

The Deeper Meaning of the Entered Apprentice Degree

An Esoteric Interpretation of the First Degree

W. Bro. Rob Lund, W.M., Kilwinning Lodge #565, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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Introduction

Albert Pike once wrote: "*Freemasonry is the subjugation of the human that is in man, by the Divine; the conquest of the appetites and the passions, by the Moral Sense and the Reason; a continual effort, struggle, and warfare of the Spiritual against the Material and Sensual*".

This definition of Freemasonry may sound strange to some, but I believe that this is what the rituals of the Craft are all about and it is an appropriate introduction to what I am about to present. I would also like to point out that there are three levels addressed here: **Body, Mind, and Spirit.**

I've always sensed that our ritual had a **deeper significance** than what appears on the surface. Through my association and study of certain Mystery Schools and their knowledge, I came to recognize phrases, analogies, allegories, and symbols from these esoteric bodies and their ancient teachings. Many Masons are not aware of, or have lost sight of, what our ritual attempts to reveal to us. I've made it my mission to share my discoveries with all Masons, and would now like to reveal to you, *some* of the deeper meaning behind the ritual of the first degree, in the hope that you will understand, and propagate this information to others.

I've come to realize that there are three aspects to our rituals: physical, mental, and spiritual. The first degree is mostly related to the physical; the second degree to the mental, and the third degree to the spiritual. In addition, each of the degree rituals has, within it, those same three levels. The **physical** relates to the actions and symbols; the **mental** relates to the moral and intellectual aspects; and the **spiritual** is the more hidden aspect that I'm about to address.

First, I must tell you that there is no *official* view regarding this deeper aspect of our ritual. These are *my* interpretations (but also those of some eminent Masons) and remember that no one person speaks for the Craft. Grand Lodge does not provide you with any standard book that contains these explanations (in fact, few Grand Lodge publications refer to the deeper, more esoteric, side of Masonry. A notable exception being the Grand Lodge of Texas). Therefore, **you may come across a few different interpretations, but it doesn't matter – what matters is what you take out of it and what is meaningful to you.**

How do we know that there are deeper meanings? There are a number of books that deal with this in detail. I will, briefly, provide some evidence of this. In fact, our ritual *tells* us that there is.

Now, think about this:

At your initiation, you were announced at the door of the lodge as “a poor candidate, in a state of darkness, humbly soliciting to be admitted to the *mysteries* and privileges of *Ancient Freemasonry*”. What are these *mysteries*? Why is it called Ancient Freemasonry?

I'll remind you that, during the examination before passing to the second degree, you are asked:

“What is Freemasonry?” The answer you are to give is: “A beautiful system of morality, veiled in *allegory* and illustrated by *symbols*”. Brethren, in that statement are the first clues that there is something hidden. Let's examine this statement.

A “System of **Morality**.....” - Are the rituals of Masonry there merely for the purpose of teaching morals: Temperance, Prudence, Justice, Charity, and Brotherly Love. Was Masonry instituted to teach these very *elementary* virtues? In the examination before Passing, you are asked: “who are fit and proper people to be made Masons?” The answer is: “Just and upright men and **strict morals**”. So, ask yourself if Masonry was meant to teach morals to those who are *already* moral?

“**Veiled** in allegory and illustrated by symbols...” – “**veiled**” means “hidden or covered”, and that is another clue. “**Allegory**” means “a story that has a *deeper* or more general meaning *in addition to its surface meaning*“, and that is another clue. A **symbol** is “something used for, or regarded as, *representing something else*”, which is yet another clue. As you can see, this statement of the definition of Masonry is a clear indication of something hidden in our ritual.

What is it that is veiled? The Junior Warden's Tracing Board lecture begins “*The usages and customs of Masonry have ever corresponded with those of the Egyptian Philosophers, to which they bear a near affinity. Unwilling to expose their mysteries to vulgar eyes, those philosophers concealed their particular tenets and principles under certain hieroglyphic figures and expressed their notion of government by signs and symbols*”. Again, this is suggesting, as in the ancient Egyptian mysteries, something is concealed in our customs.

These points indicate the *real* secret of Masonry: that our ritual hides deeper, more esoteric, *spiritual* lessons, based on various *ancient mysteries and teachings* that have been taught throughout the ages, in different forms, and is still being taught today.

Here is a quote from Albert Mackey: "*In the investigation of the true meaning of every masonic symbol and allegory, we must be governed by the single principle that the whole design of Freemasonry as a speculative science is the investigation of divine Truth.*"

These mysteries are not officially taught within Freemasonry but they are imbedded in the ritual for the use of those who *seek* the light, through research and education, contemplation, understanding, and assimilation. It doesn't matter what religion, if any, you may follow, as these mysteries are at the root of all of them. The candidate in our rituals, if he is to benefit by the light to which the Craft leads, must, with an open mind, *seek* those mysteries. Understanding what these rituals point to is of vital importance to us all.

The sources of our Initiation Ceremony, while based, perhaps, on old Operative ceremonies, are a blend of various streams of influence, usually called the Ancient Wisdom or "Secret Doctrine", which are common to all the Ancient Mysteries and Initiation systems from ancient times. These are combined with elements from more recent systems, such as Hermeticism, the Hebrew Qabalah, Rosicrucianism, Muslim Sufism, Christian Mysticism, Buddhism, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, and others, drawing symbols and teachings from *all* of them.

Researching these Mystery teachings, and there are many books regarding them, it becomes clear that all these sources have been promoters of the *same* Mysteries, and that they proclaim the same truths. Many of them *also* have rituals with layered meanings, and many correspond

to *our* Degrees. Some of the founders of Freemasonry as we know it today were Rosicrucians, who are teachers of the ancient wisdom. Having studied their teachings myself, I can clearly see the signposts imbedded in our ritual. I encourage you to do your own further research to verify this for yourselves. I'll go so far as to say that it will be the most important thing you do in your life. Time doesn't allow me to elaborate on that last statement except to say that that is where you will find Light.

The Ritual

Many men come to Freemasonry because they are looking for something more meaningful, but don't know what they're looking for. It's like they're blindfolded and groping around in the dark.

It's these two conditions that are reproduced in the two parts of our First Degree Ceremony: one of groping ignorantly in the dark for the Truth behind our earthly existence; and one of discovering light with the opened eyes of the Initiate.

Freemasonry requires that every Candidate for Initiation comes "properly prepared". What does that mean? It's in the answer to the question: "Where were you first prepared to be a Mason?" The answer, as you know, is "in your heart". Every ancient and modern Initiatic system has required this as a prerequisite. Only then can Initiation be meaningful, because it is meant to create a psychological change in the receptive candidate which leads to a new outlook: of humility, realizing that one has been in the dark; of eagerness, for seeking and receiving light; of hope: for spiritual enlightenment.

The First Degree is made up of fourteen distinct acts, in two series of seven each: the first seven are in a State of Darkness; the second seven in a State of Light; *corresponding* to the Ancient Mysteries. Seven is a special number in all the mystery systems and has many important allusions.

It is *very* important to understand that the **Lodge** referred to throughout our rituals, in this spiritual sense, is a symbol of our own individual *being*, and if we interpret our rituals in light of this, we will find that it reveals an entirely different aspect of the *purpose* of our Craft. It provides a blueprint which can be used to build our own spiritual temple within, and provides signposts pointing us to the knowledge that will prepare us for developing a higher spiritual consciousness.

We'll now examine some of the ritual of the EA Degree in light of this view.

Outside The Door Of The Lodge

Outside the door of the lodge, the candidate's change of clothing into humble pajamas, prior to the Ceremony, is symbolic of the mental unclothing required of him: to leave the old trappings of the outside world behind and wearing a new attitude, of humility.

From "a convenient room", the Candidate is led to the door of the Lodge, but it's tyled. This symbolizes that he cannot gain admission to this new life without his guide. In other words, on turning from the world outside to the world within, his first discovery is to find his way blocked by

the door of the Lodge. Entrance can only be gained by knocking on the door. In some Masonic jurisdictions outside of Ontario, the candidate himself must provide the knocks. To me, this is much more meaningful, as it symbolizes the candidate seeking admission. Part of this symbolism has been retained, though, as when the candidate is made to knock with his fist at the Wardens' stations.

The door of the Lodge symbolizes an obstructive element within himself: his past habits, prejudices, and preconceived ideas. The Candidate should recognize that any opposition to his own spiritual advancement must be overcome: first, by seeking entrance with a new attitude; and second, with some help and guidance.

Furthermore, he cannot enter without permission from the Master. The Master *represents* his own Master-Principle, and we'll touch on that again, later.

Within The Lodge

After the candidate is admitted to the lodge, he is received on the point of a sharp instrument – *this* symbolism will be dealt with later. Then, on his knees, he is queried as to where he places his trust in circumstances of “**difficulty and danger**”. What *are* the difficulties and dangers? A Candidate for Initiation into the secrets and mysteries of his *own being* should possess *trust* in the universal Laws of the Great Architect otherwise, grave risks of failure exist for an unqualified person to "rashly run forward" towards experiences for which he is unsuited and *unprepared*.

The Candidate then **rises**, from a position of humility, and is told to follow his "guide", who represents his *inner guide*, or "that still small voice inside", on which he can truly rely, "with firm but humble confidence". This is an important teaching of the ancient mysteries.

Perambulation

The journey around the Lodge is a symbolic representation of the Candidate's *own life journeys* in the world outside, prior to his Initiation into the new world *within*. Being blind, he does not know where he is going.

Though in a state of darkness, he is not alone. He is aware that he has, with him, an enlightened **guide**. The significance being, as I have already indicated, that every traveller on this path has, within himself, his own *invisible guide*.

In the course of his symbolic journey he is led to each **Warden**, in turn, with a repetition of the knocks previously given at the door of the Lodge. These represent not only his request to come out of a state of darkness, but also overcoming his own self-created obstacles. It also represents the awakening of other aspects of himself (his psyche and intellect), represented, at this point, by the Wardens (we will deal more with what the Wardens represent, a little later).

After both Wardens (psyche and intellect), have assured themselves of the Candidate's fitness for advancement to the East (the source of light), he is certified as such, and **presented to the Master** (master-principle) for Initiation. But, before the Master accepts him, the Candidate is required to affirm three things:

1. That he **seeks the Light voluntarily**, for its own sake, and not from any unworthy or material motive.
2. That his objectives in seeking it are: **knowledge** for himself; and a desire to make himself, in possession of that knowledge, of **more extensive service** to humanity. This means that the enlightenment of Initiation is not to be for his private benefit only; it must become of importance for the general good. I should mention that service to humanity is important in most mystery schools.
3. That he will **persevere** in the path about to be disclosed to him; which means perseverance throughout his daily life with all that the Ceremony really represents: his spiritual development.

The Candidate has now completed his journeying around the Lodge, which symbolizes the end of his darkened wanderings in this world. During his life, he has passed blindly (though never without unseen guidance) through places and experiences: sometimes of darkness (the "North"); sometimes of more or less enlightenment (the "East", "South", and "West"); yet entirely ignorant of where he was going, or what the purpose of his life is, or whether at a given moment he was near to, or far from, its true goal. He is then guided toward the East which (represents the source of light in all the ancient mysteries), as a "candidate **properly prepared** to receive the light".

Three Steps to the Altar

The steps of 15, 12, and 9 inches describe a Pythagorean triangle with the ratio of 5, 4, and 3. This has an allusion to, firstly, the Law of the Triangle (taught in the ancient mysteries) which states that one side of the triangle represents the **Origin**, another the **Recipient**, and the third, the **Result**. Secondly, it alludes to the Alchemical representation of First Matter: the three vital principles (**balance**, **self-consciousness**, and **higher consciousness**); the four basic elements (fire, water, air, and earth); and the five stages of development (mineral, plant, animal, human, and enlightened). These principles are also found in Yoga philosophy. Time does not allow further explanation of these.

The Obligation

The Altar holds the Volume of the Sacred Law, and is therefore considered to be a sacred place. This applies to the Altar itself as well as the area immediately surrounding it. Think about how the candidate is prepared: right arm, and left knee made bare, and right heel slipshod. Why this mode of preparation? Match that with the candidate's position at the altar. In taking the obligation, the candidate's bared parts are in direct contact with this sacred area.

Traditionally, the Mysteries, and all secret Orders, require a **vow of silence and secrecy** from the Candidate, before Initiation, and entrustment with any secret information. The reasons for secrecy, and for being **solemnly obligated** to it, are much deeper than the need for silence

about the secrets of the Order.

You should be aware that silence and secrecy are imposed more in interest of the individual himself, than in the Fraternity (which would hardly suffer from any disclosure). The Mystery School teachings, and his own experience, will teach him, later on, the deep personal value of silence, and the peril of unwise speech: a peril pointed to in the penalty of the Obligation. What it really represents is that Knowledge of the ancient mysteries and its practices is very personal, and is a difficult concept to be communicated in words and, if done so, can be misunderstood and misinterpreted by those not familiar with them. Esoteric orders will typically cut off communication with those who reveal secrets to the uninitiated. But the real symbolism of the penal clause relates to the severing of communication between his lower aspects and his higher consciousness. The Mystery Schools teach about four lower aspects and three higher aspects of humanity.

The Restoration to Light

After the Obligation, the Candidate is reminded that, for a considerable time, he has “been in a **state of darkness**”. This does not merely allude to the few minutes during which the Candidate has been hoodwinked for symbolic reasons. Remember that the whole ceremony is allegory, and it dramatizes, in a way, "*the entry of all men upon this their mortal existence*"; and that the whole of that existence has, until now, been spent in a state of darkness. The Master's command, "*Let there be Light*", therefore implies: let there now be an awakening of a higher consciousness.

The **clap of hands**, which all the Lodge Brethren engage in at the moment of restoration to

light, is a signal for the candidate to wake up, to become conscious. To the Candidate, it should mean a sudden waking up, a newly found spiritual awareness, which enables him to realize: "Before, I was blind, now I see!"

When a child is born into this world, it takes a considerable time before its consciousness becomes adjusted to its new environment, and for it to focus its vision. Time and practice are required before it can accustom itself, and its eyesight, to its surroundings. Similarly, with spiritual rebirth, the candidate transitions into an awareness of something having changed in him, of an illuminating nature. He knows that there has been a shifting of his consciousness from a lower to a higher level, a feeling of the start of a deeper understanding of the universe, and a greater awareness of the Divine Consciousness.

The Great Lights of Masonry

The **Three Great, though emblematic, Lights** consist of the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square, and the Compasses. These are the most important symbols in Masonry.

The **V.S.L.** has a deeper significance than being a religious text. It is a symbol of the invisible *Cosmic Law*, through which all things are manifested in the Universe. It represents the Creator's "law" which is the basis for everything in existence, as revealed in the ancient wisdom. Cosmic Law, also called Natural Law, is taught by the Mystery Schools and incorporates seven basic principles: the principles of Mentalism, Correspondence, Vibration, Polarity, Rhythm,

Cause and Effect, and Gender. Understanding of this law is essential for spiritual development.

The **Compasses**, resting upon the V.S.L., represent the *Divine Cosmic Principle* issuing from the Creator into manifestation, both cosmically and in the individual. Time doesn't permit further explanation of this now. It also represents the candidate's Spiritual nature.

The **Square**, in this context, represents cosmic *matter*, in which the Divine Principle takes form physically. It also represents the candidate's material being, or lower nature.

Together, the Three Great Lights reveal the *Cosmic Purpose*: of Spirit and Matter working in unison, and according to Cosmic Law, to construct a perfect Universe, and develop perfect beings, in order that those beings can eventually return to the Creator, which is their purpose on earth, as taught in the ancient mysteries.

The points of the Compasses, being concealed beneath the Square, in this degree, imply that the candidate's *spirit* is, at that time, *overlain*, and prevented from full function, by the tendencies of his *material* body. If man is to become perfected and rise to the full development of his being, his spiritual principle must *not* remain subordinate to the material and its tendencies, but gain superiority over them.

The Three Lesser Lights directly correspond to the three Great Lights. The **Sun** symbolizes our *spiritual consciousness*, the **Moon** is a symbol for our *intellectual faculties*, and the **Master** represents the *Master Principle* (or highest consciousness) in ourselves. Together with the

Great Lights, they are meant to indicate to the Candidate that the three great Cosmic Principles underlying the Universe, are present in *himself*. ***This is a very important point!*** The Universe is the Macrocosm, he himself is the Microcosm (as above, so below) and, in *him* reside the three "lights", enabling him to start working towards perfection.

The Secrets

Before the Candidate is entrusted with the "secrets" of the Degree, he is told of certain dangers which he has already passed. He is shown the sword and the cabletow.

The **sword** is a symbol of certain *spiritual* perils, mentioned before, of a person *rashly rushing forward* upon the path of spiritual experience for which he is *unprepared*.

The **cabletow** represents an umbilical cord, with the Candidate having been "born" into the Masonry, but cannot be separated from his guide until he has seen the light. It also represents the *spiritual death* resulting from retreating from that path, once one has become aware of it.

The "**secrets**" of this Degree are explained as consisting of certain signs, tokens and words. These, of course, are figurative emblems of them. It is what they *signify* that constitutes the secrets, and *that* significance is left for the Candidate to meditate upon, understand, and assimilate into personal practice. Only that way will he really learn, and begin to understand why they are called "secrets". They can never be *orally* communicated, except in symbolic form. Just

as a successful businessman can never convey the "secret" of his success to someone who has himself not practised it, so the secrets of spiritual progress are learned only by those who actually *live* them ("skill without exertion is of little avail"). They are *pointers* to spiritual progress rather than confidential communications of secret information.

The **sign** of this degree (the penal clause) is not physical, but *mystical*. I have already explained this but I'll repeat it here. Its meaning is that the violation of the Obligation may result in the lower self being cut off from the higher self and, as a result, preventing further progress in understanding cosmic truths (as if they are buried in the sands of the sea). It also alludes to an energy centre within his being. Energy centres are also called Chakras. In this case, it is the throat chakra, which has to do with communication.

When, in our first Degree, you *salute* the Worshipful Master with the penal sign, remember that that gesture signifies the homage you should pay to your own Master-principle, the Divine Essence in yourself, for the Master of a Lodge symbolically personifies that Master-principle or higher self.

The "**Word**" given to the Candidate, which denotes "Strength", refers to the strength or energy which the Candidate requires to pursue his work of self-perfecting, *and* the strength obtained from pursuing that spiritual path.

The Apron

The Candidate is invested with the Apron, which is one of the most important and

comprehensive of our symbols.

Its **shape** is that of a triangle superimposed upon a rectangle. The **triangle** is the primitive and universal emblem of what is *Spiritual*, while the **rectangle** is that of what is *Material*. Because the triangle and rectangle are among the most ancient ideographs in the world, the Apron is truly described as being "a badge older than that of any other Order in existence."

The triangle overlays the rectangle showing spirit overlaying material.

In some jurisdictions, the EA apron is worn with the flap turned up, indicating that, as with the Square and compasses, that the Spirit is not yet overlaying the Material.

The Apron is made of white lambskin; an emblem of purity. It represents the purification required in order to progress on the spiritual path.

There is *more* symbolism in the Apron, but you can have fun researching that yourself (or reading my books).

The North East Angle

The N.E. has great symbolic significance. It is the meeting place of darkness and light (the sun rises in the East, travels across the sky in the south, leaving the north always in shadow). The **N.E. angle** represents the Candidate's own condition. Standing at this point, he can, at will, advance further east, to the Light, or relapse into darkness in the North; it rests with him as to which direction his life will take. He is to regard himself as a "foundation-stone," and the material for raising thereon a "super-structure." This expression means more than just character-

building: it refers to building, within himself, a *spiritual Temple*.

An important subject in the N.E. corner is the awakening of the duty of **Charity**, which is, of course, about *more* than donations of money to the financially distressed. The "Charity" spoken about here is also that of giving of one's self, from the heart, and *universal compassion* for all life. The Candidate is meant to learn that charity is the foundation stone of a higher life, and may be practised at different levels, the highest of which is the pouring out of charitable, *compassionate love* to all beings.

Tracing Board Lecture

Remember that the *real* Lodge referred to throughout our rituals, is *our own being*.

The "**form of the Lodge**," is the way in which human nature has been composed and constituted: the length, breadth, depth and height of man's own *being*. His *body* and his *spirit* are "**holy ground**", upon which he should build the *altar* of his own *spiritual temple*.

The **West** side of the lodge represents the *rational mind* – material-oriented common sense and reason.

The **East** side represents man's *spirituality*.

The **South**, being midway between West and East, is where rational understanding and spiritual

intuition meet, and where *intellectuality* can attain its “meridian”.

The **North** is the *physical sense*, the lowest perception, a place of darkness and ignorance.

The **depth** of the Lodge ("from the surface of the earth to its centre and even as high as the heavens ") refers to the difference in depth between the *superficial* consciousness of our earthly mentality, and the *divine degree* of consciousness resident at man's spiritual **centre**. It also implies that the range of consciousness possible to us, when we have developed our potentialities to the full, is *infinite*.

The Lodge is "supported by **three great pillars**, Wisdom, Strength and Beauty". **Wisdom** is gained by an increase of *perceptive* faculty and understanding, which leads to gaining mental **strength** and confidence, and developing grace of character and conduct and an inner **beauty** of spirit. These pillars also allude to Qabbalistic teachings (which we don't have time to go into now).

The **covering** of a lodge, a celestial canopy of diverse colours, represents man's *ethereal* nature. The symbolism here refers to what is learned in the ancient wisdom, but we can not go into that now, due to time.

The candidate will discern that there is a mystical "**ladder** of many rounds or staves", i.e., that there are numerous *paths*, or methods, by which one can move towards to the *spiritual Light*, and of the three principal ones, the “greatest of these”, the one “that comprehends them all”, is *charitable Love*, and one who reaches the summit is approaching *divine consciousness*.

The black and white **chequered floor** of the Lodge denotes the dual quality of everything connected with life, and of *human nature*. Everything material is characterized by inextricably joined opposites: good and evil, light and shade, joy and sorrow, positive and negative. This represents several of the Cosmic Laws mentioned earlier. When we stop perceiving them as opposites and realize that they are a *unity* (two aspects of the same thing and one cannot exist without the other), then a *transcendental balance* is achieved, which is symbolized by the **indented border**. This symbolism of duality is taught in the ancient wisdom using the triangle: two angles are the opposing elements, creating a third balancing force. The indented border is also a symbol of Divine Providence. The meaning of this can be found in one of the Cosmic laws – the principle of mentalism. I leave this to you to research further.

Opening the Lodge, and the Officers

The seven Officers - three principal, three assistant, and the Tyler, represent the *seven aspects of one's being*, as taught by the mystery schools. When mentally and spiritually interactive, and coordinated into a unity, they constitute a "perfect Lodge", or perfect being.

The knock of the **Master's** gavel to call the lodge to attention, and the repeat of those knocks by the Wardens, represents the Master-Principle calling you to attend to, and control your own actions (i.e. the **Psyche**, represented by the **Senior Warden**), and to keep down the impulses of his lower nature (i.e. the **Intellect**, responded to by the **Junior Warden**).

The **Senior Deacon**, carrying the messages and commands of the Master to the Senior Warden, is the link between Spirit and Psyche.

The **Junior Deacon**, carrying the messages and commands of the Master from the Senior to the Junior Warden, is the link between the Psyche and the Mind.

The **Tyler** is the *outer sense*, the link with the outside world, and keeps out unwanted influences.

The **Inner Guard** is the *inner sense*, the link between the mind and the outer sense-nature, and evaluates incoming influences.

I have already mentioned that the seven principle officers are also an allusion to the seven-fold nature of our being, consisting of Physical, Etheric, Astral, Lower Mental, Higher Mental, Intuitional, and Spiritual, as taught in the ancient wisdom.

Based on what I have just told you, I hope that, next time you go through the opening of the Lodge, you will see it as more than just a mechanical ritual, that you will understand how this should be reminding you how to prepare yourself for spiritual advancement.

Summary

From this examination of the Ceremony, we can summarize its purpose as follows:

The Ceremony of our first degree is a comprehensive portrayal of the entrance of all masons into spiritual consciousness.

The first half of it is designed to restore to Light (in the spiritual sense) a Candidate who seeks Light from his heart, and comes prepared in mind and person to receive it.

The second half of it is meant to teach him, having been brought to that Light, how to develop himself, so that he may emerge from his former darkness.

The Apprentice stage of Masonry is, therefore, one of purification, education and self-control, which every Brother must *work out*, and *live out*, for himself, *in his own way*. There is no Lodge instruction book for this. There are books that will guide one, but no amount of book knowledge, or instruction from others, can teach him what can be learned only from his own experience and effort. "*Though the heart may conceive and the head devise in vain if the hand be not prompt to execute the design.*"

Progress in this journey requires humility and perseverance (repeated efforts). It also requires not looking at matters of the inner (spiritual) life with the same eyes as those of the outer (material) life. One cannot apply "common sense" to the mystical teachings, they must be *spiritually discerned*. There is no room for unenlightened opinion, scepticism, and non-spiritual perception.

This concept is stated eloquently in this quote from Walter L Wilmshurst:

"He who enters the Lodge in quest of Light should leave all his previous learning behind him with his garments and loose the shoes of personal opinion from off his feet. He should think of

himself as a child, and as being taken into a world of new sights and sounds, and where new ideas and even a different logic obtain from those with which he has previously been familiar, and where he must begin to recast his ideas and his life. If it will not, he will but continue to darken his own light, and the Craft can teach him nothing of value, whatever titular rank he may attain in it."

Hopefully, you will view this ritual, from now on, with a different perspective, and use this as a way of moving toward further spiritual consciousness and growth. How you do that is mainly up to you.

However, *Seek and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you.*

Brethren, what I have covered here only scratches the surface. I'll leave it to you to go and discover more.

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