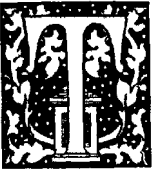


CHAPTER V

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SECTION I

Passage The Quarry



HAT'S ONE GOOD THING about bustin' our backs in there every day."

"What's that, Earl?"

"Y'know. When it's snowin' t'beat the band, we get to work inside all day makin' rocks outta this mountain. Now ya gotta admit, it's better'n somma the trades where they're out in the cold this time a year."

"Yeah, right?"

"Yer kinda quiet t'day, Theo. Everything O.K.?"

"Yeah. 'Guess my mind's just not into sharpenin' bits today. I mean, when you've been workin' in the brass mine for seven years, it's just not all that different from day ta day. Ya know what I mean?"

"Yeah, I guess yer right there, Theo."

"Bet yer life I am. Watch yer head there, Earl."

"Thanks."

Theo walked along the glistening tunnels towards the Number 12 shaft, as he had been doing for the past few years. The soft amber light bathed the walls with mystical shadows, interspersed with pinpoints of golden light beaming back from the brass ore.

"Hey Earl. Y'know what I heard last night at Floyd's?"

"Whaddo I look like, a mind reader?"

"No, seriously, Earl? This guy, I never seen him before, he comes into Floyd's place last night 'n sits next t' me at the bar. I'm mindin' my own business, ya know . . . only had a couple a drafts, when he leans over ta me an' asks if there's any work around these parts. Well, we get ta chattin' a little an' I tell him I work at the brass mine, if he'd like ta put in an ap for a driller or hauler or whatever. Next thing I know he gets ta lookin' like a Cheshire Cat n' I sez, 'What's s'funny. Did I say something funny?'"

"Yeah, an' then what did he say, Theo? Geeze, Theo. I can't stand it when ya get rollin' into a story an' then drift off ta God knows where."

"Yeah, sorry, Earl. Well, he sez, 'What kinda mine did you say it was in which you work.'" So I tells him I work at old man Johnson's Mine, up on the Crumhorn Mountain, ya know."

"And"

"Yeah. And, well, he sez, 'Not *whose* mine. What *kind* of mine? You know. What kind of ore do you extract from that Crumhorn Mountain of yours?' So I tells him . . . Brass, I said . . . I said brass. That's what we mine up there. An' he sez, 'Ain't never heard of a brass mine before. Ain't no such thing so far as I know.' Can you image that, Earl. This guys lookin' for work an' he ain't never heard of a brass mine."

"Takes all kinds, Theo."

"Yeah. Well, I gotta go get my stuff. Don't let them give ya no crap today 'bout yer tonnage. You know yer the best darn'd driller they got."

"No problemo. You just keep sharpnin' them bits, an' I'll stay the best driller on the shift."

Theo watched Earl disappear into the amber light, then turned toward the shop where he kept the equipment in good running order for the crews. He was well-liked and respected for his knowledge and craftsmanship. He was an admixture of craftsman, confidante and advisor to the miners, but for now he was just plain 'Theo', and a little confused at that.

"What limp-noodled flatlander never heard of a brass mine before?" he mused.

As he turned to heft a 4' star-bit and extension shaft from the workbench, he saw the 'gate', as always he had for the past seven years. It was just a gate across the little cavern from where his shop was, but Old Man Johnson had told him long ago never to open that gate, so Theo never had. Maybe it was something in the way the flatlander had said 'There ain't no such thing as far as I know,' but today was kind of strange anyway for Theo, so he set down the drill and walked across the cavern to the 'gate'. At his approach a figure emerged from a recess in the cavern next to the gate. Having never seen 'him' before, Theo was a little startled, but from the presence of the figure, he felt a certain calmness about 'him.'

"Mornin'. I'm Theo. I know I'm not s'pose ta be here, but it's been like seven years or so, and I seen this gate now the whole time. Must be somethin' pretty special in there for you to be here. I've 'been in what I thought was every part of this mine from time to time, but I don't recall ever seein' what's in through this gate. Mind if I take a look?

'Him' nodded his head in assent.

Theo could clearly see that the gate was locked, and when 'him' made no move to open it he queried, 'If that meant yes, could ya please open it for me?'

'Him' raised his right hand and motioned slowly with his finger, moving it from side to side, that he would not open the gate. Then he carefully reached with the same hand into the fold of his garment and withdrew a small golden key suspended from a golden chain. To his surprise, 'him' placed the chain over Theo's head and around his neck and just as softly as he had come, 'him' disappeared into the recess of the cavern from which he had emerged.

If Theo had been having a strange day, it now had become a little stranger yet. He looked at the key suspended from the chain about his neck and somehow understood from 'him' that he was not a gatekeeper in the usual sense of the word. He also perceived that this key was his to keep, and that should he ever encounter another gate of a similar nature, that this key could be used to also open it. Sensing that he had somehow been entrusted with the care to which he must exercise in the use of this key, Theo opened the gate before him and entered the space before him.

After a few paces he saw that there was a flight of steps cut out of the rock before him, which he proceeded to climb. At the top of the long flight of stairs he came to a chamber, which, too, had the characteristic amber glow of the rest of the mine, except that this chamber also had a cast of russet infused with the amber glow, giving it the appearance of being very old and little used.

As he looked around the chamber he could see no apparent light source until he looked toward his right where he saw a shimmering ball of golden-white light, about three feet across, resting some three feet above the dirt floor on a golden cube. As he looked across the chamber he saw along the wall what appeared to be a series of coat hooks. Seeing more clearly now, Theo saw that the hook on the left of the row was empty. It had a patina to it that indicated it was very, very old. The hook next to it, nearly as old, had hanging from it a dim, nebulous thing which as nearly as Theo could discern was a garment of some sort.

The next hook did hold a garment of some sort, made of old dried skin. "Must have been here forever," thought Theo. The next one held a similar garment, not quite as old, and the next another, again not as old as the previous one. It was then that Theo was able to discern the features of the garment more clearly, and became aware that it was not a 'garment'! It was the full flesh of a Man!

His mind reeled slightly at this revelation as he quickly reviewed to see that each of the previous hooks were each 'garments' of flesh, each much older than the one following it in succession!

Before he was overcome by any further sensation, a calm descended over him, and his attention was drawn to the first, empty, hook. A perception entered his being, to the effect of, "There is no garment upon this hook, for this entity passed by before Man took form in the flesh." From this he now perceived that those of the following hooks

had also passed by, though while still in the flesh. He was experiencing a sense of reverence for those who had been able to pass by, when he became aware that the furthest hook to the right was new . . . and empty . . . and HIS.

With an inner peace, beyond his comprehension to explain, Theo removed his 'garment' and entered the golden-white Sphere of Light on the pedestal.

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It would be nice to say that the above story is wholly fiction, but, happily, it is not. Though the symbols may not be wholly in consonance with the 'Ritual' to which we have become accustomed, the allegory is. The *experiences* of Theo, related in the story, concerning the key and the chamber, may *actually* be experienced within, in a way that is comprehensible to the Seeker. Following the next section, another such experience is recorded for your review, but to relate it before addressing the subject of 'The Preparation Room,' would place the experience in the wrong sequence in the telling of the tale . . .

SECTION II

The Preparation Room An Idealization of the Room and Its Purpose

In the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, this phase of the Initiatory 'process' is related as follows:

ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ.

ΑΘΑΝΑΤΟΥΣ μὲν πρῶτα Δεοῦ, νομῶ ὡς διαχρῖνται,
Τίμα χαι ἀεβού ὀρξον, ἐπειθ Ἡρώας ἀγαυοφ.
Τουφ τε χατα χθονιούφ σεβε Δαιμοναφ, ἐννομα ρεζων.

Many of the books to be read in 'academia' leave the reader at this point, assuming a fluency in the language quoted. This is not an 'academia' work, so the translation is given below and will be familiar as the first thing our Candidates are asked to do, not in the Preparation Room, but immediately after being 'received.'

PREPARATION

Render to the Immortal Gods the consecrated cult;
Guard then thy faith: Revere the memory
Of the Illustrious Heroes, of Spirits demi-Gods.



ASONRY TEACHES US to conduct our Candidate "to the center of the Lodge and cause him to kneel for the benefit of prayer." He is also taught that "Before entering upon any great or important undertaking we ought always to . . ." do something very special. Before moving to the next paragraph, there are a few observations relative to the Pythagorean and Masonic "Preparation."

- Our candidates are not necessarily 'prepared' before they are brought to our Preparation Rooms to the extent that they would 'invoke the aid of Deity' without being instructed to do so.
- Who is to *define* what is a 'great or important undertaking,' and are we to live the remainder of our lives, other than during such undertakings, without the aid of Deity. As the expression goes, "I think not!" For in the donning of the apron of an officer (in most Lodges), there is a symbol which *defines* this for us: the All-Seeing Eye. This is not the "Eye" that is always watching US, it is the Eye of Horus, the Constant Gaze, the State of Awareness *attained* by a person, not just a Brother, when they are *constantly* in tune with and aware of the God within. This is not something to be 'invoked,' but to *BE*, as 'it' is not something that comes and goes, that is limited by Time or Space, but 'it' becomes a permanent (immortal) part of our consciousness, our Being.
- The True Preparation Room is Within, and only There may we become Duly and Truly Prepared. All or anything else is a symbolic representation, a reflection (the Moon - hence our Preparation Room is in the West), of this. (Note: There is a Ritual in one of the Concordant Masonic Bodies where an entrance, not of a Candidate, is made from . . . a veil . . . in the East, in radiant Light!)

The next part of the Pythagorean Golden Verses covers an admixture of the Masonic Preparation Room and the Whole of the teachings of the three Degrees. This second section is eloquently titled by the Pythagoreans:

ΚΑ/ΘΑΡΣΙΣ.

It is from this Greek word that we get our English word of "Catharsis," and to them it was translated as 'Purification' or ceremonial cleansing. Masonically, this would be the "subduing of the passions," and the "vices and superfluities of life."

The last part of the Golden Verses was titled "ΤΕΛΕΑΟ/ΤΗΣ" which is "Perfection," or to be brought to completion, *fully* accomplished or developed. The Reader is invited to review the complete text of the Golden Verses of Pythagoras at Appendix IV if they wish, in that the material contained therein exceeds the scope of the subject here being covered.

The Preparation Room of the Blue Lodge, referred to in one of the Scottish Rite Bodies as the 'Room of Reflection,' sets the tone of all that is to follow in the Masonic Life of the Candidate. The latest Ritual of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York [1996] reads: ". . . insure: That the candidate's garb is neat and clean, . . . That proper decorum is maintained at all times, emphasizing the *meaning* [italics added] and solemnity of the ritual *That the environment and decorum in the preparation room reflects a meditative atmosphere, which prepares the candidate's 'mind' for that which is to come.*"

The elements of the Room and the function it is to serve consist of some of the following elements:

- The Candidate
- The Facility
- The Masters of Ceremony
- The Ambiance
- The Paraphernalia & Furniture

. . . not necessarily in the order given.

Our Initiates/Candidates/Brothers will have cause for their placement in the Preparation Room of Masonry on Three distinct occasions. These occasions are preparatory to their entry to:

First Degree:	The Ground Floor of King Solomon's Temple
Second Degree:	The Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple
Third Degree:	The Unfinished Sanctum Sanctorum of King Solomon's Temple

When they enter our Temples for the very first Degree, they have had no exposure to Masonry, save the interview by the Investigating Committee and some information from the pages or a tape of the LSOME (Lodge System on Masonic Education). If they were to become merely members of a Masonic Club, we could just as well walk them through the outer door, collect their money and be done with it. But we have undertaken since before 1723 (Anderson's Constitution) to bring them through the Inner Door for some apparent reason.

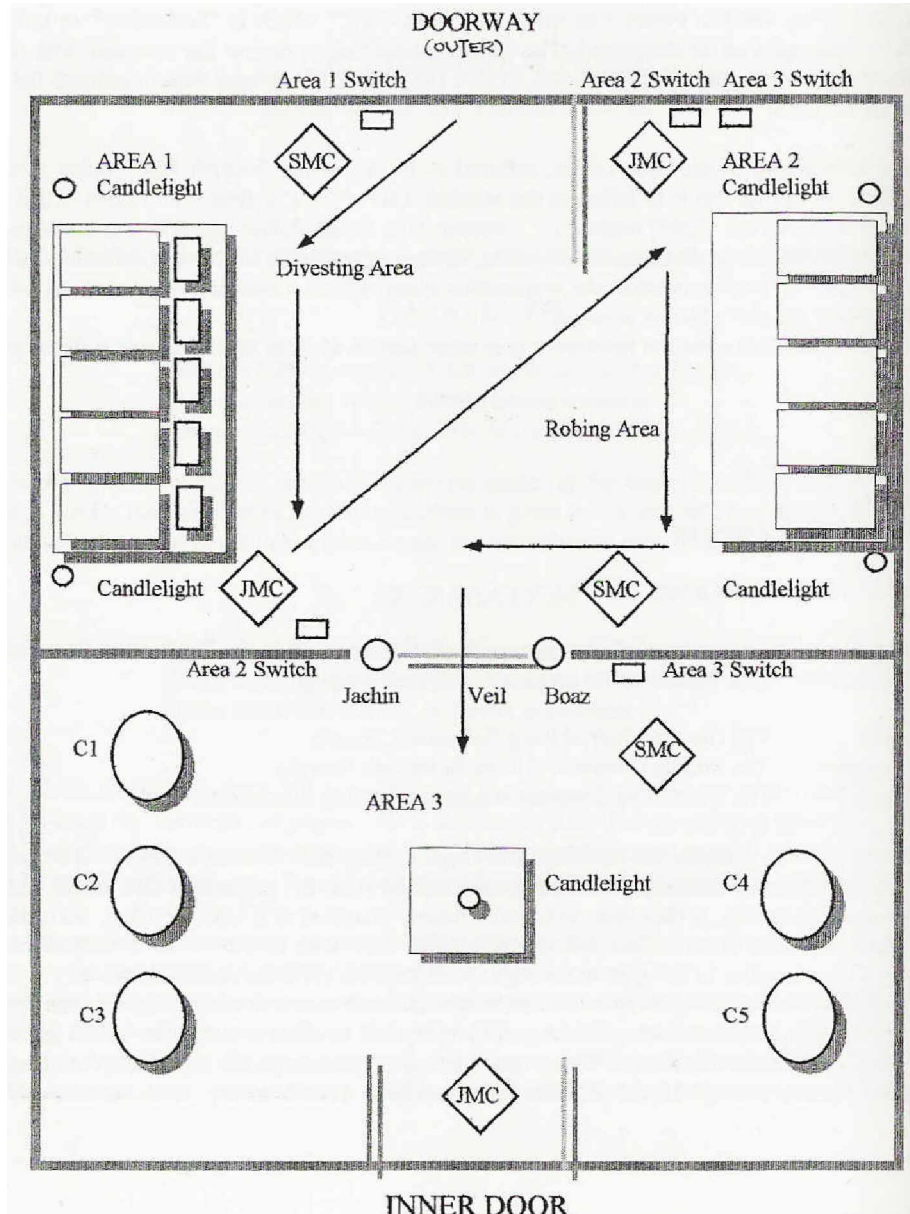
Great thought and effort has gone into the words, symbols and structure of the Degrees, and the Degrees are *obviously more than* just 'Moral Teachings' to be perfunctorily laid on a warm body who will sit in our Lodge or at least pay his dues. We ask our Brothers, "Where were you *made* a Mason," when perhaps the question might be "Where are Free Masons made?" In the ultimate culmination of Free Masonry, Free Masons are made in the Sanctum Sanctorum. At that point it is no longer unfinished. This is the setting which should inspire the Reception of Candidates from their very first entry to our Preparation Room, to their very last moment among their Brethren when they are called to the Celestial Lodge 'above.' Everything in between should be to the end of guiding, instructing and assisting the Candidate and Brother to the 'place' where Free Masons are made.

This is no easy task, be it a labor of love, for it requires that if we are to call ourselves Masons and if we are to guide, instruct and assist, that we must each actively search within the Ritual and Great Light of Masonry and our own inner being, for the Realization of the Timeless Truth contained therein, while, at the same time, being an Operative Mason by doing all of the things that have come to be a part of this 'Institution of ours', such as the dinners, maintaining the Temples, filling the chairs, learning the Ritual *and its meaning*, and a host of ongoing exoteric things.

What then is a Preparation Room?

The ideal Preparation Room would *look* something like the schematic which follows. The *essence* of its suggested use will be found following the schematic:

Schematic of Idealized Preparation Room



This Preparation Room is set up based upon the *essence* for which Masonry has asked if our Candidates are 'duly and truly prepared.' As may be seen, there is nothing in the above Preparation Room which is not directly related to the Ceremonial aspect of the Degree upon which the Candidates are about to enter. There are no filing cabinets, safes, storage cabinets, or other boxes or equipment in the Room to alter the ambiance of the Preparation of the Candidates.

Let us briefly explore the journey of a Candidate from the time of his Petition until his Knocking at the Inner Door of the Lodge Room.

For whatever reason, 'a man, freeborn, of lawful age and well recommended' is the man who will eventually appear in the Preparation Room, in the exoteric sense. He will submit a Petition in his own handwriting, answering all of the questions *completely* and *legibly*, the Secretary will *insure* that all of the information is fully, lawfully (in

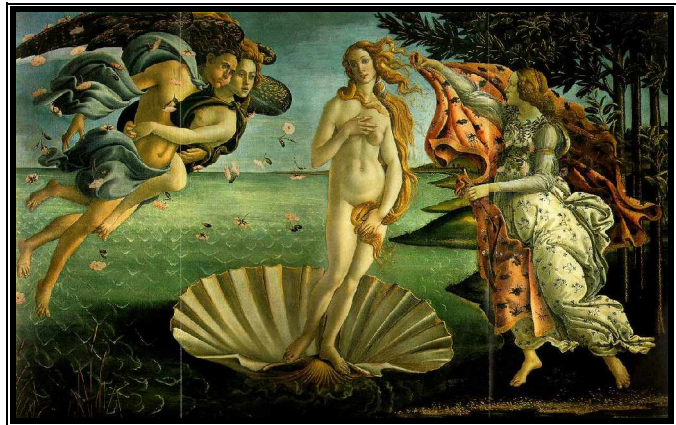
accordance with Masonic Law) and properly recorded on the Petition, and will read it at a stated communication at the time called for by the Master.

The Master will appoint an Investigating Committee of three Brothers, which will meet with the Petitioner at a mutually agreeable time and place, according to established custom and in the customary manner. The Committee will render the usual report and submit their findings to the Secretary to be read at the call of the Master at the next stated communication. If the Candidate has been recommended favorably, the Master will call for a ballot of the Lodge Brothers present and will direct the Secretary to inform the Petitioner of the result thereof. If in the affirmative, a Shepherding Brother or Committee will be appointed for the Candidate for the period of one year, and the Candidate will then have come under the umbrella of the Shepherding and Lodge System on Masonic Education (LSOME) programs (in a Lodge of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York).

At the appointed time and place, the Candidate will appear at the Temple, and will be placed in the charge of his 'Shepherd,' until such time as he is to be brought to the door of the Preparation Room. All that had preceded his arriving at this point has been lightly glossed over above, but the extreme care to be exercised in the acceptance of Petitions and Candidates is critical to a well-governed Lodge. The complete training of the Investigating Committees, Shepherds, and Degree Teams by highly qualified Brothers is likewise essential.

The Masters of Ceremony, upon being directed by the Master to 'report to the Preparation Room,' should formally and solemnly greet the Shepherd in the Anteroom of the Temple who should then present the Candidates to the Masters of Ceremony. With the Junior Master of Ceremony in the lead, the Candidates should then be led into the Preparation Room to the Divesting Area, and caused to face the table to their right. The Senior and Junior Masters of Ceremony would take their places as shown in the schematic. What is represented as taking place in the Divesting Area is the shedding of the Outer Garment of Man (ref.: "The Quarry," in Section I above). All of the Great Teachings tell us that Man is more than Flesh and speak of the Great Pearl. The 'Pearl' is our Inner, Spiritual Being -- The Divine Man -- and the Flesh and Bone is all that is of the Earth and its Elements which we release from all Attachment so that the Inner Garment may walk 'On Earth as it is in Heaven.' Symbolically, the Outer Garment of Flesh 'dies' to the Inner Garment, and is 'buried' or given up so that we may walk our remaining years in the Body of The Divine Man. To make this transition requires that we are 'duly and truly prepared' and Free Born, which in this case means that we are no longer born in the Flesh, but in the Inner Body (Free Born). This is a suggested deeper meaning to the usual reference to being 'born again.'

This concept is well illustrated in the famous painting by Sandro Botticelli (born 1444), known by the title of "*Nascita di Venere* - Birth of Venus," a contemplative reflection upon which could reveal some things of interest.



Birth of Venus – Sandro Botticelli

The Divesting Area of the Preparation Room represents the shedding of the Outer Garment . . . of Flesh and Bone - the Mortal 'Coil,' and should be attended with solemnity and understanding. The Outer Garment of a Candidate should be ceremoniously removed, and reverently 'buried' in the box ('coffin') on the table before him. The recommended sequence, symbolically but not suggested for actual practice in our Lodges, would be something to this effect:

- All 'Metallic Substances' should be placed in a special [Golden] pouch and placed in the small box ('coffin').¹
- Remaining contents of pockets, done in sequence: shirt, left pants pocket, right pants pocket, back pants pockets, then remaining small items are placed in the small box. When all Candidates have accomplished this sequence together, the lid is then ceremoniously placed on the box (buried, surrendered).

¹ Again, not that any Grand Jurisdiction would give this as an esoteric 'meaning' for the 'Metallic Substances,' but in Alchemy metallic substances, associated with 'Planetary influences,' are those substances which are 'transmuted' from their baser nature to their higher nature, such as from Lead [Copper, Silver, Mercury, Iron, or Tin] to Gold. This is allegoric of the transmutation of our earthen, lower nature [our vices and lower passions] into our higher, spiritual nature. These principles of Alchemy were quite widely known prior to and in the period around the formative years of the early Craft 'rituals.' But, again, I am aware of no 'authentic' Masonic documentation to support an alchemical usage of 'metallic substances' in this sense.

- Remove, carefully fold and place in the larger box, done in sequence: Suit coat, trousers, tie, shirt, undershirt, shoes, *and* socks. When all Candidates have accomplished this sequence together, the lid is then ceremoniously placed on the larger box (buried).

In the best-selling book, Mutant Down Under, a 'divesting' ceremony is reported preceding an Aboriginal 'walkabout.' The Westerner participant was asked for *all* of her clothing, possessions, jewelry, pocketbook and contents, which she carefully removed, folded and placed into a neat pile, hoping to be 'reinvested with that of which she had been divested.' To her astonishment, the Aboriginal 'Master of Ceremony' reverently lifted the neat pile and threw the whole lot into a waiting fire, consuming (and symbolically purifying) the whole 'Outer Body' of the Initiate!

To resume . . . The Candidates, now being Divested, will stand before the table, facing the box. The Senior Master of Ceremony will extinguish the Light, leaving the Candidates in total darkness for about five seconds. The Junior Master of Ceremony will then cause the Light to appear over the Robing Table [behind them] and cause the Candidates to follow him, in file, to a position by which each Candidate is now facing a box on the Robing Table. In unison, the Candidates will remove the cover of the box in front of them and will in sequence, at the command of the Senior Master of Ceremony, remove and don the representation of the Inner Garment, the luminous 'pearl' (which should be pure, pressed and spotless for each new Candidate):

- The Trousers, which when properly in place, the Masters of Ceremony will assist them in baring the appropriate knee.
- Next, the Cape, with the Blue Border on the *outside* of the Cape, tied at the neck.
- Next the appropriate sandal (not a shower clog or paper one) is put on the appropriate foot. The Candidate is not necessarily barefoot (slipshod in the older rituals) or shod for the reason given in our ritual; it is considered *the* appropriate act to remove ones shoes, i.e. to be barefoot, when walking on 'Holy Ground,' (see Ex. 3:5) i.e. in King Solomon's Temple. In the 1st Degree the left, advancing foot is bare, for it is considered the weaker or feminine side of the body. The right, advancing foot, in the 2nd Degree is considered the stronger or masculine side. In the 3rd Degree, both feet, it being the Master Mason Degree in the Sanctum Sanctorum (albeit unfinished).
- Next the appropriate 'cable tow' is removed from the box by each Candidate and tied in the appropriate manner by the Masters of Ceremony.

All being in ready, the Candidates will face the Robing Table and the Light will be extinguished by the Senior Master of Ceremony, leaving the Candidates in total darkness for about five seconds. The Junior Master of Ceremony will then cause the Candle in the Preparation Chamber to be illuminated and cause the Candidates to follow him slowly in single file between the Pillars, through the Veil, to a seat facing the candle. After facing the candle in the center of the Preparation Chamber for about ten to thirty seconds, the Masters of Ceremony will blindfold the Candidates and instruct them to contemplate and to '*prepare themselves within for their Initiation into the Mysteries of Freemasonry.*' The time for this contemplation should last for about three minutes (actually longer, but our Brothers may not stand for such a 'delay'), following which the Candidates should be told to rise, and should be placed on 'all fours . . . as a child' (1st Degree only, standing for the 2nd & 3rd Degrees) into a file facing a 'low' Inner Door of the Lodge Room, representing the Ground Floor of King Solomon's Temple. The lead Candidate should then be *caused* to give Three Distinct Knocks. An alternate allegory, "From Temple to Temple," is at Appendix I for your review.

The Outer Garment, being 'buried' and the Inner Garment being the 'Outer,' the Candidates are now 'prepared,' *exoterically*, to enter a place representing the Ground Floor of KST. In the Ancient Mystery Schools, this 'process' of being 'duly and truly' prepared and 'Free Born' would take many, many years to accomplish. The Initiates of those times would not be *caused* to give Three Distinct Knocks; they would have knocked of their own free will and accord, and they would have had the 'pass,' or they would not have been admitted to the *inner* KST (not a place *representing* it).

This Ancient Mystery School *still exists*. It is available to all True Seekers who are Duly and Truly Prepared. The Outer Door is closely Tiled, and the Inner 'Door' is attended at all times by what we may call the Senior Deacon. Those who will Search will find that he has another Name (but the same 'Duties').

SECTION III

The Door

*Who Buildeth this Door upon which you must Knock,
What is it you Seek, as though it was Lost;
Who keepeth the Key to the Gordian Lock,
What is it you Find when all Seas have be Crossed?*

From "The Old Poet's Rhyme," by Lee Miller, 1981. Full Text at Appendix VII.

Many years had passed since Theo had begun working in Old Man Johnson's Brass Mine, and for all intent this was a day like so many others which had gone before him. Upon returning to his room at Mrs. Wilke's Boarding House he flopped on his faithful old couch for a few moments of relaxation before preparing his evening meal. He thought a while about 'The Gate' and his strange experience of the other day. He felt the warmth of the Chamber of Old Souls and his mind drifted into a soft peacefulness when all of a sudden he perceived a Door before him.

From deep within an instructive voice queried, "Well ?"
"Well, what?" replied Theo to 'The Voice.'
"Aren't you going to Knock?"
"Uh, well" At this, Theo mustered the sense to extend his right hand and knock three times upon the old Door before him."

No sooner having thus knocked, he heard from 'The Voice,' "There! . . . Got that out of your system?"
"Uh, yeah"
Before he could gather his senses further 'The Voice' continued, "Now, put your hand on the Door and push."

Theo, feeling a little sheepish for not thinking that it was *he* who was suppose to open the Door, placed his hand on the center of the Door at about heart level and slowly pushed and was immediately met with a new and startling experience: his hand had passed right *through* the Door.
Again 'The Voice', counseled in his attentive ear, "Whose Door is It?"
"Mine ? ? ? . . . ," replied Theo with a sense of inspired Realization.
"Very Good . . . ," the Voice responded, and at this, the Door disappeared, leaving only the Doorway.

Theo contemplated the Doorway, thinking at first that he would step through and see what would happen next, but a feeling within gave him cause for further contemplation. "If I step through, I will be at a place and time of which I have but the most meager of any knowledge, let alone any Wisdom. If I remain where I am I will likewise be at a place and time of which I have but the meagerest of any True Knowledge, let alone any Wisdom. If I stand at any Distance, Place or Time, other than in the Doorway itself, I will be standing in the Illusion of Time and Space." This being the *essence* of what he thought, Theo, with an unknown and unseen confidence stepped *into* the Doorway and stood fast. The Doorway disappeared, and Theo stood bodiless, timeless, in the Cosmos of Eternity.

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SECTION IV

Preparation Room Charge

To be Read . . . slowly . . . by the SMC, with appropriate feeling and understanding,
when the Candidates are Robed and Ready.
[suggested, not required]

SMC: Gentlemen, you will now be seated in this place called the Preparation Room . . .
or the Room of Reflection.
(Seats the Candidates, facing each other. . . with a single candle on a low table).

You have Petitioned this Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of your own Free Will and Accord. Having been found to be Worthy and Well Qualified you were Elected and have appeared here this evening to Receive the First of the Sublime Degrees of the Craft.

You arrived this evening from the outer world and have since been Divested of all that you brought with you from that world. You now sit here in Contemplation, prior to being Initiated as an Entered Apprentice of the Fraternity.

The Initiation you are about to undergo will be Conferred with dignity and a deep inner meaning, as it has been Conferred upon all Brothers who have gone this way before you for many Centuries.

Freemasonry portrays, though its system of Degrees, the Great Teachings and Principles as may be found in the Great Philosophical, and Moral Systems of World. As with most such systems, it is portrayed in Symbols and Allegory, a Language we would commend to your further contemplation for the treasures which rest quietly within them for he who is Duly and Truly Prepared.

As you sit here, then, Reflect briefly on the Outer World and the Outer Shell of yourself of which you have just been Divested, and Contemplate the White Robe you now wear as your Outer Form. Contemplate, too, that you are about to Enter a Place Representing the Ground Floor of an Inner Temple of Initiation. When you are permitted to Enter, pay particular attention to the general movements, the sequence of such movements, and the accompanying sounds and words you will experience, for, in Symbol, they are as a Symbolic Map of the Inner Journey we each may take, if we choose to take it. There is little to be gained by those who enter upon these Degrees out of Idle Curiosity or purely personal motives. Rest assured that there is nothing demeaning nor harmful in the Ceremony you are about to experience.

Consider, if you will, that an empty cup is a better vessel for the Receiving of Teachings than one that is teeming with preconceptions and anticipation. It is no small task to be able to Still yourself when the appearance of the World all about you appears to be so active, and yet this is what you should now consider doing: to focus only on the Here and Now in which you find yourself . . . a place, indeed a Point . . . of Perfect Peace.

So . . . Reflect here and now, in Peace, upon the Journey you are about to Commence.

*(Room light may be turned out, so that only the single candle illuminates the room . . . for 3 to 5 minutes.
The WM should endeavor to insure that distracting sounds are not emanating from the Lodge Room)*

glh - Dec 1998