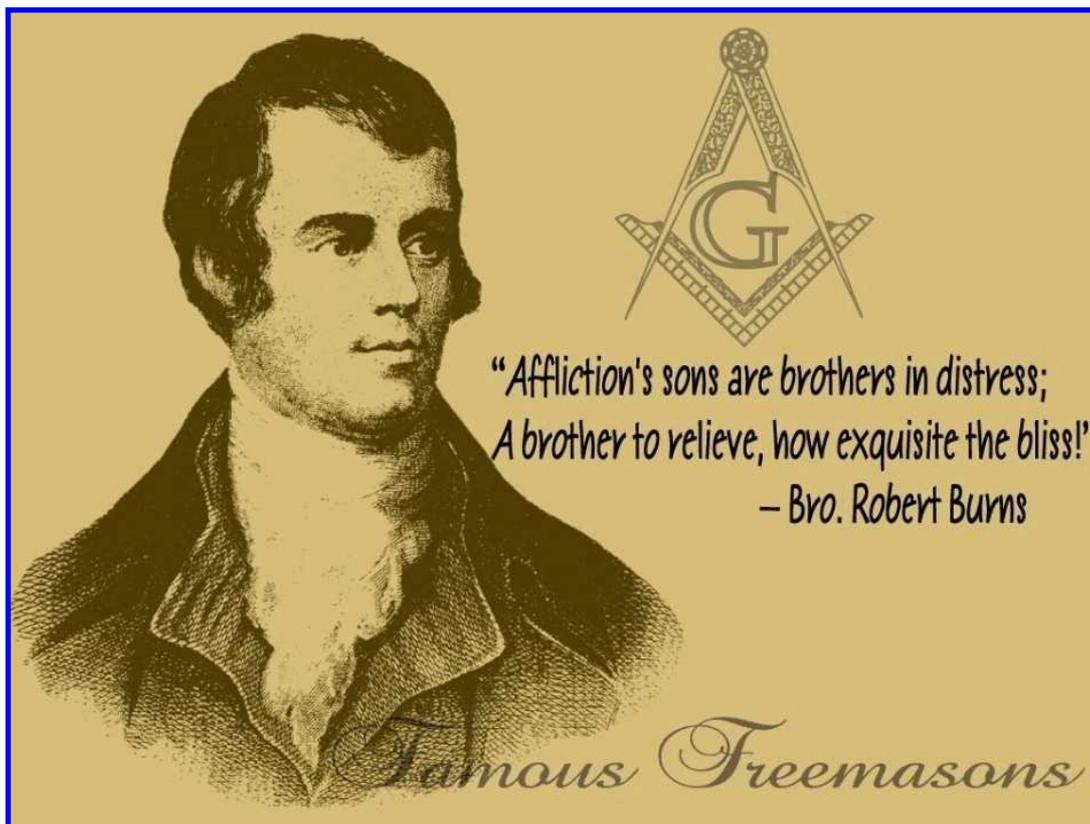
"It is such a spirit that Masons join, all, in celebrating Christmas. It is on the Masonic side of the tree we dance, not the Christian side. When this lodge erects its Christmas tree in the basement and throws it open to the little ones of the poor of this town, you will find children of all kinds there; black, white, yellow, and brown, Jew and Gentile, Christian and Mohammedan. And you will find a Jew at the door, and among the biggest subscriptions will be those from some Jewish brethren, and there is a Jew who rents cars for a living who will supply us a dozen free to take baskets to those who cannot come. And when the Jewish Orphan Asylum has its fair, in the Spring, you will find many a Christian Mason attending to spend his money and help along the cause dear to his Jewish brethren, never remembering that they are of a different faith. That, my son, is Masonry."

"For Charity is neither Christian nor Jewish, nor Chinese nor Buddhistic. And celebrations which create joy in little hearts and feed the hungry and make the poor think that Masons do not forget the lessons in lodge, are not Christian alone, though they be held at Christmas, and are not for Christians alone, though the celebration be in His honor. Recall the ritual: 'By the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family, the high and low, the rich and poor, who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support and protect each other'.

"It is with this thought that we, as Masons, celebrate Christmas, to bring joy to our brethren and their little ones, and truly observe the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God, whether we be Jew or Gentile, Mohammedan or Buddhist." The Old Past Master ceased and stood musing, his old eyes looking back along a long line of lodge Christmas trees about which eager little faces danced. Then he turned to the Junior Mason.

"Well," he said smiling, "Do you understand?"

"I thank you for my Christmas present," came the answer. "Please tell me to which brother I should make my Christmas contribution?"



Robert Burns, also known familiarly as Rabbin Burns, the National Bard, Bard of Ayrshire and the Ploughman Poet and various other names and epithets, was a Scottish poet and lyricist. He is widely regarded as the national poet of Scotland and is celebrated worldwide.

His Birthday, 25th January, is celebrated, every year, all over the world.

Lodge Birthdays

Gavin Struthers 18
Kevin Green 12
Jorg Schwartz 8

News from the South

All quiet on the Masonic front in this busy festive season.

Now that the New Year is upon us we are all busily preparing for the big day—14th March, when we have both the inaugural meeting of our Royal Arch Chapter and the Craft installation ceremony.

Interesting times ahead!!

GOLF AND WHAT IT ALL MEANS

Golf can best be defined as an endless series of tragedies obscured by the occasional miracle, followed by a good bottle of beer.

Golf! You hit down to make the ball go up. You swing left and the ball goes right. The lowest score wins, on top of that, the winner buys the drinks.

Golf is harder than baseball. In **Golf**, you have to play your foul balls.

If you find you do not mind playing **Golf** in the rain, the snow, even during a hurricane, here's a valuable tip ...your life is in trouble.

Golfers who try to make everything perfect before taking the shot rarely make a perfect shot.

A '**gimme**' can best be defined as an agreement between two golfers ...neither of whom can putt very well.

An interesting thing about **Golf** is that no matter how badly you play, it is always possible to get worse.

Golf's a hard game to figure. One day you'll go out and slice it and shank it, hit into all the traps and miss every green. The next day you go out and for no reason at all you really stink.

If your best shots are the practice swing and the 'gimme putt', you might wish to reconsider this game.

Golf is the only sport where the most feared opponent is you.

Golf is like marriage, If you take yourself too seriously it won't work, and both are expensive.

The best wood in most amateurs' bags is the pencil.