

1. What does Freemasonry mean to you? What are its purposes, aims, and ideals?

I see Freemasonry as a way to get closer to the divine. I hope to find brotherhood and further my understanding of Freemasonry's purposes, brotherly love, relief and truth. Some of Masonry's aims and ideals are to make good men better and to strengthen one's body, mind and soul.

2. What is the difference between *Operative* Masonry and *Speculative* Masonry?

Operative Masonry involves men actually in the trade of stone masonry. Speculative Masons are not physical builders, they are builders of character.

3. Where and when did Freemasonry originate? From what date do we trace our modern origins? What occurred on this date?

There are many theories, but nobody is positive when or where freemasonry actually started. Today we trace our origins from the medieval craft guilds that gave rise to the operative lodges. In the early 1600's, with the consent of Operative Masons, patrons were admitted into the Lodge as Accepted Masons. In June of 1717 the Grand Lodge of England was formed from four old Lodges.

4. What is the meaning of the titles A. F. & A. M. and F. & A. M.? In California, which title do we use?

A. F. & A. M. means Ancient Free and Accepted Masons. F. & A. M. means Free and Accepted Masons. In California we call ourselves Free and Accepted Masons (F. & A. M.).

5. Is Freemasonry a religion? Why or why not?

Freemasonry is not a religion. There are Freemasons of many religions, the only requirement is that the candidate believe in a Supreme Being.

6. Is Freemasonry considered a secret society? Why or why not?

Freemasonry is not a secret society. Freemasonry's purposes, ideals and principles may be learned by anyone who inquires.

7. Allegorically, in what historical location is the degree work of our Lodges meant to take place? Why is this place so important?

Our Lodges are meant to take place in the temple because it is sacred, the center of the universe. The temple is the place where the human is most likely to encounter the divine.

8. Giving your own opinion, why do you believe that only one who believes in a Supreme Being may become a Mason?

The Supreme Being is the foundation for many of our beliefs, rituals and traditions. Without the belief of a Supreme Being one cannot relate to or fully understand Freemasonry's teachings.

9. What are the qualifications to become a Mason under the Jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of California?

One must be at least 18 years of age, free of any criminal convictions and be of good moral character.

10. What percentage of a Lodge must vote favorably upon an application for it to be accepted?

One hundred percent. 100 %.

11. What do we mean when we say that a candidate must be first prepared in his heart?

A man should feel the spark of the Supreme Being within himself and look toward the lodge for a deeper understanding of life through his own ambition.

12. What is the meaning of *duly and truly prepared*?

Being duly and truly prepared refers to the candidates true intentions in what it is that he is looking for. Signifying his sincerity with the use of special garments is how the lodge emphasizes their concern with the man's internal qualifications. Masonry does not regard any man for his worldly wealth and honors.

13. What is the symbolism of the *hoodwink*?

The first meaning is to emphasize the veil of secrecy and silence surrounding the mysteries of Freemasonry. Secondly it represents the mystical darkness, or ignorance, of the uninitiated.

14. What is the symbolism of the *cable-tow*?

The cable-tow is a symbol voluntary and complete acceptance of whatever Masonry may have in store. It also represents the umbilical cord, which is necessary to begin life.

15. How is the candidate received upon first entering a Lodge and what is it meant to convey?

Upon the point of a sharp instrument, to emphasize the seriousness of the obligation which you are about to take.

16. What is the purpose of *circumambulating* (walking in a circle around) the Lodge room during the ceremony of initiation?

The act of circumambulation in Masonry is done in a clockwise manner, patterned after the movement of the sun as we see it on Earth. Moving from East to West by way of the South. It symbolically aligns one to a proper relationship with the order of the universe.

17. Who are the *Holy Saints John* and what is their importance in Freemasonry?

The Holy Saints John are John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. They are the patron saints of Freemasonry and prove that we hail from a "just and legally constituted Lodge"

18. What are the *Three Great Lights* of Masonry and why are they placed in the center of the Lodge?

The *Three Great Lights* of Masonry are The Holy Bible (soul), Square (body) and Compass (mind).

19. What does the open Volume of the Sacred Law (VSL) upon the Altar signify, and which Holy Book(s) do we use in California?

The V.S.L. signifies that we should regulate our conduct according to its teachings because it is the rule and guide of our faith and is a symbol of man's acknowledgment of his relation to Deity. In California we use the Holy Bible as our Volume of the Sacred law.

20. Give the meaning of the *Square*.

The Square is a symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty.

21. Give the meaning of the *Compass*.

The Compass signifies the propitious use of action and is a symbol of restraint, skill and knowledge.

22. Of what significance is the *Obligation*?

The Obligation binds the Candidate to Freemasonry and gives him a sense of the responsibility he has for all of his brothers of the Fraternity.

23. Even though the physical penalties mentioned in the Obligation are symbolic, why are they retained in the ritual work?

The physical penalties are retained in the ritual because it gives the ritual greater meaning and the Candidate an idea of the importance of his vow.

24. Of what is the *Lambskin Apron* an emblem? What does it signify?

The *Lambskin Apron* is an emblem of innocence and is a mark of distinction. It signifies that if a Freemason does not keep himself morally pure in all his actions he stains the pure white of his apron.

25. What are the Working Tools of an Entered Apprentice Mason? After reading what the ritual has to say about them, what, in your own words, do you think they mean for us? Consider the difference between Operative and Speculative Masonry.

The working tools of an Entered Apprentice are the twenty four inch gage and the common gavel. I feel that the gavel is a symbol of the beginning works in my development and represents the start of my formation from good man into a better man. I believe that the gage symbolizes the twenty four hours in a day and that we should divide time for our service of God, a portion for ourselves and a portion for refreshment and sleep.

26. What is the *Rite of Destitution* meant to teach us?

It symbolizes that you should willingly give aid to those who seek it.

27. The North is a place of darkness. The East symbolizes the rising Sun or the dawn of illumination. Why is the Entered Apprentice placed in the North-East corner of the Lodge?

The E. A. is placed in the Northeast corner of the Lodge because it symbolizes the cornerstone from which he will construct his own temple by the principles of Freemasonry.

28. Name the *Four Cardinal Virtues*.

The *Four Cardinal Virtues* are *Fortitude*, by which we are taught to resist temptation; *Prudence*, by which we are instructed to regulate our conduct by the dictates of reason; *Temperance*, by which we learn to govern the passions; *Justice*, which constitutes the cement of civil society.

29. What are the *Three Great Supports* of Masonry? To which Officers are they attributed?

The *Three Great Supports* of Masonry are the three pillars Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. The Officers that they are attributed are Wisdom/Worshipful Master, Strength/Senior Warden and Beauty/Junior Warden.

30. What is the difference between a *Rough Ashlar* and a *Perfect Ashlar*? Why is this symbol considered by some to be the most important symbol in all of Freemasonry?

The rough ashlar is a stone taken from the quarry in its imperfect state and represents an uneducated man, the perfect ashlar symbolizes that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education and represents a man educated in Masonic principles. This symbol is very important because it represents a man becoming a Freemason.

31. Define the term *Cowan*.

A *Cowan* is one who tries to masquerade as a mason, but has not done the work but says he has in order to gain admittance.

32. Define the term *Eavesdropper*.

An *Eavesdropper* is one who tries to steal the secrets of our society.

33. What is the meaning of the term *Worshipful*, and how is it used in a Masonic Lodge?

A title of respect given to the Most Worshipful Master in the East.

34. Give an example of one symbol from the Entered Apprentice Degree and describe its meaning. Look below the surface and try to see what universal principles it is meant to communicate.

The Chalk, Charcoal and Clay. They are symbols of the need for zealous dedication to principles; the inevitability of death and the return of our bodies to the earth

35. What has been your experience of Freemasonry thus far? Has it met your expectations? Why or why not?

I have loved every minute of studying Freemasonry. I have been a Freemason at heart my entire life. I am overjoyed that it is now my time to see the light.