

MASONIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q. Why 3 knocks on the Door ?
- A. Seek and ye shall find, Ask and ye shall receive, Knock and it shall be opened unto you.
- Q. Why is the W.M. placed in the East ?
- A. Learning started in the East. People of Biblical times always looked to the East to pray. Churches have their altars in the East. The W.M. we are told, represents the Sun in the East and so from the East he bestows light and lustre upon his Lodge.
- Q. Explanation of the Steps and their signification in the various degrees?
- A. In the first degree are cautiously taken by instruction and blindfolded. In the second degree are equally cautiously taken for when ascending the winding staircase (seeking a knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences) he cannot see what lies ahead. The seven steps in the third, again taken cautiously as he steps over an open grave, he is reminded of dangers and tribulations as he continues his way through life, fully appreciating the promise of a reward upon the completion of a noble earthly life, which brings a life of everlasting bliss.
- Q. Explanation of the Winding Staircase.
- A. This is purely symbolical. The allegory teaches us that the study of the liberal arts and sciences leads us upwards and onwards and the intricacies which lie ahead are for the most part are obscure, just as our vision is when we are climbing onward and upward.
- Q. Why are we slipshod ?
- A. This is an allusion to the injunction given by God to Moses from the burning bush on Mount Horeb when tables of stone bearing the ten Commandments were given to Moses. The Lord spake unto Moses saying. "Take off thy shoes from thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is Holy Ground" Our Lodges are Holy ground because they are consecrated.
- Q. What are rough and perfect ashlar.?
- A. The rough ashlar represents the stone, as it is taken from the quarry. An apprentice is employed to knock off its superfluous knobs and excrescences. The perfect ashlar is the stone upon its completion as a true die or square by the master mason. Upon this our masonic jewels are tested and adjusted.
- Q. What is the symbolism of Masonic Blue ?.
- A. It is one of the most durable colours in Nature and is peculiarly characteristic of our Order which has stood the test of time and is distinguished by the beauty of its superstructure viz:- Universal brotherhood and benevolence. It is intended to remind us that in the breast of a Freemason those virtues should be as expansive and all embracing as the Blue vault of Heaven. Finally it can be said to symbolise the universality of Freemasonry.
- Q. Is Freemasonry a secret society ?.
- A. No, but we are told in our ritual that there are certain signs, or marks to "know a mason by. Every Lodge is required to furnish the Clerk of the Peace with the names addresses and occupation of all its members and to state the Place and precise times of its meetings. A secretary is also required by law to record the names of all members actually attending every meeting.

Q. What is the signification of a P.M's jewel and why is it based upon the 47th proposition of Euclid ?.

A. It signifies the completion of a masters duties and the proof of his ability to solve his greatest test, that is, to rule and govern his Lodge to the entire satisfaction of its members. In like manner Pythagorus solved that great geometrical problem demonstrated and proved in the 47th proposition of Euclid which says that the square on the hypotenuse of a right angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.

Q. What is the difference between a gavel and a Maul ?.

A. The Maul, as erroneously stated at an Installation ceremony, as a gavel, has a heavy round base, "Whereas a gavel is a wedge shaped tool. An apprentice could use the Maul but only the experienced mason can use the gavel..

Q. What is the origin and explanation of the Masonic Fire.

A. It probably had its origin in an old naval custom when captains with their crews went ashore and after their merry-making bouts they fired rounds of ammunition. The word "Toast" is probably a relic of Village festivity when toast was put into ale and the last person to drink from the bowl or flagon would eat the Toast. We associate with the sign of the E.A. when we say point left, right We are starting from the East crossing to the South or J.W and finally to the West or S.W. The claps are also in the rhythm of the E.A. knocks with distinct breaks after each knock.

Q. What is the difference between Craft and Fellowcraft ?

A. Craft is the art and the Fellowcraft is the one who is learning and practising it.

Q. What is the meaning and signification of High time or High Twelve.

A. There were originally two periods in a day known as High Twelve viz:- Mid-day and mid-night but the mid-day known as High time or High noon was observed as the time in the middle of the day to break off for rest and refreshment. It obviously became the recognised time for operative masons to be called from labour to refreshment hence its adoption by the Speculative mason.

Q. What are the ancient Landmarks ? Is there an Official List ?

A. The ancient Landmarks are those fundamental principles which characterise Masonry as defined in the Charges of Freemasonry, and without which the Institution cannot be identified. A great American Authority named Mackey prepared a list of 25 Landmarks, whereas others have itemised 108. Let us summarise them by the answers to those questions
Can you imagine a Lodge, just, perfect and regular
1. Without a Tyler and Inner Guard
2 Without Master and Wardens.
3 " the symbolical teaching of the Masons tools.
4 " The secret modes of recognition and other secrets.
5 " The Holy writ (Bible or its equivalent in other religions.)
6 " A Belief in God. T.G.A.O. U

OR

With the attendance of females and criminals.

" Visitors excluded

" disregard for the Moral law.

Q. What is a Lewis Status and definition of ?

A. A Lewis is the son of a Freemason who is entitled to the precedence of his fellow Candidates. His father having borne the heat and burden of his years is grateful for the assistance and attentions of a dutiful son shows his gratitude by acceding to his desire to become a Freemason by proposing his membership to a Lodge. The actual use of the "word in our Lodge is stated in the First Tracing Board. It is a piece of metal dovetailed into the top of the ashlar or stone by which the latter can be raised by a series of pulleys and demonstrated on the S.W.s pedestal

Q. What is the definition of a "Cowan" ?

A. A Cowan was an inexperienced person not qualified to undertake the work of a mason. He was originally a dry dyker, that is building boundary walls. He was not admitted to the meetings of their master masons or to participate in deliberations concerning the plans of procedure. We have construed it to mean any person not entitled to attend our meetings.

Q Why do we use the Word or Term Anno Lucis.

A The Term means In the year of Light Hence in our Initiation Ceremony when we are asked the predominant wish of our hearts, we say, "Light" By the means of Light we can see everything around us. Previously we were hoodwinked or blindfold and just as we are enabled to see material things at this stage, so also, are we introduced symbolically speaking, to the light or enlightenment of masonic principles, which before were unknown, unseen or undetected by us.

Q What is the meaning of Hole ?

A. Its real meaning is to conceal. It is derived from an Anglo-Saxon word Holen - to hide or to cover. Still used in Celtic districts like Cornwall. Thatching houses or haystacks is still called "Holing"

Q Why is the term Lodge applied to our assemblies ?

A. The term Lodge was originally used by operative masons to mean the rough building where they worked and also had their meals. Sometimes the meetings were held in open spaces, away from the towns, where reasonable privacy and quietude could be obtained. The Book of Constitutions says a Lodge is a place where Freemasons meet to work and instruct. To us the Lodge represents the Universe. Its dimensions are explained to us in the First Tracing Board. On its beautiful flooring are depicted the vicissitudes of life, in the moral and Material prosperity and adversity of the brethren.

Q What is the symbolism of the Rosettes and Tassels on our Aprons ?

A The rosettes may be said to represent the bases of the three great pillars of Freemasonry viz: Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. The rosette is a symbol of the Rose and Argent blue was the colour of the Virgin Mary whose emblem was a Rose. Blue in general denotes prudence and goodness - immortality, eternity and Chastity. The tassel may be said to represent the seven liberal arts and sciences and also to denote that seven make a Lodge perfect

Q. The Symbolism of a Spring of Acacia ?

A. This is shown on the third tracing board to remind us of the shrub which had been disturbed but replaced after the body of our Master Hiram Abiff had been rudely deposited in a rough grave. A brother had observed that the corpse had been recently disturbed and proceeded to investigate. When the body was afterwards properly and decently interred by the order of K.S a sprig of acacia marked the place. Nowadays it is intended to remind us of that great hereafter or futurity where we hope to gain immortal life and everlasting bliss.

Q What is a Cables Length .?

A. ACables length is the distance within which the attendance at the Lodge is obligatory upon a Mason. In the old charges it varies from 5 to 50 miles but nowadays, by modern transport the distance seems to be elastic.

Q. What is a Cable tow and its signification ?.

A. It is a rope of indefinite length which would indicate that distance should be no deterrent when duty calls upon us to attend our lodge At our Initiation such a rope (but very short) was placed about the neck. It had a running noose which limited the distance to which a candidate could go if he declined to enter into an obligation of secrecy and fidelity

Q Why white gloves and gauntlets ?

A. White gloves were worn by K.S.'s orders when Hiram Abiff was properly interred, as an outward sign of innocence and respect. In like manner white gloves are worn in our Lodges to signify our innocence where differences may occur. We are instructed to withdraw in order to settle such differences which being happily affected we may then clothe ourselves, enter the Lodge and work in love and harmony. Gauntlets were originally worn by "Knights and men at arms to shew their distinctive ranks. To throw down a gauntlet was a challenge to combat when a Knight's honour was impugned. Probably the Gauntlets worn by the officers, present and past, of the Lodge are relics of the prestige of those worthy brethren.

Q. In the 3rd degree there seem Contradictions e.g "Going from W to E and yet it is on the centre when making the Wardens quest. How can we reconcile this ?.

A. The J.W. says he has come from the East the S.W says he is directing his course to the West. Both are engaged or co-operating in the search for their Master, Assuming that they start at the same time from their appointed posts they would meet in the Centre, that is, midway. Having discovered their master they attempted to raise him and those who witnessed saw and heard certain signs and words which they communicated to "K.S. who ordered etc. etc.

Q Why is it that Masonry does not recognise other bodies when it preaches universal brotherhood.

A. Freemasonry is surely jealous of its traditions and is anxious to preserve its ancient landmarks and customs. A newly installed master is enjoined and obligated to adhere to the ancient charges, read to him by the Secretary. He promises to conform to every edict laid down by Grand Lodge any order which may have or bear any semblance to freemasonry may have been formed by some Mason or masons who may have violated the promises they made, either intentionally or inadvertently. By acknowledging such bodies we too should be guilty of condoning the action of some insincere unscrupulous or careless incautious masons. Such societies have sprung up in America and even in this country ladies have obtained access to our rituals and practises what is known as Co masonry.