

Academia Lodge № 847

[About Our Lodge](#)
[Statement of Principles](#)
[Lectures & Symposia](#)
[2012 MRF Symposium](#)
[Library Articles](#)
[by Our Members](#)
[Visual Arts](#)
[Reference Shelf](#)
[Resources](#)
[Traditional Lodges](#)
[Masonic Research](#)
[Bodies Search](#)
[Contact Us](#)

The Worshipful Master

Officers of the Lodge

by Shawn Eyer, P.:M.:



Worshipful Master—the title itself reveals much about the intentions of the framers of our Art regarding this time-honored station and the type of individual who is intended to fill it.

The Master is honor bound to embrace his duties as the holder of the Solomonic chair with integrity and without the slightest artifice or equivocation.

As a man he should be truly worshipful, that is, "full of worship," and one to whom sacred matters are not mere intellectual curiosities, but profound and abiding truths. His religion of course is his own personal matter, but his personality ought to reflect that "unfeigned peity" which is represented to us as an essential characteristic of every true Master Mason.

And, just as importantly, he must a true Master of the Art in the traditional sense. The W.:M.: is not intended to be a mere "president." He must be able to fulfill his role as the primary teacher of the Lodge. This lesson is clearly demonstrated in the culmination of the Apprentice degree, when the newly made Mason is brought to a place near the Master to receive instruction. Interestingly, William Preston's original lectures taught that the purpose of a Mason's symbolic travel from West to East is "to seek the Master, that through him I may acquire knowledge." That the knowledge so described is not merely the minimal understanding of the ritual is emphasized by Albert Mackey in his standard reference work on **Masonic Jurisprudence**:

He who desires to be the Master of a Masonic Lodge, must not be satisfied with a moderate share of skill. His knowledge and attainments must be great. If he proposes to be a teacher, he must thoroughly comprehend the subject which he intends to teach, and by the fluency and readiness which education gives, be capable of communicating his instructions in a pleasing and impressive manner. "A man of education and talents," says Dalcho, "will elucidate with admirable beauty, perspicuity and interest, the origin and progress of the arts in different

ages, the development of genius in the organization of our Order, and the adaptation of the system to the wants and happiness of man. He will, in short, speak upon literary and scientific subjects as a Master; he will understand what he professes to teach, and consequently he will make himself understood by others. All will listen to him with delight, and all will be benefited by his instructions." . . .

An educated man, however well skilled in general literature and science, will make an incompetent Master of a Lodge, if he does not devote his attention to the peculiar science of our Order. If Masonry [is] "a science of morality, clothed in allegory and illustrated by symbols," it is evident that a successful teacher (and the Master is, in an emphatic sense, a teacher) must qualify himself by a diligent investigation of these symbols and allegories, the myths and legends of Masonry, their mystical application—and the whole design of the institution in this, its most important feature, must constitute his study.

And we learn from Brother Wilmshurst, in **The Masonic Initiation**, that within the ideal lodge:

Promotion to office in the Craft would not be by rotation or from seniority of membership or social standing in the outside world. It would depend entirely upon spiritual proficiency; upon ability to impart real illumination to candidates and advance the true work of the Craft. The little jealousies and heartburnings that now occur at the annual promotions would be impossible; such things belong to the base metals in our nature, which ought long ago to have been got rid of in any one really qualified for office. Did we better realise the serious nature of Initiation work, we should often shrink in humility from accepting positions we are now eager to seize. Remember that in leaving the outer world and passing the portal of the Lodge into the world within, all values change; all questions, and even all sense, of personality should cease. You become engaged not in a personal task but in a common fraternal work before God, in whose sight all are equal and who will act through such instruments as seem good to Him. Therefore "let him that is greatest among you be as he that is least"; it may well be that the apparently least among us is often likely to be the more efficient workman.

Thus a picture begins to emerge of the Lodge Master according to the traditional pattern. He is not merely a man who has "done his time," but one for whom Freemasonry is both a true passion and a longstanding discipline.

"If thou be made the Master, lift not thyself up, but be among them as one of the rest. Take diligent care for them . . . And when thou hast done all thy duty, sit down, that thou mayst be merry with them; and receive a

crown for they good behavior. Speak out that art the elder, for it becomith thee, but with sound judgment—and hinder not music. And at all times let thy garments be white."

Ahiman Rezon
1756

"For a pattern of imitation, consider the great luminary of nature, which rising in the East, regularly diffuses light and luster to all within its circle. In like manner, it is your province to spread and communicate light and instruction to the Brethren of your Lodge. Forcibly impress upon them the dignity and high importance of Masonry; and seriously admonish them never to disgrace it."

Charge to the Master
California Rite of Installation



IN VIAM
INITIATORVUM

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