

# **Freemasonry and Ritual in South Africa**

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree Master of Theology

(Science of Religion)

in the

Faculty of Theology and Religion

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

May 2019

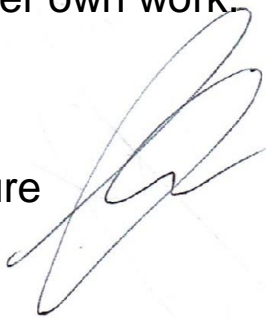
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## Summary

This study discusses key concepts and definitions in the fields of practical theology, ritual studies and phenomenology with a focus on understanding religion, especially in South Africa, as an anthropological discourse concerning every facet of life often with far reaching implications. The study also includes a practical example of this value and definition of religion through a brief iconographic study of the Amarna letters, the Akhetaten stelae and religious reform in Egypt during 1390-1352 BCE and the occurrence of the 'outstretched hand/arm' in key texts in Exodus 6:6 and 7:1. This highlights the social projection theory of religion and its impact on material religion in the Ancient Near East over time. This serves as part of the precursor discussion to a more specific focus on two Freemason rituals as expounded by McDade & Tonkin (2013) in "My Handbook and Rituals". This is the prescribed handbook given to members and is used for the training and proper functioning of the rituals and other Freemason matters of the Irish Constitution of Freemasonry in South Africa. This study takes an interdisciplinary approach to the question of ritual and religion in order to bridge the gap between social groups through a holistic understanding of the 'others' symbols drawing on the work and methods of Richard Osmer, Ronald Grimes and Victor Turner among others. The study also observes the corporate structure and highlights key developments and identification of the history of Freemasonry in three parts, namely; legendary, documented and undocumented history. Through a consideration of the ritual phenomena and symbolic understanding within the first two ritual degrees of Freemasonry (Entered Apprentice Degree, Degree of Fellow Craft), aided by a deeper sociological and psychological understanding of normative social structures, the veil of perceived secrecy may be lifted. This study may serve as further example of the value of objective, interdisciplinary research which does not rely on theologically comparative methods. Rather, a model may be developed by which to better study phenomenology of religion, rituals and 'normative' social structures.

## Key Words

Ritual Studies, Phenomenology, Irish Freemasonry, Theology, Science of Religion, History of Freemasonry, Fourfold Task, Liminality, Religion/Religiosity, South Africa, Symbols, Sociology, Anthropology, Spirituality, Ancient Near East - Egypt

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## Chapter 1

### 1.1. Introduction and Ritual Theory

Much mystery surrounds Freemasonry and for generations it has intrigued many people on the outside of this group. Incredibly exclusive, we can see that many ideas and theories have surfaced as to what goes on during Freemasonry meetings and rituals. Though all are free to interpret as they can, given their available resources, it is important to note that this has caused great schism between Freemasonry and mainstream society. To have a proper understanding of what Freemasonry is and what it entails means to consider a number of key points. The origin, history and development of Freemasonry is imperative. Very often conclusions are made without the necessary justification. There has been a perceived veil of secrecy surrounding Freemasonry, their beliefs and practices and as such must be examined in order to make a more responsible conclusion.

This veil has created schisms between people who are members of Freemasonry and other religious or spiritual movements. This is a result of Freemasonry being classified as a dangerous religion or cult in many mainstream circles by authors such as F. N. van Niekerk in his “Die Vrymesselary: Sy Geheime en Gevare” (1979). Not only this but in many local, South African, communities very conservative views are still upheld. We identify three core questions that need to be addressed. What is the origin, history and development of Freemasonry? This enables us to better understand the nature of Freemasonry and define what can or cannot be classified as Freemasonry. The second question addressed in this study focuses on the symbolic world of Freemasonry which is inaccessible to most outside of these circles. This includes the ‘secret rituals’. What do the ritual and symbols mean to Freemasons? Thirdly, any meaningful study of this nature requires a reflection on any new-found understanding. How can religious groups foster a relationship through a consideration of one another’s’ rituals and symbols?

The nature of the issue at hand and limitations to this study make obtaining credible and reliable qualitative data a challenge. Therefore, I will be using only quantitative data in the form of written historical accounts, phenomenological theory, advertisements from recognized Freemasonry groups, an actual ritual handbook

from the Irish constitution and other recognized academic studies to perform a literary study focused largely on the understanding and interpretation of the ritual handbook of the Irish Lodge in South Africa. I will provide historical critical perspectives in order to highlight the origin, history and development of Freemasonry to determine what can be considered documented history, undocumented history and legendary history. Sources from academics or non-affiliated persons as well as Freemason members will be utilised. This allows for a combination of both an insider and outsider look at the origin, history and development of Freemasonry. As far as possible, authors or sources will be identified if found to have any personal connection to Freemasonry. This allows us to assimilate information from objective, descriptive and subjective perspectives.

A discussion of key terms and concepts is crucial for the ensuing discussion. A phenomenological approach will be taken with regards to the ritual handbook. We cannot observe the actual rituals in person and so can only follow the ritual handbook by McDade & Tonkin (2013) with an understanding of the space in which these rituals are performed. This is empirical data obtained from strict objective observation. Once we have described the various parts of the rituals and symbols it is important to interpret these rituals and symbols in light of Freemasonry understanding and see how this challenges mainstream perceptions. The final reflective task calls on practical theological perspectives in order to enter into meaningful dialogue. This dialogue will however not be focused or centred on the Christian tradition and refrains from taking a comparative approach such as is suggested by Osmer (2008). The focus of practical theological perspectives here refers to a broader interpretation and understanding of '*theos*' more similar to a new religious (spiritual) movement, only at least 350 years old. Reflecting in this way as opposed to the general Christian comparison allows greater dialogue across different social, religious, spiritual and economic groups.

Freemasonry groups in South Africa have been reaching out for new membership as a result of the ill-founded connotations attached to the fraternity. This study hopes to illustrate the process of becoming a member, the symbolism as well as the rituals of Freemasonry and how this can be re-interpreted in light of ritual studies. In this study I will employ approaches from a variety of fields in an interdisciplinary approach,



namely; sociology, psychology, religious studies, phenomenology and theology. The value of interdisciplinary research is continuing to grow and this study reinforces this trend and seeks to contribute to this trend. Though ritual studies can be quite comprehensive and in itself can be considered interdisciplinary, we combine perspectives from theological, phenomenological and critical historical methods. This study hopes to provide a new model for the study and interpretation of groups and rituals without relying on traditional comparative or hierarchical models for understanding. This proposed model has potentially pragmatic implications for religious, non-religious, areligious, agnostic, spiritual, social, political and economic systems and understanding.

The question of whether Freemasonry is a secret society is a silly one. We will see, through the work of Kuhn (1917) and Mackey (1996), that Freemasonry is far from secret but actually quite widespread in history as well as today. It is the attempt of this study to look into the ritual aspect of Freemasonry in order to separate some of the myth and legend from the practical context of a Masonic Lodge as rituals and rites take place today. This cannot be done without a rather broad look at a few key points. In what is to follow I will outline some key remarks with regards to the methodology which I will employ throughout this paper. I will be using of Ronald Grimes' (2010a, 2010b, 2014) extensive work in ritual studies to guide use as we discover more about masonry. I will make well mention of where I deviate from Grimes. Also it is important to understand how we are to undertake on such a task and so consult Richard Osmer and his introduction on practical theology (2008).

Richard Osmer (1997:11) highlights the core of the need for such an endeavour. He explains that practical theology has developed as a response to the ever-changing society that we live in. The growing empirical culture is key to the rise of this practical theology. The unique challenge then for the application of these different methods is to be both scientific as well as theological (Osmer 1997:12). It is important to note that theological here denotes a much broader discussion than mainstream or orthodox Christian, Islamic or Jewish traditions. This outlines both the empirical task and the theological task. These will both be discussed in what is to follow. In following this model, we hold true to first understanding before reflecting. Osmer (1997:16-17) explains that we might consider a shift to a more argumentative communication which is cognitive and leads to intersubjective agreement where we

can thematise and critically examine the 'other' (1997:15). Though the final step of this proposed process here is to establish claims as valid and this cannot be done. These value judgements can be truly detrimental to constructive dialogue and meaningful academic inquiry.

The task of ritual study, in part, is one which requires a practical understanding of the implications of numerous aspects of individual or communal social life or social ritual practices. It is my goal that all the information gained and discussed throughout this paper can be used in a way which is beneficial to all who read and understand. The greater aim is a healthier relationship between all societies which are actively working together within themselves to reach some form of betterment in a way which is not detrimental or necessarily disadvantageous for greater society. This is why the pragmatic task is crucial for the hermeneutical circle to come, well, full circle (Osmer 2011:156-157). Osmer (2008:10) makes much of this hermeneutical circle. In order for us on the outside of this self-proclaimed elite fraternal group to either restore or build a relationship with the Freemasons, it is necessary that we, as academics and unique individuals in every sense, educate ourselves about the culture and tradition of others, here specifically Freemasonry. It is important to understand that Freemasonry is to Freemasons, not a religion, but a space for creative submersion and dialogue in the form of a fraternity which may in fact be termed a 'new spiritual movement' but not a religion in itself. This crucial paradigm shift can yield much insight into repositioning and thus reinterpreting Freemason ritual.

To demythologise these rituals does not mean to take away from their value but rather serves us better in our reflection at the end of the paper. The value here will be that a new understanding will culminate in new understanding of Freemasonry by the 'outsider' in general. Hennie Pieterse (2017:3) notes that in following Osmer's (2008:4-10) model we may bridge the gap between academic disciplines and interconnectedness of spiritual, social and religious phenomena and academia. We will see the immense role of symbolism and drama and as such shed light on how we interpret and interact with Freemasons knowing they participate in rituals which are strange and mysterious to us. By observing the monumental role of symbols within the ritual practice, we can see that without the right perspective, we will be bound to misunderstand the way in which Freemasons see and interact with the world at large.

It is important to take note that a primary view of this study is one which places rationality as the chief paradigm in order to better be situated within the sphere of conversational praxis (Osmer 1997:26-27). This is beneficial as it encourages co-determination of knowledge and understanding. One informs the other through dialogue and reflection. This type of phenomenological hermeneutics is crucial for understanding the role and meaning of ritual, specifically in Freemasonry and the three primary degrees and their rituals and teachings. Furthermore, we endeavour not to make value judgements on the efficacy of these rituals.

## 1.2. Introduction to the Fourfold Task

As a precursor we must consider the fourfold task as proposed by Osmer (2011:157). It is difficult to approach any ritual task as it is a diverse field. Ritual studies must take the context into account and thus this can in many cases influence the paradigm used. It is important to note that Osmer (2011:156) acknowledges that he may not be the first proponent of such a fourfold paradigmatic task and this he calls reflective practice within academia or more specifically the field of practical theology.

The primary task is that of empirical observation (Osmer 2011:157-158) or as Barnard *et al.* (2014:51) would refer to as participant observation. Here we observe what is going on through asking questions about what is happening, what is visible, not visible, felt, etc. This task cannot be overlooked if we are to gain understanding into a world different from our own. We acknowledge the tension between objectivity and subjectivity. What is important about the term 'participant observation' is that it implies a voluntary participation in the events and phenomena from an observational perspective. In many rituals there is a certain ineffability which poses a challenge for an outside observer (McGrath 2011:147). In this case our challenge is compounded by not having direct visual access to the rituals of the Freemasons. This can be partly overcome by a consideration of the elements presented in the ritual handbook of the Irish Constitution in South Africa (McDade & Tonkin 2013).

We may, for a moment, compare the framework and teachings spelled out in the rituals to an interpretive model which allows one to better come to grips with the existential reality we all face (McGrath 2011:148-149). Osmer (2008:33-35) describes how being spiritually present with the 'other', specifically in pastoral care

and practical theology has the benefit of allowing greater relationship to develop between the observer and the 'other. For the purposes of our study we would understand this presence as being holistic presence. Being present in all spheres of openness and understanding. It is necessary to remove Christian reference wherein the paradigm developed and was expounded and expand our framework of understanding beyond our immediate context as far as possible. In order to hear what one may be saying it is imperative to be able to listen. To see what someone or something wants to reveal through a demonstration we must be able to observe. This observation is one way in that the observer pushes nothing back but only receives from without. Here our object of observation is ritual. These rituals have formats, layouts, process, specific language and so forth. This means that in many ways it is a closed object of study which can very thoroughly be studied empirically. Osmer (2008:41-42) explains that empirical observation allows one to identify underlying trends and factors which may be relative when we continue with the fourfold task.

Challenges in our context to this first task is a gap in a practical case study regarding each of the three rituals to follow. We cannot observe the ritual and know that each lodge may be slightly different by the notes in the ritual handbook (McDade & Tonkin 2013). Furthermore, while some tools and ritual objects are described and defined, there may be many other objects and spaces which are not detailed in the outline for the ritual. This means that there is even more ineffability here. The McDade & Tonkin (2013) have naturally excluded key elements of the rituals such as the knocks (one would imagine it challenging to convey this in writing) and secret words and grips. This is very much part of the rumoured veil of secrecy surrounding their rituals and have left some to question the nature of these initiation rituals. Through the course of this study we will hope to demonstrate that anything which is not directly observable and therefore may be termed as 'secret' is in fact not essential knowledge for the larger population. We resist any connotations and assumptions in this first task as any deviation from neutral observation would spoil the spectacle.

Lastly, it is crucial to note that empirical studies with regards to rituals primarily concern and involve a presence or visual account to accompany the ritual in order to be able to identify and be exposed to all elements of the ritual as it is presented and as it unfolds. As was said before, it is a challenge and limitation to this study that we

only have access to a textual account and instructions of the rituals but this does not take anything away from the value of the source or the methods followed.

Once we have gained some experience through empirical observation we begin to move forward in-line with the reflective task and its appropriate model. We must interpret what we have observed using a wide range of disciplines which may aid in understanding some of the underlying factors (Osmer 2008:4-10). This interpretation can be, for instance, interpreting the music or the role of speech in a certain ritual. This is part of understanding the ritual on a deeper level apart from strictly observational. Whereas the first task centred its questions on the phenomena here the reflective task is to ask a different question. What role does the music play in the ritual? What are the significant language used (if any) and how do we know it is significant? A larger question may be; what explanation has been given for the purpose or reason of the ritual. Has it perhaps been to appease a seasonal deity or to invoke a blessing for a new born child? Essentially, one may ask, what does this ritual mean to the group where it is practiced or found or what is its significance? These questions bring to light underlying factors, catalysts, beliefs or confessions and these themes are crucial for reaching a point of true holistic understanding.

The step is taken from a neutral observer to an interested third party. We are still reminded not to make any value judgements but take the information as it is received. Our own context is at this point still far removed from the process. This, I believe, is the great downfall of practical theologians the world over. The exclusivist view of practical theologians and the insistent comparative approach which places Christian theology at the apex of theological studies is a fallacy. In order to truly understand the 'other' it is paramount that we ignore, as far as possible, our own pride and belief in our own experience and knowledge and adhere to the confession that we live a faith seeking understanding.

Up until this point we are still very much within the scientific task and is evident in the use of various social sciences and their own methodologies in order to gain better understanding. Here we begin to traverse into the theological task as Osmer (2011:157) outlines his third task. This is the task concerning normativity. This almost comparative task places what has been observed and interpreted and places it alongside the chosen norm (Osmer 2008:8-9). In our case this would not

necessarily be a criticism of ethical or moral behaviour as this is not applicable here. To claim one thing as normative over another may lead one away from being as objective as possible. Though it is true that as a practical theologian, Osmer (2011) building on previous work in this field in developing this fourfold task, our focus of study must be in conversation with Christianity on some level. In this research essay it is the impact of the understanding of Freemason ritual in order to provide more space for dialogue. The schism between practical theological perspectives and 'hard-core' social scientific perspectives is clear but here we attempt to bridge the gap to a certain extent. Hans Schilderman (2007:7-8) shares a similar concern regarding the understanding of the normative aims of Christian theological perspectives and social scientific analysis in contrast. It must be made clear that the interpretive model employed is not concerned with a comparative approach. We deviate from Schilderman's (2007:9-11) view that the confessional relevance is not comparative but rather aims at holistic understanding and integration in a manner which encourages further dialogue and mutual cooperation between more groups than just Freemasons and orthodox (or unorthodox) religious or spiritual movements. If we had to use a Christian theological term to categorize our stream it would be religious and theological pluralism as described by McGrath (2011:441-443). Christian pluralism allows Christians to confess a faith in Jesus Christ as developed by the church in different regions over a considerable period of time whilst also attesting to the omnipotent and revelatory nature of a universal deity which is revealed to different people in different ways at different points in time. This paper assumes the position extrapolated above, as we will see, this is the same view taken by the Freemasons of the Irish Constitution in South Africa (McDade & Tonkin 2013). This would allow us to freely traverse the world of the 'other', in complete submersion, without the restraints of (as far as possible) one's own confession or understanding of religion and spirituality. Definitions for the aforementioned will be discussed shortly.

Lastly, being a great outcome of such an investigation, is the pragmatic task (Osmer 2008:10). We cannot begin to reflect on something unless we have some understanding. Hence we perform both scientific and theological tasks (this being theological) in order to better shape our response. It is inevitable to respond or react to something but by following the fourfold hermeneutical task as set out by Osmer

(2011) we are able to more responsibly engage and respond to Freemasonry and their ritual in our own context.

Whereas the reflective task focused on the meaning and symbolism inherent in a ritual to the participants or performers, the pragmatic task falls upon the observer. Here we begin to grapple with what we have observed, what we have been told about what we have observed. The question of efficacy is not important here but may hold certain special relevance to other scholars. We begin to ask how do we then as an observer internalise and understand what has been explained and observed. As a human being, not even as a scholar, it is evident that we will react to something, whether different or similar. The reaction depends greatly on how well the first three steps were followed. The pragmatic task, though not the most important step in the fourfold task, can be neither overlooked nor avoided. Any meaningful inquiry will inevitably involve the pragmatic task as it is not based necessarily on fact but can very often be opinion-based.

### 1.3. Introduction to Ritual Studies & Phenomenology

What is a ritual? Is ritual an action? Could it be a certain phrase? Is a ritual more of an experience? Should we rather speak of rites and not rituals? These few questions highlight why it may be difficult to speak about ritual. Grimes (2014:186) lets us know from the outset that to define ritual is very difficult. Upon researching culture in Santa Fe, Grimes (2014:186) realised that the ritual he had come to study, namely the Fiesta, was not considered by the participants to be a ritual. Rather, it was merely a Fiesta. As scholars of ritual studies it is very important for us to acknowledge and constantly be aware of our observation from the outskirts. It is true that to gain a better understanding we must submerge ourselves in the world we wish to study, to be a part of it in as many ways as we can without losing our unfamiliarity.

We must be aware that ritual is not always to be connected with religion. Victor Turner, places much emphasis on connecting ritual with religion. He provides us with one such definition; 'ritual is formal behaviour prescribed for occasions not given over to technological routine that have reference to beliefs in mystical beings or powers' (Turner 1970:150). This is but one of many definitions as a result of the fact that ritual studies is a learned experience which varies quite often. This is because rituals studies, focusing on the contextual, cannot be defined.

Though we can see a strong connection throughout many cultures where the link between ritual and religion is widespread. A slightly more suitable definition may be found in the citation of Roy Rappaport which reads, “the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers” (Grimes 2014:189). This definition refrains from religious terminology or connections and allows for a rather neutral basis which may be appropriate for our later discussion surrounding some of the drama of Freemason rituals. We will not exclude Victor Turner’s contributions to understanding and interpreting symbolism and the drama of the ritual performance which is especially appropriate here (Grimes 2010a:124).

We have still not said much of what ritual actually is. In order to aide us a bit later, it is perhaps easier to break down different aspects of ritual in order for us to formulate a more appropriate understanding of Freemason rituals. The following discussion is rather simple and can serve, if at all, as a brief introduction to some key fundamental terms with regards to understanding ritual.

Ritual is a concept. What happens during a rite is the ritual? As the observer, we see ritual as specific enactments in concrete time and space (Grimes 2010b:7). In this way ritual focuses on performance or gestural activity (Grimes 2010b:6), the symbolism or symbolic anthropology. To Nel, Post & van Beek (eds. 2014:1) ritual is very often connected with identity forming processes within a context.

The theory expounded here which is referred to as a spatial triad serves our understanding well. When looking at ritual we must understand that space is always evident or utilised in one way or another. In this space, tension (drama) is usually evident in some form. Along with this is the importance of symbols and representations of ideas and understandings. These are often below the immediate surface layer of what can be observed. We must understand that rites are multiphase and multileveled and their symbolic meanings often connect and overlap, becoming interdependent. According to Grimes (2010b:154), in many instances rites are an attempt at restructuring and integrating the emotions and mind of the actor and this is important when we consider the third aspect to be ritual practices.

Larger groups or types of rituals we may classify as decorum, ceremony, liturgy, celebration and ritualization, invented ritual, hybrid ritual and ritual drama amongst



others. Though Grimes (2014:204) identifies these groups I do not see it appropriate to discuss these here as we will see that these groups cannot be used as a means so easily to define Freemason ritual. As many other concepts and terms in ritual studies there remains substantial overlapping and intertwining. In what is to come I follow Grimes' work, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (2014), supplementing it with previous works by the same author. I will also bring in the methodological perspective of Wepener and Ter Haar (2014) regarding the practical case study done on an African Native festival.

The foundation from which we must embark is one of neutral observation. Wepener and Ter Haar (2014:92-95), Grimes (2010a:19, 31, 2010b:11 & 2014:242-280) agree that we are to observe analytically what transpires and not to judge or make evaluations on the effectiveness, validity or correctness of what is observed. This allows us to remain as objective as possible while trying to become part of a different world. We know that it is impossible to be completely neutral and objective but we must attempt as far as possible to create a clear space to absorb information without being influenced by personal beliefs or opinions. Creative engagement is the final step of our process. We cannot presuppose ritual failure as we must acknowledge that rituals may be effective on one or more different levels (Grimes 2010b:153-154). First we must discover, then formulate and finally utilize the new understanding of what we may have discovered. Victor Turner (1970:150) demonstrates this by obtaining exegetical material from the Ndembu specialists and laymen alike in order to better understand from an 'insider' perspective resulting in an ability to better inform the 'outsider'.

### 1.3.1. Ritual Time

Ritual time is also of crucial importance. Does the ritual take place at a certain time of day or year? Is it based on seasons or astrological events? Is the ritual performed in present or 'normal' time (Grimes 2010a:24-25)? Does the ritual wish to bring about a future time or a past time? Does time play a symbolic role in the ritual? The length and duration of the ritual as well as frequency must be taken into account (Grimes 2014:262). We can see that ritual time has more than one dimension. For one, the ritual time may refer to the specific day or time where the ritual is supposed to occur. This can be based on a number of different calendars but can be easily identified.

Some communities offer offerings from their harvest at the beginning or end of a season to increase fertility and yield, some also for protection of the farmlands.

The second dimension of ritual time would be what could also be described as 'narrative time'. This is slightly more difficult to identify as it requires, in the case of no clear indication, to identify the time transposed on or during the ritual. This can have a significant impact on other ritual aspects such as clothing/attire, language and may help better understand why certain things happen the way they do. Is the ritual bringing the past to present or moving into the future?

Lastly, the role of time must be considered, if any. Are there certain times for ritual progression or for ritual action? With all three dimensions in mind we hope to see what significance time plays in ritual. Time orientation is commonplace in culture and religion and provides insight into the worldview presented or proposed by ritual. It enables one to be removed from one's real (present) time and transcend into another time.

On the other hand, what is the actual physical countable time that the ritual is supposed to last? Is the ritual fifteen minutes long, is the duration determined by some event or happening? Birthing rituals can only be completed once the birth is completed and so is dependant, in many cases, on the time it takes for a child to be birthed. The rituals we will be discussing are rituals which do not have prescribed time periods but rather relies on guidance such as 'when the candidate is ready' or 'until after the (teaching) has been presented'.

### 1.3.2. Ritual Space

Ritual space is crucial for understanding the ritual and culture of many societies and people and as such space plays a fundamental role. The type of space, the layout, the size etc. are all important questions that need to be considered. Many sites are considered sacred as a result of tradition or history. Such an example may be found in Mecca and the holy monument of Islam where millions make the Haj every year. The space of the monument and surrounds allows for the different rituals to be performed both individually and collectively. This site may also be considered as being a consecrated site. A space which is made holy or sacred is called consecrated space. This means that someone or some group declared a space consecrated. We may think of a new church building being erected and is

consecrated as a holy space. The difference is both miniscule and significant and we see that there may be some overlapping with some sites. The rituals of the Freemasons take place in a recognised lodge, a consecrated space.

Certain rituals must be performed at certain places and all these factors have a bearing on fully understanding ritual. These places hold special symbolic value in most cases and cannot be overlooked. The empty space is not the only significant source for understanding ritual space but moreover the way in which the space is utilised or not utilised is paramount. Some spaces may be off-limits, such as the holy of holies in the temple in Jerusalem, whilst other spaces within the larger space may be significant. The space may be bare to indicate emptiness or loneliness, solitary or individualism, opportunity or hopes. The space may also be filled or scattered with various objects or symbols of both a functional as well as symbolic. Hence it is important to take ritual objects and time into consideration when reflecting on the ritual space.

Nel, Post & van Beek (2014:3) criticise Grimes for not paying enough attention to sacred space in his ritual theory but here, by combining the work of various scholars I am of the opinion that we have bridged that supposed gap.

### 1.3.3. Ritual Language

Rituals have been around for as long as people and as such the literacy of participants cannot be assumed, especially for rituals stemming from older traditions. The language or sound of a ritual may be observed in not only the text or spoken words of a ritual but also in other ways. Are they prescribed or inspired or is it a performance utterance (Grimes 2014:274-276)? Ritual language also concerns the sounds through singing or chanting. Any music employed is part of this group. Inclusion or use of other sounds, be it natural or created, is significant for our study. The meaning of sound and language is conveyed not only through the sound itself, rather the meaning stems from the intention and definition of that sound or language in its context.

Furthermore, we must note that the exclusivity of the language and teachings of the rituals to follow may demarcate a border between sacred and profane or secular language (Tambiah 1968:179). The language may be vocal and meant to be heard by the ritual audience or actors. In much the same way, when one hears or reads of

the ritual language of the sacred those on the outside may not understand what is being meant or said and often results in misunderstanding. Ritual language is complex and very often may be connected to a specific symbolic orientation (Tambiah 1968:182).

Some sounds evident in the rituals to be studied below which cannot be identified or described are the secret knocks and the secret words given to those advancing through the ranks. Some words and names have been excluded from the ritual handbook and so this poses a challenge. However, the ritual language of the rituals indicates to a great extent the conglomeration of past, present and future ideas and hopes coming together.

#### 1.3.4. Ritual Action

One key element we may look at are what we may term action or ritual action. This term refers to behaviour as well as other actions which take place during a ritual. Questions that become pertinent here are those surrounding the type of action or behaviour. Are the actions functional, symbolic or active? Are they passive or are they perhaps part of a play or drama (Grimes 2014:242-244)? Victor Turner's Social Drama Theory shows that many rituals, as we will see with Freemasonry as well, exhibits a clear progression and applies it to liminal spaces and process between and across liminal spaces (Grimes 2010b:141). Ritual actions serves to aid the progression between phases of separation, liminality and reintegration (Turner 1969:122-124) as it directs and gives the ritual movement and life. Ritual action may include the reading of text or the ringing of a song. Ritual action may describe the movement within the ritual space, the interaction with ritual objects and the ritual role players. Ritual action may broadly be described as everything that happens within a ritual that can be observed and described as some form of movement, interaction, speech or action by a ritual role player, whether it is in conjunction with or between a ritual actor/character or ritual object.

#### 1.3.5. Ritual Characters/Role-players

When we consider that a ritual cannot happen on its own, we find it then necessary to identify actors who fulfil roles within the ritual (Grimes 2014:248). This will show us who is involved and why they are involved. It is important as we begin very quickly to see if there is indeed a hierarchy or whether identity changes or is formed. Roles

played often have major significance and not just anyone can be involved or perform a rite or initiate a ritual (Grimes 2010a:27-29).

A group which Grimes (2014:279-280) does not include in his discussion in previous works is that of the ritual group. This is closely connected to ritual actors and as such needs some clarification. The group dynamic is a larger view on the individual focus of actors or those who fulfil certain roles within a ritual. Here we look at the general group. Is it the entire community that is involved or is it only a certain portion? On what grounds is a group excluded or included? Often we see that this perspective enlightens us to some of the ideas or stages of hierarchy, power or support systems.

What may be of peculiar interest in analysing the power system or orientation of a ritual is the different actions, both functional and symbolic of the various role players demonstrated by certain ritual actions in relation to the ritual actor performing certain ritual actions. To touch on a prime example is that in the Nether Dutch Reformed (NG) church of Southern Africa, only ordained and recognised ministers in good standing with their community may raise their hands to bless the congregation at the end of a service/celebration/sermon. The ritual action of raising one's hand in blessing over a group can only be performed by someone with a certain cultural, academic and religious status. This highlights the power systems within the NG church, especially in relation to what may be termed a 'lay person'. An NG minister is, according to what can be deduced from the blessing ritual within a formal service, on a different religious level as compared to the ritual participant in the form of a lay congregation member. In the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, likewise, the power system is displayed through the role of the minister in the Eucharist ritual of breaking bread as found in the New Testament of the Christian Bible. Only an ordained Methodist minister in good standing with his community may bless the elements in preparation for a communion service.

#### 1.3.6. Ritual Clothing/attire

Ritual clothing can aid our observation and reflection by shedding light on ritual characters, ritual time and can be included in the category of ritual objects. Ritual attire may be symbolic or functional and in many cases serve both functions. The clothing may be new and glamorous or expensive or it may be inexpensive or minimal. Some rituals require that participants be without clothing and this too has its own significance.

Ritual attire or clothing may also force us to ask questions as to why the attire is the same or different for different roles as this often helps one distinguish nuances within roles and power systems and orientations of rituals. In graduation ceremonies the world over there is a ritual whereby graduating students wear a certain colour sash in conjunction with an academic gown and cap. When one person qualifies for different degrees different colour sashes are bestowed upon them. Each successive ceremony means that sashes will be added of different styles and colours to indicate one's progress and success. In the same way, religious or spiritual rituals may exhibit progression in the clothing or attire and must be considered. What designs may be present on the clothing/attire? Are there any words visible? Is the material used significant? Does the clothing or attire change as the ritual progresses? What does it mean to wear this clothing or attire? From what time period does the attire/style originate? All these questions shed light and provide further insight into the intricacies of ritual.

#### 1.3.7. Ritual Objects

Ritual objects have been a major stumbling block to religious studies in the past as fetishes and ritual objects were misunderstood or not studied properly in their immediate context and use. This is a rather tricky venture as ritual objects may be functional or symbolic, whilst others may be both functional and symbolic. Some objects function as icons which either teach empirically or teach through their symbolism (Grimes 2010a:23-24). Classifying ritual objects as sacred objects which are valuable and those which are functional and used only for ritual can sometimes be difficult without access to the appropriate sources (Grimes 2014:267-268). We have already mentioned that we do not have even a photograph of a lodge which is decorated or ready for ritual which can be studied for ritual objects and so focus on the objects described in the ritual handbook (McDade & Tonkin 2013) as being of primary importance.

Now that we have mapped a very brief outline of key aspects with regards to ritual theory, we must lay out our path as it were. We have already stated that we are to take on an observational model which aims only at describing the ritual phenomena as it unfolds (Grimes 2010a:31). By doing this we may be able to identify some structure or symbolism to the phenomena described above (Grimes 2010a:85). Grimes (2010a:31-32) suggests that we identify the archetype according to group or

individual psychology. This however is not always possible without direct access to participants during or after the ritual. The ritual needs to be explained as an ecological or biogenetic operation. This is done in order to trace the precedents as well as the consequences of the ritual. This does not mean evaluating its empirical effectiveness as we have already mentioned. This means evaluating rather the impact on our understanding which begins to flow into the creative engagement of this understanding with our own. When we engage in this way we are informed and benefit from the reflection on our own culture and tradition, whatever that may be.

Why is it necessary to perform such a ritual study? Grimes (2010:1b) notes that there are a number of reasons why one may endeavour to study ritual. He suggests that one reason may be to revise or improve these rites. This is not our objective here and so our method will vary accordingly. He also mentions that another factor may be conflict arising out of a diverse and pluralistic society. In studying the results of the 1982 Peterborough 2<sup>nd</sup> Indigenous People's Theatre Celebration he notes how the performers of the celebration drama were critiqued by two members of the academic community. These non-native academics' remarks came under fire for being Eurocentric and for not considering the context. The response by the participant performers were to see the event in the following two lights (Grimes 2010b:5-6); On the one hand the celebration performance or drama is seen as a ritual to partake in. On the other hand, and perhaps more interestingly, because this is increasingly becoming the trend that these showpieces act as a form of informal education about culture history or tradition and may not always produce the 'effective outcome' expected of a ritual as has been the trend in the past. Rituals empower or disempower groups. The empowerment or disempowerment is not always determinative on who performs the ritual or for what reason. This is the social success of many rituals.

Above we have traced a brief outline of some of the key concepts which are crucial in order to perform the empirical-descriptive task (Osmer 2008:6-7). The ritual and rites are diverse and contain many diverse groups which play key roles in its development and understanding. We have mapped a route to guide us in looking at the Freemasons and their ritual in a light which is scientific as well as theological. The phenomena of ritual in cultures and traditions around the world show us just how

important they can be and as such must be considered when wanting to engage with and understand the other and all they have to offer.

We can do well to understand Freemason ritual of the first three degrees as rites of passage. Victor Turner (1969:120-122) reiterates that these rites are intended for transitional purposes. Three broad demarcations can be made here. Separation from the main group is a way to prepare and signify the break from an earlier point in time or system of understanding. Secondly, the liminal phase is crucial and is where 'change' is enacted, proposed, motivated or justified. This phase is between the old and new orientation. Hereafter the ritual subject is reincorporated to the larger community. This incorporation is crucial for maintaining the normative social structures of the new orientation.

## Chapter 2

### 2. The problem with defining religion

The human condition regarding ideas about spirituality and how we understand certain concepts such as religion has been a major issue for many centuries. This can often be described as the belief or feeling in more than just the material realm, seen or unseen. When we begin to delve into the mystical and mysterious aspects of life we can observe numerous forms of religious beliefs and systems. Though we seem very accustomed to ideas about religion, it is important for any holistic understanding to begin at the essence of what can be considered religion or religious.

In the discussion to follow I will be discussing the concept of religion as discussed by some noted scholars. Also, we will be looking at the problematics when discussing the origin or the 'root' of religion if you will. In doing so I will demonstrate that not only is religion a troublesome term to define, but in defining it we might uncover the approximate essence of what it means to be religious in a world filled with different forms of and expressions of religious aspects.

When we begin to study religions it becomes clear that not everything is clear-cut as we would have hoped. James Cox (2010:1-2), writing from a phenomenological point of view, sees the aims of defining religion as doing so in a way that would not be considered offensive and to protect it against being reduced to a 'epiphenomenon' (Cox 2010:1). An epiphenomenon can be simply understood as an occurrence or



happening which is merely and solely a result of something else. This means that the phenomenon of religion is seriously considered from an objective position and recognizes the monumental impact religion has had on society and history.

It is important to take note of the definitions which are suggested, though equally important is to take note of certain scholars, like Andrew Aghapour (2014:709-711), who see no viable definition of religion. Aghapour relates religion to science and understands it as follows; As science has many methodologies, empirical techniques and instrumental uses, science can only be studied where it is taking place, in its context. Therefore, no one definition can be attributed to all of science, and so in the same way, no one definition can be attributed to all religions, and so should be studied and defined in its rightful context. In this way, we can see Aghapour (2014) expanding the views of philosophical naturalists.

As mentioned before, in order to come to a holistic understanding of religion we need to look at several points of departure in our study. These will each be discussed hereunder.

#### 2.1.1. Theological definition

When we begin with a theological understanding, it is important to note, that in most cases, the person defining religion from this point of departure can be considered religious themselves already. This then creates a 'type' of bias which is evident in the definitions provided by Cox. (2010)

We observe this bias in the way the term is defined. It is defined in Cox's (2010:1-3), *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, in a rather positive way. Belief in the spiritual nature of things or the spiritual world is the foundation. Though not only the spiritual world itself, but moreover spiritual beings may or may not demonstrate a hierarchy within these belief systems.

We can see that these definitions tend to be positive toward an idea about God and the spiritual. We can deduce, that from a theological perspective, the core of religion would be some or no relationship to a mysterious and powerful transcendental being or power. Impersonal or personal. However, not all understandings within theological definitions can be termed as 'positive' as stated above. Within this sphere we can see many ideas about the role of deities then. For instance, to some charismatic Christian traditions, the Holy Spirit is said to be moving in and amongst the believers

and disciples of Christ. Undoubtedly, a union and relationship between a people and their god or deity for the greater good can be seen as extremely positive. In a similar way, the Hindu pantheon also interacts with our reality on different levels, some continuing and some no longer. In other spheres of thought around theological issues such as divine or spiritual presence or divine absence, the idea that a god or gods are far removed from our reality either due to, amongst other reasons, distance, death or total disinterest with humanity is prominent.

It may seem from the theological perspectives around divine presence or absence that the understanding of religion can be reduced to a mere presence or absence of gods or deities. This can be said from any theological position as this field, as implied in the Greek roots of the word theology, primarily concerns the study of god(s). This cannot be disputed. This is not to say however that the value of theology or theological understandings of religion can be grasped in understanding it as either an epiphenomenon or as the mere presence of gods or deities at one time or another in one way or another.

#### 2.1.2. Moral definition

Cox (2010:4) speaks of moral definitions to be applicable to religions where there is a moral code for life which is called to be followed. This can come in many forms; i.e. holy writings, teachings from elders, acting on emotions or impulses, etc. Though we know not all religions are necessarily radical or even functional, this understanding of religion is important as it is relevant in our society.

It is important to highlight that though we speak of moral codes, we most likely have a preconceived notion of what is morally correct or incorrect. Due to these presumptions, it is noteworthy that what is considered morally right or wrong defined quite loosely as a result of our multiplicity of cultures. What may be considered moral or immoral can be drastically different, even when studying closely located groups where morality of any sort may play a role. Emile Durkheim (1912:37-39) describes religion as a means by which normative social structures with regards to ethics and morals could be established. A religion here is then merely a way of unifying a group of people under one standardized set of moral and ethical reasoning. Strictly speaking, it is not possible to make value judgements on one religion over another as all are described as a 'social fact'.

It is in the above explanation that I explain how Aghapour (2014:712) draws on the genealogy of religious defining in historical contexts to explain that a moral definition of religion would be wholly defined by the culture wherein it is located.

### 2.1.3. Philosophical definition

We, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have had, to this point, much exposure to philosophical thinkers and their teachings. So, as we have come to expect, there is no cohesion on this topic, except in the vagueness or abstractness of the idea. Alfred Whitehead's (1861-1947) definition of religion can be surmised as "what a man does with his solitariness". This may at first seem strange, but he goes on to explain that this solitariness is to be understood as awareness of one's solitariness, and is not concerned with merely being alone. This definition is severely lacking in substance and so cannot stand alone. We must consider the vast quiet moments, especially in an ancient world far removed from technological hustle and bustle as we experience it today. A single person outside alone, possibly hungry and partially clothed, at the mercy of the elements and natural dangers we are no longer accustomed to, questioning why the rain falls on the fields in the north but not in the south. Does he ask his family? Does he attempt to illicit a response from the animals? In some cases, yes the latter does occur. This is the solitariness we refer to, the solitariness in relation to our greater existential reality and experience. Schleiermacher (1988:3-4) discusses this in somewhat mystifying terms as the sacred secrets of mankind according to his view. Religion and spirituality may be described as the result of each individual (also the collective's) constant renewal of gain and loss between natural forces, keeping them/it in equal balance. He goes on to explain that two great needs are in constant tension; the need to express one's individual identity as well as the need to be accepted and be part of a larger collective group.

Another definition provided by Ludwig Feuerbach (1898:7-8), in supreme respect draws on the work of Spinoza but criticizes his tendency to describing the supreme deity in line with 'old' theological ideas. Rather, religion can be understood as a relational experience of humans, within and without him/herself/themselves, remembering the tension between individuality and the collective. Paul Tillich (1959:5-6) sees religion as being the ultimate concern or rather as the dimension of depth in all the functions of man's entire spirituality. This could be understood by referring to Pascal Boyer (2001:5) wherein he states that religion provides

explanations. That would fall right in at home as one philosophical understanding of what religion is. It becomes a question about faith and not religion. Feuerbach (1898), exclaims that human kind has projected their own ideas and concepts onto created gods in order to satisfy and stay fears, hopes and needs. Here the great other, as it were, is an external representation of and expression of the believer/follower. The religious awareness is a self-awareness. This argument is powerful considering the innumerable religious expression and experience evident over centuries and the need for absolute dependence as well as absolute individuality according to Shleiermacher (1988:5).

Faith becomes a mean to avoid alienation by seeking affirmation or some functional outcome. A person may start attending church again after a period of absence if someone close to them passes away. Some immediate remarks may be that the person has been reminded of their mortality and may feel some anxiety. There may be a need for mourning and comfort is often found in religious institutions across history. It is abundantly clear that life and death play a significant role in the discussion surrounding religion. The great questions of life are the very questions many religions attempt at providing an answer for or an understanding of. This can be closely tied to understanding religion as a psychological manifestation or need. The uncertainty about death and the complex emotions one may experience when experiencing the death of someone close to them is another closely tied factor to understanding the philosophical understanding of the role of religion and spirituality in society on both a group and individual level. (Jensen 2014:2-4)

In the above definitions we can see the vagueness of philosophical definitions about religion. Though this is something we have become accustomed to. These definitions are as helpful as they are utterly useless. This is supported by the Professor J. Simons accuses philosophers in defining religion to fall victim to “frequent narrowness, insularity and intellectualism” (Simmons 2015:19).

#### 2.1.4. Psychological definition

As one can deduce from the sphere within we are working here, psychological definitions are concerned with the internal workings of the human mind with regards to religious experience. These tend to be slightly less positive about religion. Jensen (2014:3-4) notes that many psychologists vehemently accuses religion of being ‘an obsessional neurosis’ (Freud 1907:122-125). This would be because the answers

which religion provide people, whether true or accurate or not, provide comfort in answers. A person may follow a religion which provides answers for the sole reason that it provides answers. The content is not always a crucial factor here, merely that there is knowing where there previously was mystery.

Cox (2010:4-5) stresses that the source of ideas about the psychological aspect of religion are the emotions and state of mind of the religious person. These definitions are concerned with the internal processes. Sigmund Freud (1907:116-117) sees religion as something that is actually detrimental to the mental health of people and quite directly classes people who confess or hold to a certain religious belief in the same group as those who exhibit obsessional qualities. This means that simply put religion may be a result of one's obsessive compulsion for understanding or for a perceived notion of control over the 'greater' aspects of reality. Carl Jung's (1924:4-6) explanation of different psychological types may be noteworthy here. Those who might be described as 'extraverted' are those who exhibit a general tendency toward objective value and so receives self-determination from without. He explains that this is not in fact, because they cannot find absolute factors within, but they do not expect it from within, and so do not search for it from within. This may at first seem positive but one must consider that the objective refers to the external sources of influences which are not defined by 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong'. The public sphere provides this self-determination. This is not to totally ignore one's own subjective factors but often results in objectivity overriding the subjective experience. This originates largely from the psychological need for perceived safety and belonging within a community. Religion becomes a means by which extroverts who exhibit habitual obsessive tendencies find not only control and order but very much a sense of safety and belonging to a greater existence than what may be subjectively experienced.

The religious expressions and forms are thus a response to our emotions, in a quest to satisfy or stay some feeling which originates in our psyche. Pascal Boyer (2001:2) sees the explanation of religion lying here too. Being found in the mind of all peoples, and not necessarily only the minds of already religious folk. This may be due to inherent ideas regarding the source and structure of authority and results from individuality rather than group dynamics as proposed my moral definitions of religion and one may argue here even spirituality; a feeling or belief in the spiritual on some or other level, connected, disconnected or indifferent (Jensen 2014:3).

### 2.1.5. Sociological definition

As a starting point to sociological definitions of religion, one cannot overlook the work of one of the most influential thinkers with regards to socialism and its expression found throughout the world, Karl Marx. Marx (1957) sees religion as a response to class antagonisms. In this way, the oppressed find expression in an idea which brings hope or fulfilment, either in this life or in another. He further expounds this theory, saying that religion was created by the oppressor as a means to keep the marginalised content with their situation. He argues philosophically to understand religion as a product of society and psychological control. (Engels & Marx 2008:23-26)

This idea, though strong in its roots, is not the most popular sociological understanding. Scholars such as Emile Durkheim (1995:35-37) who conclude that religion is primarily a social tool. A means by which to preserve certain values but also as a way to transfer certain attitudes and mental states of one group to another. Furthermore, Pascal Boyer (Boyer 2001:27) states, contrary to the above view, that the cohesion of society and preservation of morals do not lend to creating institutions and so this cannot explain why we find religion in social contexts. Having said this, he goes on to state that the social relationship between people, and the shared or individual moral codes are fundamental to understanding the origin and function of religion, Boyer (2001:27) draws a close connection between preconceived notions about life and the view on religious ideas.

In conclusion, we can see common criteria for understanding religion here, which is a community of people abiding to a set of beliefs which are often, if not always, considered to be of more importance than the immediate community. Clifford Geertz (1973:90-91) describes religion as a set of symbols, which act to establish certain social norms by developing understandings of the order and nature of existence in a way that is believable and effective to the mood of society and its power structures.

To further extrapolate on this point, we will take some perspectives from archaeological and other social scientific sources and look at the occurrence of the outstretched arm of YHWH in Jewish tradition as well as Egyptian royal typology by comparing archaeological evidence and text from the Hebrew Bible. This will be done briefly to highlight the projection and reflection of concepts and ideas of humans and deities/gods on material culture in the ancient Near East. This very brief

study shows practically the intricacies of studying religion but does give us a more sophisticated understanding of how religion and psychology are connected and expressed in secular and material culture. What people created was created with purpose and meaning, by studying these objects and understanding the socio-religious climate it provides a firm foundation for our venture into the ritual antiquities of Irish Freemasonry in South Africa.

Though de Hulster (2009:148-149) proposes a full text critical as well as historical critical analysis of the chosen text be performed prior to the ensuing discussion, due to specification constraints this will not be discussed here. Rather, we note that there are a number of redactional layers present across the larger narrative. This intertwining of sources makes it extremely difficult to discern dating and/or author and there is not a large consensus on the question either. I will as far as possible attempt to locate textual or iconographic reference as far as possible to a broad period and create some form of timeline to aid or understanding which should also reveal further links or progression in the representation and understanding of the relationship and understanding of deities of the ancient near east. What is important to keep in mind is that though things may have happened hundreds of years apart and ideas may have changed and been adapted by different peoples or cultures, traces of these earlier elements can be found much later. It is almost impossible to really know what total effect one type of iconographic representation or textual piece may have had on a people or on a religion.

Strawn (2007:164) expresses the view that not much attention has been paid to the iconographic depictions of the outstretched arm/hand of YHWH in academic discussion. It is clear that much has been done regarding the Baal-Ugarit cycle and the connection between YHWH and weather deities of the ancient Near East. With so much emphasis found on the depiction of an outstretched hand or arm, both on a textual and iconographic level, it would be irresponsible to disregard the importance of these occurrences. It is difficult to bring the two together at times because an 'artefact' may stand alone as well as in relationship to a textual production. Carstens (2017:1-2) stresses that the meaning of an artefact is inherent to the production. This means that the description of the seal, statuette, etc. holds the meaning and we should be careful of making wild conclusions not supported by the description of the iconographic piece. The material culture reveals a great deal of the social and

theological understanding of ancient traditions and the projection of theological notions and highlights instances of projection in the ancient Near East.

Our initial discussion begins with the outstretched arm of YHWH found in Ex. 6:6, 7:1, 7:4 and 9:15 as well as Ex. 9:22 & 29 & 33, 10:12-13 & 21-22, 14:16 & 21 & 26 and attempt to understand the action of stretching out one's hand or arm. We will only cover two prime examples to illustrate our point. The consequences of the actions described and depicted in this context will not be discussed but may be relevant to a broader discussion regarding religious pluralism. This is merely a descriptive exercise as the integration will follow in light of connections between YHWH and deities of the ancient near east as well as the strong arm of Pharaoh. This illustrates a small portion of the numerous similar depictions between deities and humans which may support the stream of spiritual/emotional projection as described by some philosophical definitions of religion.

- Exodus 6:6b - וְגַאֲלֹתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָהּ וּבְשִׁפְטִים גְּדֹלִים:

“And I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgements.”

נְטוּיָהּ – Adjectival Part. Pass. Fem. Sing. Abs. “stretch (out)”

Here YHWH affirms that he will redeem the Israelites from Egyptian oppression. The function of stretching out an arm here is twofold; it is to liberate the Israelites and provide great judgements. It is important to note that the outstretched arm here is not simply providing this liberation and judgement but rather it is an action that goes alongside God's mighty act of redemption (Ellicott 2018). One cannot say that the mere outstretching of the arm fulfils the words spoken here but rather it denotes something else. In this case, power, authority and judgement over the Egyptians and Pharaoh himself. This is further ratified by Barnes, Cook, Frew, Leupold and Pusey (1996) who highlight that the people, as well as Moses, would have been familiar with royal Egyptology and their representations in hieroglyphics. By employing this the author is creating tension between the outstretched arms of Pharaoh and implies that YHWH is superseding the authority of the Pharaoh. It is important to note here that YHWH is the principal authority and the signs and wonders which Moses and Aaron



perform later in the narrative are an extension of the authority and power of YHWH and not a result of their own.

The connection with God's outstretched hand here can be seen as destructive in nature if looking from an Egyptian perspective. As we will see, this is not the only side of the coin as no doubt, if viewed from an Israelite perspective this is salvific in nature. It is undeniable in any case, that destruction, violence and conflict are part and parcel of this instance of YHWH stretching his arm over the nations. It seems that as early as Exodus 3:20 and here again the contrast is made between the strong arm/hand of Pharaoh which brought oppression to the Israelites and the arm/hand of YHWH which will bring relief (Henry 1994). This is ratified by Jamieson, Fausset, Brown (Jamieson, Fassuet, & Brown 1871) who remind us that the Egyptian connection with the outstretched arms so commonly found among Egyptian as well as other ancient near eastern societies would have been clear here to the Israelites in this context. This will be discussed in the following chapter.

- Exodus 7:1 - וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה רְאֵה נִתְּתִיךָ אֱלֹהִים לְפַרְעֹה וְאַהֲרֹן -  
אַחֶיךָ יְהִי נְבִיאֶיךָ:

And he said, YHWH, to Moses; 'See, I have given you as a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother will be your prophet.'

This first verse of chapter seven is crucial for understanding how Moses and Aaron are able to perform the signs and wonders which are to follow. This is not only in response to Moses' hopelessness (Ellicott 2018) but the confirmation here is that YHWH will bestow power on Moses and Aaron which will give them the power likened to a god and a prophet respectively (Henry 1994) This precedes the commands for Moses and Aaron to lift up the rod and stretch out their hand/arm over the land of Egypt. This is all with the goal to multiply the signs and wonders of YHWH through his people. When read in light of Exodus 6:6b we see how Moses and Aaron become extensions of the hand or arm of YHWH in bringing about relief for the Israelites. Without this justification and affirmation, it can easily be concluded that Moses and Aaron's spreading out/stretching toward/etc. of their hands and arms are only made significant by the power and authority bestowed upon them.

The textual variation and the challenges with dating each text can be quite daunting. However, this is not the focus of this study. We can say that the textual variation can be attributed to the stylistic differences and separate layers of redaction that the text of Exodus presents. This development however is made effectively null and void for our present discussion. Strawn (2017:166-167) remarks on scholars such as M. Gorg, J. Hoffmeier and M. Weinfeld who have all linked the terminology of the strong hand or outstretched arm to as early as the fourth and fifth dynasties in Egypt we can see stronger use and depictions thereof in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> dynasties of the same empire. There are more challenges when one notes the fact that Deuteronomic tradition can be traced as early as the sixth or seventh century BCE (Strawn 2017:169-170). It would not be ludicrous to suppose that the very strong oral transmission and history of the Israelites made it possible for these ideas and terminologies to be passed down many generations. This can also be a reason for some of the variation of the terminology and expression found in the text of Exodus. Furthermore, we are aware that it would be almost impossible to gauge the impact of textual and iconographic productions in their totality and as such we hope to demonstrate with a few brief examples how this idea and depiction may have been passed down through iconographic sources to further support the idea that this tradition stems from interaction and exposure to the various cultures and religions of the ancient Near East.

The Amarna letters, a collection of four, exhibit three instances where the author, Canaanite scribes of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century BCE, 'Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem, uses the idea of a strong arm/hand of the king which is supposed to invoke the reason and justification for his given authority (Strawn 2017:168-169). The specific terminology '*zuruh*' used here has a Hebrew equivalent in '*zeroa*' which refers to the arm. In this case the 'strong arm of the king'. This letter uses this idea and depiction in a way that connects the 'strong arm' with authority and power. It is by command and by strong arm that one is lifted to a position of power and authority. We can see that this is true also then for the exodus narrative as the Israelites are to be brought out of oppression by YHWH's 'outstretched arm' (Ex. 6:6b). Another example from the Amarna letters describes how the land of Nahrma was taken by the 'strong hand/arm of the king' (Strawn 2017:168). This denotes judgement and power, victory over one's enemy by the strong hand of a king. Similarly, YHWH claims he will 'set

out his hand over the Egyptians' and bring his people out of Egypt 'with great judgements' (Ex. 7:4).

The stela found at the boundaries of the kingdom of Akhetaten (originally Amenhotep III) are significant for a number of reasons. It shows firstly that a process of religious takeover had begun to take place by replacing competition with Aten (Strawn 2017:174-175). Secondly, it is true that many Pharaohs and kings, as well as chief priests have in Egyptian culture been described as having a special relationship with god. Though in this period (1390-1352 BCE) it now became solely the privilege of the king. This naturally amplified the power and authority of Akhetaten substantially. This change in theology is reflected in the depictions of Akhetaten and the royal family. The shape and form of the depictions of the royal family is quite 'alien'. Strawn (2017:176) uses this word specifically, as an attempt to show the king as a transcended form and entity not entirely human as a result of the power and authority bestowed upon Akhetaten. This form of visual and textual propaganda goes one step further. The rays from the sun, giving *ankh* to Akhetaten and his family are received and given via outstretched arms. This theme and design is attested in multiple reliefs, talatat and stela with Akhetaten and his family (Strawn 2017:178). This artistic and religious reform could be described as an attempt to further separate the gods and deities, or the sacred and profane even further from the 'normal' human. Akhetaten clearly depicted himself and his family as being 'other' than the rest. The image which Akhetaten had of religion informed his view of himself which in turn informed his view of religion. The primary relevance here is how ideas about religion and spirituality shape large parts of social and material culture.

What is clear however, is that the outstretching of a hand or arm can be directly linked to power, authority and/or judgement. We see many instances of authoritative figures depicted with outstretched hands or arms, with or without weapons or tools which bring both destruction, violence, chaos, disease as well as fertility, strength, light, love and mercy. This can be considered both an expression of violent authority, judgement or the power connected to salvation (not strictly spiritual). How one experiences these ideas depend on which side one may find oneself; behind the arm or in front of the arm. This extreme duality is not strange to the ancient Near East, nor to us today. What it does show us is the fundamental belief in an ordered and crucial system for the universe where one ruler (here YHWH) has complete and utter

control of not only life, but of death and judgement as well. This is prevalent not only in the text of Exodus but very much alive in the material culture of the ancient Near East as evident with the way in which the authors of exodus employed this motif. The things which YHWH creates can be used as he pleases and as he wills. This can be done by his own hand, as it is his own hand which created it and can destroy it. Very much the same, the hand of YHWH's follower can be understood as an extension of the hand of YHWH as his appointed leader. His 'weapons and instruments' as it were. This is significant when we remember the numerous instances where a king or leader (warrior or otherwise) is depicted with an outstretched arm/hand. These instances vary and can show both the destructive, violent nature of the gods but also the loving, caring and merciful nature of the same or adapted entities as perceived not only by the Israelites but the entire ancient Near East.

The similarity in depictions discussed here makes the argument for a sociological and psychological understanding of religion just as plausible as a theological positivist pluralist understandings. The discussion above exhibits not only a historical foundation and justification for the study of theology in different cultures but also how the material culture can provide insight into their understanding regarding ideas and concepts commonly referred to as spiritual or religious. Furthermore, the examples above highlight the intricacies of dealing with religion and spirituality. This demonstrates that as many relevant factors must be considered when studying religion as it is not only the 'sacred texts' which are pertinent for consideration. It is crucial to take all sociological and psychological factors into consideration when discussing theological, religious or spiritual phenomena.

We have utilised examples primarily from the ancient Near East as this is where Freemasonry claims to find its roots. The Irish Constitution in South Africa exhibits a peculiar relationship with the Hebrew Bible as we will see in the study to follow. As we cannot yet determine whether this is accurate or not it may be helpful to frame Freemasonry vaguely as originating within very similar social and historical circumstances.

#### 2.1.6. Substantive and Functional definitions

Just as we thought that we had waded through the sea of uncertainty, we arrive at yet another fundamental issue when discussing religion. This is whether to attribute

characteristics of religion to their substance (substantive) or to their function (functional).

If we are to divide the definitions above into these categories we could see it as follows;

Substantive: Theological, Philosophical and Moral

Functional: Psychological, Sociological and Moral

We are still working within a very broad framework, as religion is a very vague term. Cox (2010:8) demonstrates further that these two groups each serve their own purpose and have their own criteria for what is to be considered and what is to be disregarded. Substantive definitions or understandings, with regards to a phenomenological approach have often excluded certain phenomena from what it considers to be religious. Adversely, functional understandings can be all-encompassing, sometimes including aspects which may have nothing to do with religion at all.

In this way we can see that neither definition can be accepted as overriding of the other. Each scholar has his/her own preconceptions and so will be bias in their study. It is inevitable. When considering the work of Durkheim, from a sociological perspective, religious expression, when *functioning* within a social setting by means of social cohesion or authority, is considered as being functional.

An argument is made by Cox (2010:9), citing Daniele Hervieu-Leger (1999:76), that substantive religious definitions restrict our understanding to majority world-religions. All definitions are subject to criticism, Hall, Pilgrim and Cavanagh (1985:9-10) as cited by Cox (2010:9), criticise all these definitions under one or more of the following categories; being vague, narrow, compartmentalised or prejudice. (cf. Cox 2010:9)

#### 2.1.7. Can there be cohesion?

As Aghapour (2014) has already mentioned, Cox (2010) notes how all these definitions, which do not cover all possible understandings, can pose quite an issue when we begin to actually study religions. We can consider what we have discussed above as fundamental definitions of religious understanding. However, if we hope to truly study religions we need to have a firm foundation from where we can depart. Here Cox searches for a 'working definition' of religion.

Drawing on scholars like Ninian Smart (1986) and Arie Molendijk (1999) who call for a pragmatically orientated definition. In agreement with Aghapour (2014), we are advised to take each scenario separately and study it according to the characteristics it exhibits. Though the scholars differ in methodological approaches as we move on, the basic principle is invaluable.

The conclusion can be drawn that to study religions, we are to define a religion within itself. The most appropriate definition suggested by Cox (2014:12-13), is as follows; "Religion is a varied, symbolic expression of, and appropriate response to, that which people deliberately affirm as being of unrestricted value for them." Cox does provide some critique against this definition, but must understand that no definition is without criticism. Jeppe Jensen (2014: vii-viii) similarly applies a rather broad understanding of religion as one who acknowledges the pluralism of religion and religious expression. This liminal space is exactly where we want to be when embarking on any ritual study. When we are studying religions, all we can do is come close to what we wish to achieve. This is due to our preconceived notions and preferences with regards to scholars, method and aim. Cox (2010:17) aptly revises and redefines this definition. He states, "Religion refers to identifiable communities which base their acts of believing and their resulting communal experiences on postulated, non-falsifiable alternate realities." (Cox 2010:17 par. 2) I feel we can be for the most part content with this answer. Working with a broad, non-defined idea of religion allows the observer to respect the intrinsic value that these social and religious systems hold to those within the group.

We have already touched on the important place of religion in countless societies both now and in the past. There is, however, another stream which must be included here. Contextually, in Africa, religion is a major part of many facets of public and political life. Noting this is of supreme importance when considering the place of Freemasonry Ritual within South Africa. To Jon Abbink (2014), religion can be an instrument to affirm or manipulate collective identity essentially exploiting the belief in a supernatural or 'invisible' existential or metaphysical order or hierarchy (Abbink 2014:85-86). This can be understood when we consider that Clifford Geertz (1973:10-11) describes culture partly as the extrapolation of normative social structures which provide boundaries for what can be considered acceptable. As we have seen, this very much echoes ideas about sociological psychological and moral

definitions of religion. Risking being slightly reducing here we may suggest that according to Abbink (2014:13-14), religion is essentially a culture of anthropological discourse concerned with normative social structures and universal understanding. For myself, this is by far the most persuasive definition of religion. Perhaps my local context has enable me to observe, every day, the unbelievable intertwining of social, religious and political issues and discussions as if they are all of the same stream. That specific discussion is not appropriate here. What is important to note is that in South Africa the lines are thin and often blurred, sometimes intentionally. This is, for me, evidence that religion can essentially be described as the anthropological discourse, along with the existential epistemological framework that one places that discourse within. This discourse is primarily concerned with defining, enforcing and maintaining certain normative social structures which are largely based on the aforementioned discourse and corresponding framework. Emile Durkheim (1912:38) can be included as being in agreement here and reiterates that religion is an eminently social phenomenon.

What can we say then, after all this uncertainty has been discussed? The problem with defining religion seems to be not in the way we wish to study religion, but moreover as a result of the vastness of religious expression which can be observed throughout the world. Religion in itself can be considered pluralistic, not grammatically, but rather semantically. As we study religions, we should rather narrow, not our definitions, but our scope, insomuch that our definitions may become more accurate. To study religion is to study a specific religion or religious expression in its social or secular context, with reference to all the substantive and functional aspects contained within. If we undertake this route we are able to come closer to the essence of what a religion is, studied within itself.

This is relevant to our study of Freemason rituals and structure as key problems are highlighted when trying to define Freemasonry. According to the discussion above, we can say that Freemasonry is a religion in the sense that it provides participants with a certain orientation regarding existential realities as well as mysterious. On the same hand however Freemasonry itself is not concerned with a specific confession or belonging to a specific religion or movement but rather a certain symbolic orientation which lends itself to useful guidance of participant members.

Alternatively, Freemasonry can be considered a moral institution focusing on training

'good men' whom they themselves find to be personally accountable to an entity, deity or system greater than themselves.

## 2.2. Secrecy

We have mentioned that Freemasonry has been considered a 'secret society' but this must be better understood as a fraternity with some secrets. This is a vague statement and needs some brief attention before we can continue.

Hugh Urban (2001:4-5) is very critical of Eliade and Bolle as well as Antoine Faivre in that they do not pay enough attention to understanding secrecy. He notes that there must be a distinction between the content and the form of secrecy. Building on Michael Foucault's (1986) power discourse, Urban (2001:5-6) redefines secrecy by looking at the strategic objective of secrecy and not the content. What this means is that the content is not important but rather how secrets are withheld or transmitted are more pertinent for understanding the greater symbolism and role of secrecy in a sociological setting. He notes that secrecy is the practice of controlling and regulating access to information considered valuable. This is a means to transform the knowledge or information into a social resource or commodity. The bestowment of this information exemplifies a certain 'adornment' of the individual/group and may very well exhibit similar themes relevant to the values of shame and honour in the ancient near east. Someone who has the secret knowledge is honoured and one who does not is shamed.

The process of 'adorning' one with this information (conferring ritual degrees) is part of the social transformation of the individual. This information acts as a sort of 'capital wealth' of more than just an economic nature. By only conferring the secrets of Freemasonry on those who 'put in the work' and pay their dues to the Lodge the teachings of Freemasonry become a scarce resource as a result of their exclusivist approach. Making something secret makes it more desirable and more valuable to the outsider (Urban 2001:6). This imparts a certain social status on the recipient of such knowledge or information. The secrecy of Freemasonry may be described as a self-producing form of capital wealth in the form of symbolic understanding and knowledge. This information however is by no means automatically regarded as essential knowledge but only hold special importance in a specific social setting or group. It is a psychological and sociological response of those on the outside of this group or setting to sometimes consider this secrecy as dangerous or threatening.



This however, only serves to strengthen the appeal of such symbolic capital exchange systems. (Urban 2001:6-7)

### 2.3. Symbols in Freemasonry

Symbols play a crucial role within Freemasonry and naturally within the rituals as well. Throughout our greater discussion much of the symbolic meaning and symbols will be discussed. Symbols, symbolic meaning, and all the associated fields cannot be discussed here. We shall only hereunder outline a brief understanding of symbols, specifically within Freemasonry.

In our initial orientation with Freemasonry we will discuss some key symbolic understandings within Freemasonry. As we progress to the actual rituals we will note key understandings of the symbolic meaning and functions where necessary for a better understanding of the ritual phenomena. Herron (2012b:1) suggests that the extreme role of symbolism within Freemasonry and its rituals is as a result of historic illiteracy. Symbols were used as a means to convey certain ideas, teachings, information, etc. We will see in a later chapter that this is not only true of Freemason symbols as we see Egyptian royal typology which clearly demonstrates a complex relationship between social, religious and political spheres, as well as their expression and reception.

Regarding symbols in general, it is important to understand that the structure and content of ritual symbols can be determined by considering external form and observable factors. These symbols, due to the nature of the Freemason rituals and teachings, need to be interpreted by laymen as well as specialists. In our current study our primary text regarding the ritual handbook may be considered a 'specialist' interpretation whilst scholars and those on the outside of this group, including myself, may be regarded as 'laymen' (Turner :1970151-152). The 'layman' researcher or observer must also consider the context worked out by insightful academic enquiries and working out.

Symbols in Freemasonry are physically represented and used substantively. We will see in the rituals how certain objects adorn the desk/table of the different lodge offices. These represent certain tasks fulfilled by the officers and are based on basic operative masonic tools. Symbols are employed here as illustrations for reminding officers on their duties and the manner in which to carry them out. Within the rituals

themselves, certain symbols can be identified and interpreted in light of both specialist and 'lay' understandings. Some symbols may be 'hidden' from us as a full extrapolation on the setup of the lodge room for specific rituals are not given in the ritual handbook (McDade & Tonkin 2013).

## Chapter 3

### 3. Introduction to Freemasonry

Freemasonry has spread across the world and can be found in various forms in different parts of the world and an in depth, accurate discussion on all forms of Freemasonry as they appear would be astronomical in preparation, execution and formulation. To aid us on our journey to a better understanding of Freemasons and their ritual, it is necessary to not only look at a broader overview of the development of Freemasonry in general but moreover the branches which we find in South Africa today, one specifically known as Erin-Go-Bragh. It is our current method to always consider the immediate context under study as it applies to our understanding and interaction with Freemasonry as part of a Christian community.

As part of Osmer's (2011) first empirical-observational task we must understand the origins and development of the group under study. Johann-Albrecht Meylahn (2011:303-305) explains that as practical theologians and also just as members of the Christian faith community are called to be in the world and to work within it. This means listening to the stories of the local communities and peoples. These stories may be 'phantom stories' but they remain important. Hence we will consider a few stories on the origin and development of Freemasonry. In order to do this, we must look at various sources in addition to Jasper Ridley (2005) such as Mackey (1996), Jack Buta (2008) and Mike Nevell (2012).

Though many people may regard this group as a 'secret society' this is simply not true. The group known as Freemasons operate openly, will admit their membership if questioned, advertise openly for members, are concerned with getting more exposure, distribute flyers and informative booklets and so forth (Finlay n.d.). This clearly illustrates the misconception that Freemasons are a secret society of cultists or super powerful and influential men conspiring for their own agendas. There is much talk also surrounding those groups who established themselves as masons but who are not recognized by the Grand Lodges across the world. This means that

there is even more misinformation available under masonic names but who are not to be counted amongst them.

There are many warranted lodges throughout the world and many adhere to the same laws and guidelines but it is also true that many of these forms of Freemasonry have their own set of symbols in addition to the conventional symbols and rituals and allows its members a certain amount of freedom in their lodges. We must note that it would be very tedious and rather pointless for this discussion to include a recollection of the various groups and branches of Freemasonry and how they spread. For this reason, our discussion will be centred on Irish Freemasonry in general without distinction, for the most part, between Knights Masons or, Holy Royal Arch, Scottish Rite, Order of DeMolay and so forth (McDade & Tonkin 2013:11-15).

A close family friend, a mason of over 25 years, and I have had many enlightening discussions surrounding the origin of Freemasonry. As one begins to embark on a research endeavour it becomes apparent that much information does not correlate and that for the earliest appearance and development of Freemasonry there is very little, if any credible information (Ridley 2005:222-224). This creates a jagged line between hearsay and credible information as some critics blame Freemasonry for the French Revolution of 1789. Using mostly official material gathered from a lodge visit, pamphlets (Finlay n.d.), official websites (<http://www.grandlodge.co.za>) and published material (McDade & Tonkin 2013) will be used in order to stay on the right trajectory towards accurate understanding. As a result of this challenge it is necessary to assess and compare a number of sources alongside one another. This will give us the broadest understanding while focusing on the most probable development.

### 3.1.1. Legendary History

The discussion between Freemasonry and Christianity and also to a large extent Freemasonry and early Judaism becomes heated here. During a discussion during June of 2017 the same family friend who is a long standing member of a Freemason Lodge here in South Africa I was told of a tale claiming the origin of Freemasonry. Though it cannot be consolidated with substantial evidence it remains a very popular understanding of the ancient origins of this group. This explanation also appears on their information booklets.

The tale takes us to the period of Solomon's temple as described in biblical texts. Whether Solomon's temple truly existed as described is not under scrutiny here and we work with the tale as it is presented. The commissioning of Solomon's temple would be a mammoth task to undertake and would naturally require a vast number and range of skilled workers to complete. The biblical text of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles gives us a rather similar account of the construction and the Masons find most guides for their rituals in the Old Testament and here this is true (Satchell 2012). The preparation of stone blocks at the quarry mirrors part of the Entered Apprentice ritual verses which refer to a divestment of all metals in order to not carry anything offensive or defensive into the lodge and also because of the notion that materials were already prepared prior to arriving at the construction site. Also the fact that everything fit together perfectly can be found in both traditions.

There are however discrepancies as we note that nothing is mentioned about the craftsmen's aprons and in Masonic ritual the apron and the manner in which it is worn is one way of distinguishing the workers. Here we can see further the notion of classification and distinction amongst masons and furthermore a need to be able to or not be able to acknowledge one or another. The Masonic tradition speaks of other symbolic points of significance such as laying the cornerstone in the North-East corner (Satchell 2012). Not only this but mention of the guards posted at each compass point gate (eastern gate, western gate, southern gate), except the northern gate of the temple meant that further divergence from biblical accounts become apparent. It is necessary to mention that practically no two accounts of history will be the same, especially when that history is being explained from a personal perspective, which is someone explaining the origin of themselves or their group. This means that the value of this observation does not necessarily lay in the validity of the information but the connection to a religious text and occurrence in ancient times.

The tale continues that as a result of the vast amount of workers there arose a serious administrative problem. As one can imagine, without proper means of identification as we have it today, identifying a single labourer amongst a group of several thousand in order to pay the appropriate wage to the appropriate worker was quite a problem. To solve this problem, the craftsmen came together and along with the chief architect, Hiram-Abiff, in order to develop signs and shakes in order to

distinguish the workers as a means to solve this financial predicament. This character, present in biblical and masonic tradition, is then approached by some young men seeking to discover these secrets in order to be paid more. This however cannot be revealed and so Hiram is killed. Mike Neville (2012) also mentions that in the Masonic tradition, it is also considered that Solomon himself was a Grand Master. Though many original secrets were lost with Hiram but new or similar secrets came about to replace those lost. The story does also include a search for the body of Hiram which was found and this story becomes extremely important in understanding Freemasonry and ritual today.

Here we see a possible need for safekeeping and thus it becomes easier to understand in that context why they would be so secretive. As we will continue to discover, Freemasonry relies heavily on ritual and tradition and this can be considered largely why these practices are still in play today. This tale, though part of the traditional and legendary history of Freemasonry, brings to the fore the same theme as previously discussed. The secrets became a means for workers to earn their appropriate salary by distinguishing different classes and levels of workers.

Whether this tale is true or not, it is quite interesting to see how Freemasonry seems to claim to stem from the same Jewish roots from which Christianity later developed.

Below we recount the legendary tale as extrapolated in the ritual handbook (McDade & Tonkin 2013:128-141). Please note that this explanation forms part of the teachings of the Master Mason Degree ritual. We see the role of ritual actors in recreating the ritual drama and calling forth symbolic understanding through action, sound and tradition. This recounting grounds the ritual justification in the retelling of a special history meaningful to the fraternity. The ritual directives have not been included as the Degree of the Master Mason ritual is outside of our current scope. I have designated where certain ritual directives or teachings are placed along the ritual structure with sight on further studies in this regard. This serves as a constant reminder that this legendary tale is a crucial element forming part of the ritual by which the third degree is conferred upon a candidate, the Degree of the Master Mason. Note that the text is used as is in an attempt to retell the legendary history from an insider perspective.

*... in what is known as the Legend of the Degree, wherein you will learn how by the untimely death of a certain man, the means of communicating the Secret Word of a Master Mason was at an end and eventually, the Word itself was lost.*

*You will learn how a new Word was substituted, and the method of communicating the information.*

*The Legend of the degree will now be recited.*

**W.M.** *“Bro. Wardens.”*

### **1<sup>st</sup> Ritual Directive**

**Cond.** *“We read in the V- - - - of the S- - - - L- -, that on a certain day, David, King of Israel, sitting in his palace and meditating on matters concerning his people, brought to mind the fact that while he, the King dwelt in a beautiful house of cedar-wood, yet the Ark of the Covenant and the Shekina which represented the presence of Jehovah, had for its habitation the Tabernacle, a tent-like and moveable structure. The King considered that this was not right or seemly and determined that he would build a magnificent Temple as a proper dwelling place for the Ark, and where the Glory of the Lord might abide for ever.”*

*Accordingly, he made out plans for this intended building and gave instructions for the gathering of large quantities of gold, silver and precious stones.*

*But the word of the Lord was conveyed to him by the prophet Nathan, saying that he, the King, would not be permitted to undertake this work as he had been engaged in warfare and so his hands were stained with blood, but that his son, Solomon, would be entrusted with the work when he should ascend the throne of Israel.*

*King David bowed to the will of the Almighty and in due time died and was gathered to his forefathers.*

*In the fourth year of the reign of King Solomon, the land of Israel had peace, having for the time being subdued the warlike nations around its borders, and King Solomon was not forgetful of the wish of his father, nor the promise of the Almighty, and set about preparing for the building of the Great Temple.*

*Now the Israelites were an agricultural and pastoral people, and had little skill in the art of building, and Solomon knowing this was aware that it would be necessary to look for assistance outside his dominion. He remembered that a neighbouring monarch, King Hiram of Tyre, had been very friendly towards his father, David, whom he had assisted in building his own palace, and as at that time the Phoenicians were renowned for their skill in Architecture and building, King Solomon determined to approach King Hiram of Tyre, and ask for his assistance on this occasion.*

*When King Hiram received the messengers from King Solomon, and heard their request, he gladly promised to do all that was asked of him because of the love that he had for King David.*

*He therefore commanded his servants to go up to the forests of Lebanon, and there cut down Cedar trees, which were conveyed in floats or rafts to the seaport town of Joppa, which port was most convenient for the conveyance of the timber to Jerusalem. King Hiram also sent his skilled craftsmen to cut and carve the timber, and also to prepare the stone for the intended building, and to instruct the men of Israel in that Art. In return for his great kindness, King Solomon gave to King Hiram gifts of Corn, Oil and Wine.*

*The number of workers engaged in this preparation for the building was 153,300 and King Solomon considered it would be advisable to have one man who should act as Chief Architect or Overseer, to direct the workers and to see that the work was being carried out according to the design and plan. He again sent to King Hiram for advice and help, and King Hiram sent to him a man who proved in every way fit and capable for the position.*

*This man was also called Hiram, a skilled and cunning craftsman. He was known as the "Widow's Son". His father had been a Tyrian and his mother an Israelite of the tribe of Naphtali.*

*This Hiram was greatly respected by King Hiram of Tyre and was given the title of A-BIF, one of great reverence meaning "My Father".*

*The Workers were divided into three classes or grades; firstly, those who did the rough work of hewing the timber and stone; secondly, those being more skilled, brought the material to the required size and shape; and thirdly, the Master Craftsman or Overseers who finally passed the material for its appointed place in the building.*

*All the work was prepared so that the timber and stone should take its place without sound of axe or hammer, or the use of any iron tool.*

*In reciting the Legend, we give our modern terms for these three grades, and refer to them as Entered Apprentices, Fellow Crafts and Master Masons.*

*Over this vast army of Workers, King Solomon, King Hiram and Hiram-Abiff, constituted themselves as what we would call "Grand Masters" and acted as a Court of Appeal in all matters of difference arising among the workers. To mark their authority, they each wore a golden square on their breast.*

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Ritual Directive**

*The Wages paid to the workers were as follows; to the first grade or Entered Apprentices in kind, such as corn, oil, etc., to the second or Fellow Craftsmen partly in kind and partly in money, and to the third or Master Masons entirely in money, so it will be readily understood that it was the natural ambition of those of the first and second grades to qualify as quickly as possible for that of the higher grade of Master Mason and so receive the higher remuneration.*

*To each grade of worker was given a secret word, and on applying to the Paymaster for payment, the worker gave the secret word of his particular grade or degree, and was paid accordingly.*

*So highly did King Solomon, King Hiram and Hiram-Abiff regard the grade or degree of Master Mason that they made a solemn agreement between themselves to the effect, that only in their presence could the secret word be communicated to a craftsman when being advanced to that degree.*

*The building was drawing near its completion and fifteen craftsmen of the Fellow Craft class were fearful that the Temple would be finished before they were advanced to the Master Mason degree and thus lose the better payment in wages. They therefore formed a conspiracy amongst themselves with the object of finding the secret word of a Master Mason, and three of them, so very desperate and determined, stated that they were prepared to commit murder if by doing so it should help them to gain their desire. The remaining twelve were not prepared to go to such an extreme measure, and withdrew from the conspiracy.*

*At High Twelve it was customary for the workers to rest from their labours for the mid-day meal, and Hiram-Abiff spent this hour of quiet and rest within the partially completed building for meditation.*

*The three conspirators were aware of this practice, and knowing that the Grand Master was cut off and isolated from the general body of workers, they considered that he was the very person whom they should approach, and at all costs obtain from him the information they so earnestly desired. Arming themselves with heavy implements, one with the Twenty-four-inch gauge, one with the Square, and the third with the Maul, they waited outside the gates of the courtyard of the Temple, one at the South gate, one at the West gate and the third at the East gate.*

*When Hiram-Abiff sought to leave the precincts of the Temple by the Southern gate he was confronted by the first conspirator who demanded from him the secret word*



of a Master Mason. The Grand Master reasoned with him saying that not so had he received the word and therefore could not communicate it, but urged the craftsman to work on diligently and with patience, and no doubt in due time he would receive his reward. Annoyed at not receiving the information, the conspirator struck the Grand Master a blow across the throat with the twenty-four-inch gauge.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Ritual Directive**

Alarmed by this sudden attack the Grand Master at once closed the gate and proceeded to seek an exit by the Western gate, but here he was met by the second conspirator who likewise demanded the secret word of a Master Mason. With him Hiram-Abiff remonstrated and urged him not to seek the information by such rash and unlawful means. Enraged by this refusal the conspirator struck the Grand Master a blow on the left breast with the square.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

Hastily closing the Western gate, the Grand Master made his way to the Eastern gate as the final means of escape, and on crossing the courtyard he became faint with the double attack.

### **5<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

Having arrived at the Eastern gate he was met by the third conspirator who roughly demanded from him the secret word of a Master Mason. The Grand Master still unshaken in his purpose firmly refused to give the information, saying "Not so have I received it, and I would rather die than give it unlawfully". On receiving this answer to his request the conspirator raised the heavy Maul and struck the Grand Master a violent blow on the forehead and said "Then die".

### **6<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

**Cond.** "You now represent the brightest star in the annals of Freemasonry, namely our Grand Master Hiram-Abiff, who laid down his life rather than betray the trust reposed in him."

### **7<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

The conspirators hid the body of the Grand Master amongst the debris and later removed it to a place outside the city walls and gave it a hasty and indecent burial. They then fled from Jerusalem.

Owing to the absence of Hiram-Abiff, confusion arose amongst the Craftsmen as no instructions were forthcoming, and fearing that the Grand Master had met his death

*at the hands of the three conspirators, the other twelve, who had withdrawn from the original agreement, went to King Solomon and told him what they suspected.*

*King Solomon immediately ordered that search parties should be sent out to see if any trace or tidings could be obtained as to what had befallen the Grand Master, and also to seek for the murderers.*

*The King ordered that if these men were found, they should be brought before him. Three search parties set out. One party going Southward returned after a few days without any tidings. A second search party going Westward eventually reached the sea coast at Joppa, and there they gave up hope of any further search fearing that the assassins had probably left the country by ship.*

*While considering what to do, they heard voices coming as if out of the ground, and on investigating closely, they discovered that the sounds came from one of the caves on the foreshore. Listening intently, they heard a voice exclaim -*

**J.W.** *“Woe is me, would that my throat had been cut across, my tongue torn out at the root and buried in the rough sand of the sea, a cable tow’s length from the shore, where the tide ebbs and flows twice daily, ere I had conspired against our good and great Master”.*

**Cond.** *“A second voice exclaimed;”*

**S.W.** *“Woe, woe is me, would that my left breast had been torn open, my heart plucked from thence, and thrown as a prey to the birds of the air, ere I had conspired against our good and great Master”.*

**Cond.** *“And again a third voice was heard saying;”*

**W.M.** *“Woe, woe, woe, a triple woe is mine, would that my body had been severed in twain, my bowels taken therefrom and with my body burned to ashes, and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven, so that no trace of such a vile wretch might be found, for it was my hand that struck the blow that killed our good and great Master”.*

**Cond.** *“On hearing these confessions the search party rushed into the cave where they found the three assassins, whom they quickly overpowered, bound them, and brought them before King Solomon, who ordered that the penalties they had severally invoked should be meted out to the murderers.”*

*“The third search party, after a fruitless search, at length returned to Jerusalem. They rested a while considering what report they should make to King Solomon. Having come to an agreement and preparing to go to the King, one of the party in assisting*

himself to rise, caught hold of a shrub nearby, which, to his amazement, came away loosely from the earth.”

“Calling the attention of his Brethren to this unusual occurrence, they examined the ground closely and concluded it was probably the hastily made grave of some unclean person or animal. To mark the spot, they placed over it a sprig of Acacia, which would also serve as a warning to passers-by, and thus prevent defilement of Priest or Levite, according to the law of Moses.”

“Fearing the worst, they went to King Solomon and reported what they had discovered. On hearing the news, the King ordered them to return to the supposed grave, examine its contents, and if, by any chance, it should contain the body of the missing Grand Master, they should raise the body and bring it to a place for decent and fitting internment.”

“The King also instructed them to take particular notice of any unusual actions, words or signs which might be made by those watching the opening of the grave, as by the untimely death of Hiram-Abiff, the means of communicating the secret word of a Master Mason was now at an end, and thus new words, signs and the manner of communicating the same would have to be substituted.”

“The search party returned to the supposed grave and at once proceeded to investigate its contents.”

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

“On removing some of the clay the head of a corpse was disclosed showing a deep wound in the forehead. On seeing this the bystanders all touched their foreheads thus.....”

#### **9<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

“Removing more of the clay, a stench arose owing to decomposition of the body, which caused those assembled to turn aside thus .....”

#### **10<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

“On removing all the covering, the searchers discovered the golden square on the breast of the corpse, which left no doubt in their minds as to the identity of the body, and on seeing this, some of the party exclaimed “What, the Builder”, and others throwing up their hands thus ....., they lowered them with a threefold motion whilst exclaiming, “O L - - - M - G - -, O L - - - M - G - -, O L - - - M - G - - was there no help for the Widow’s son.”

### **11<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

*“To raise the body one of the Craftsmen stepped into the grave, and attempted to raise it by giving the grip of an Entered Apprentice, but owing to decomposition the flesh came away and the hand dropped to the side. This is known as the first slip in Freemasonry.*

*A second Craftsman entered and endeavoured to raise the body by means of the grip of a Fellow Craft, but again the flesh came away, letting the hand fall to the side. This is known as the second slip in Freemasonry.*

*Finally, an experienced Craftsman entered the grave, and raised the body with the grip known as the L - - - - P - - or the E - - - - C - - - . “*

### **12<sup>th</sup> Ritual Directive**

#### [3.1.2. Documented and Undocumented History](#)

Jasper Ridley (Ridley, 2005:1-8) attempts to discuss the earlier origins of Freemasonry by looking at its development and activity in the social function of masons in the 1100s in England. The London Bridge was destroyed quite easily in 1176 ACE because it was built of wood. Masons, being craftsmen were then commissioned to build the bridge out of stone. One may be familiar with the tune of “London Bridge is falling down” but the earliest version of the song alludes to a ‘fair lady’ and ‘lady lea’. This may be quite unfamiliar to us now, but in 1209 ACE it was believed that the masons who built the bridge offered a human sacrifice to a god in order to save the bridge from destruction again. The young virgin woman was allegedly placed within one of the stone pillars. This is one myth which though it may be inaccurate, it highlights the early development of a group of people whom are accused of being ‘evil’ or at the very least extremely different.

In France and England during the early second millennium (Ridley 2005:3), the work for craftsmen in building churches and cathedrals created the opportunity for craftsmen to further travel and as a result these workers would erect a hut near their place of work. These places of meeting were used to eat and to store tools but never slept in, this became known as a lodge. Masons became well sought after craftsmen and as we know today, the role of trade unions are instrumental on working conditions, remuneration, and organisation and so on. These practical matters were addressed by a group of individuals who formed guilds and were primarily operative

masons. An operative mason is a distinction which may still be found today. The alternative term is a speculative mason.

These guilds regulating masons formed from as early as 1220 ACE in England and in Scotland as early as 1057 ACE. These guilds laid down instructions known as 'charges' to its members and this is still the same tradition to be found in Freemasonry today. The first charge is a charge to serve the Catholic God, the second is a charge to abide by the political power in the form of laws and king and then lastly a charge to the master or employer of the mason. Though Ridley (2005:7-8) notes that the craftsmen were not always loyal to the third charge as there is indication of illegal trade unions in England and France which comprised of masons and craftsmen who bargained for higher wages than allowed by the parliament.

The Scottish masons however suffered from a separate dilemma. Master masons in Scotland and its near surrounds were under threat from apprentice masons as the lack of soft freestone meant that apprentices could do most of the work of master masons and this was a threat to the masters. The reaction was then supposedly to create an identifying word which master masons could use to identify one another and try to ratify their superior positions. Referred to as the 'Mason Word', Ridley (2005:8) suggests that it was most likely 'Mohabyn' which in this context, semantically would be the equivalent of 'comrade' or 'mate'. This word only starts to appear in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and I cannot find sufficient evidence to support the significance of this word but it does still illustrate how a need for some type of secrecy came about. Furthermore, this secret word was not in order to separate masons from regular people but rather as a means of recognition within the structure of the guild itself. This secrecy may then be defined as self-secrecy or inner-secrecy.

Here we have touched on an important theme and though it cannot be substantiated it does give us an interesting perspective on the need for some secrecy within Freemasonry which does not react to the curiosity from outsiders and develops as a reaction to an internal issue of recognition and work allocation. This development of signs and sounds to this day remain undisclosed to the general public and so a developmental history cannot be traced accurately. If the information is known, it is not known outside of Freemason circles.

We now turn our attention to the initial documented development of Freemasonry in English and French colonial circles as it is relevant to our context in South Africa. Much like Christianity, Freemasonry began spreading more and more across the world through the colonies of nations where Freemasonry already existed in various forms. The Grand Lodge of Ireland was formed in 1725 ACE and along with the Grand Lodge of England and Scotland accordingly, were quite influential during the colonial period. This movement is one of the very few during the colonial period to be open to all men from a range of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, meeting certain requirements (Harlen-Jacobs 1999:237-239). From Britain Freemasonry moved to the British Isles and on frontiers of various colonies. Military lodges emerged during times of war and often lead to permanent lodges (Harlen-Jacobs 1999:241). This growing network did exactly that; grow.

Mackey (1996:83-85) observes that the Masons began travelling to further their skills in their trade or to teach their trade to others. By assessing the early Masonic manuscript known as the Halliwell Poem we see that not much mention is given to the spread of masonry but in one episode, "Four Crowned Martyrs", we are led to infer from the tenor of the manuscript that masonry came to England from Egypt. This is considered by Mackey (1996:84) to be more historical than other explanations. This does create potential links and adds to the believability of the legendary tale of masonic involvement in Solomon's Temple. Though this cannot be corroborated, it does highlight the intertwining of legendary and documented or historical perspectives.

The official website of the Grand Lodge of South Africa (viewed 11 September 2017, from <http://www.grandlodge.co.za/in-the-beginning/>) provides us with the following brief overview of Freemasonry in South Africa. It was originally brought from Europe by Dutch sailors stopping at the Cape of Good Hope's refreshment station. The Dutch Freemasons only founded their own chapter in the Netherlands in 1756 ACE. Only a mere sixteen years after this was the first Lodge warranted in the Cape in 1772 ACE under the leadership of Abraham van der Weijde as part of the Netherlandic Masons. As a result of certain conflicts within Freemasonry over the next two centuries, it became apparent that a unified Grand Lodge of South Africa was necessary and was formed only in 1961 ACE.

The presence of Freemasonry in South Africa During the latter part of the 1800's as well as the early 1900's is strong and the main parliament building in the Western Cape is in fact masonic. There are many more places where Freemasonry has been involved and one can understand why most are sceptical about the role and motives of Freemasonry. They appear to be a part of many major powerful movements and organisations and seem to have ties to powerful people and places. Though this would be the equivalent of blaming oxygen for some kind of corruption. The mere presence of a group or idea or individual does not automatically mean that group or idea or person is responsible for said corruption. This holds true for major historical figures who were found to be Freemasons. Some of these include Nat King Cole, Ronald Reagan and even Teddy Roosevelt (Ridley 2005:90-92). During the early period of the American colonisation Freemasonry spread across the new American colonies during expansion in the early 1700's. By the 1730's Masonic lodges had been warranted in Boston as well as Philadelphia.

Though, the criticism and attacks upon Freemasonry for having 'secrets' is well documented and one must indeed sift through a number of ridiculously uneducated opinions and misguided understandings about Freemasonry. Lilith Mahmud (2012:427) when studying Freemasonry and secrecy in the Italian region found that similarly the hunt for the secrets of Freemasonry is intense. We see Freemasonry in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century being introduced effectively to Italy accompanying the enlightenment. Though Mahmud's (2012:428) discussion points to a certain epistemological culture which underlies these secret societies. This may lead us, if we are not careful, into a long discussion surrounding the relationship between Freemasonry and enlightenment and the Enlightenment period. However, those people on the outside of the group cannot bear to not know the secrets.

On a much deeper level there is a thirst for this secret knowledge because underlying this want or rather supposed need, is the notion that this secret knowledge is essential and necessary. For what exactly? You as the keen researcher are more than welcome to traverse the sea of misinformation and conspiracy theories and ponder at which may be most probable. Alternatively, we may look at our historical evidence as well as our current experience and access to information. Though one may argue that you cannot trust the information given to

you by those who are part of the society, we will be content in making observations and not judgements based on available and credible sources.

### 3.1.3. Operative and Speculative Masons

It becomes quite clear to us upon looking at a brief historical overview that this organisation or movement originally comprised of masons and craftsmen who were responding to their context. Hence the relatively accurate depiction of early Freemasonry as being a trade union or guild rather of working class males, many holding unique or specialised skills in the mason and craft trade. The practical application of being part of Freemasonry seemed to be first and foremost for self-preservation of the individual in their trade. The trade union of a certain trade or group of trades wishes those who they represent to continue plying their trade. This means that for much of early Freemasonry the brothers were all masons and craftsmen themselves. This elite group wished to remain rather exclusive and to this day the membership process is quite strict and further enforces exclusivity. As their popularity grew throughout the ages we see that this strict mason and craft group began admitting those who did were not considered to be masons or craftsmen.

As we may at first glance begin to see the term operative refers to that which is functional or that which may have effect or exert influence (Mirriam-Webster 2017). Also as a person who works with machines or tools. Very simply, operative masons are described by Brother Worshipful Master F. Kuhn (1917) as those who were and may still be in the craft of masonry. As its earliest form would suggest, apart from a time of secret workings in England during the early 1300's as a result of wage disputes. As such the brotherhood could not have been secret and remains so today. Though as the fraternity developed into a larger brotherhood including intellectuals from other groups such as the clergy and some other academics or thinkers. Here we see how the shift between operative to speculative masons.

As operative masons applied the theory of geometry and so on to their daily work, so too academics and clergymen would become a part of a brotherhood of other individuals of an 'enlightened' mind-set. From a rather early stage speculative masons were those who were not necessarily part of the mason or craft trade. Rather these were more attune to theoretical and intellectual developments and appreciation (Kuhn 1917).



With the rise of industrialisation as well as urbanisation, especially in recent years, there are less and less operative masons and this number is close to zero and in fact zero in many lodges. The vast majority of members of Freemasonry today, as well toward the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, are speculative masons. I cannot say what the relationship between operative and speculative masons were like and whether traditionally any rank or hierarchy was given to one over the other but the general tone of the available information here is rather positive in its neutrality in discussing the difference and implies no preference. It seems almost as if the speculative mason is more important as a result of the practical application of masonic truths and architectural and geometric knowledge to the symbolism of life in order to shape and contribute to it in a fulfilling and effective way (Herron 2012a:1-4). Likewise, Mahmud (2012:425 par.6) quotes a freemason in Italy as saying, "The world is a forest of symbols, you know?" This highlights the importance and the connection between operative and speculative masons.

In a way it can be understood that essentially by default, operative masons would also be considered speculative masons in applying the principles of their work to all aspects of their lives. However, those who are primarily speculative can only become operative through learning a trade or craft as such. This is not necessary in modern times but as any skill is valuable it can certainly not be to the detriment of the speculative mason to explore the operative side. Provision was made at the earliest times for speculative masons hold they met one of the following requirements in addition to the final;

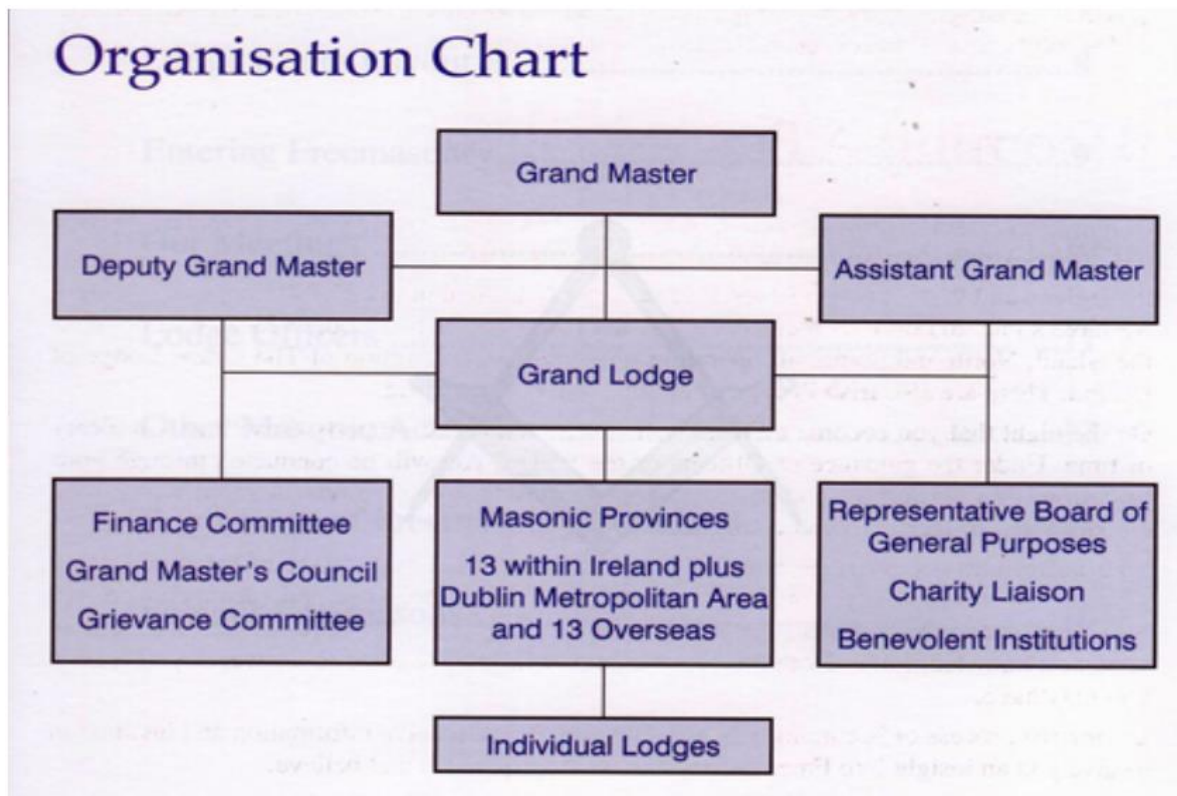
- Noble born
- or a gentleman of the best fashion,
- or some eminent scholar,
- or some curious architect,
- or other artists,
- descendant of honest parents,
- and who is of singular great merit in the opinion of the lodge

The above discussion really helps to situate the growth and development of Freemasonry from an early period, how early though we cannot be entirely certain of much from before the thirteenth century. What is certain, however, is that this

fraternity continues to operate much the same way today as it did years ago. This adherence to tradition and the appropriate 'masonic' way to do things and to view life means that a tight knit community emerges which has progressed to vastly different forms and expressions throughout the world. We can see how difficult it may be to distinguish between masonic influence and individual influence from someone who happens to be a Freemason. We must always remember to keep an open mind when traversing the history of a group as controversial as Freemasonry.

This, as well as what is to follow, helps us create a more realistic understanding of the background and framework when we begin to work with the ritual itself.

### 3.1.4. The Organisation



1: Dunlop, G., 2012, 'An Initial Guide to Freemasonry', pp. 4

The chart above represents the organisational structure of Freemasonry around the world and this is the same throughout. Each local lodge is governed by the provincial lodge and that lodge is governed by the Grand Lodge of the specific region.

Chart 1 above shows a rather self-explanatory structure which exemplifies a clear hierarchy. Within each local lodge there are a number of positions one may fulfil outside of being a 'regular member'. These lodge offices, as they are known, are to

be filled by those who are considered master masons. Master masons are those who reach the third degree and below we touch briefly on a few of them (Dunlop, 2012:11-12). These offices are recognizable by wearing certain regalia (or jewels) and by where the person sits within the lodge room. Though we must note that the following discussion is for local lodges and the layout of provincial and Grand Lodges may differ as the hierarchy of those present shifts.

#### *3.1.4.1. The Worshipful Master (WM)*

The Worshipful Master of a lodge is elected each year by the brothers within the lodge. This position requires that the bearer conduct various lodge ceremonies and oversee its general functioning. This is the top of the structure within a local lodge and so one cannot be a worshipful master without serving a term as a junior or senior warden. The sign of the Worshipful master is a square and symbolises the squaring of actions and life. He sits in the East as this is where the grand master would lay the cornerstone of a building and this mimics that masonic symbolism (Herron 2012b:1-8). We must not be tempted to see this title implying that he is one who is worshipped but rather as one who is worthy of respect.

#### *3.1.4.2. Senior and Junior Wardens (SW & JW)*

These offices act as aides to the worshipful master and assist in ritual ceremonies and in the opening and closing of the lodge. The Senior Warden sits across the Worshipful Master in the West and the Junior Warden sits in the South (Dunlop 2012:10-11). Wardens are represented by the level and the plumb. The level of the Senior Warden represents the raising of the dead to the living perpendicular. Though this may sound strange, we need to understand that this is symbolic of the equality of all men within the fraternity. The plumb symbolises uprightness. This stresses the correct moral path that must be followed within as well as without the lodge. (Senn 1980)

#### *3.1.4.3. Senior and Junior Deacons (SD & JD)*

The role of the deacons is to assist participants in the rituals and to act as a liaison within the lodge to carry messages to its members. This means that deacons are rather involved with most aspects of a lodge (Senn 1980, viewed 7 September 2017, from <http://www.masonicworld.com/education/articles/The-Symbolism-on-Our-Lodge-Officers.htm>). Here we observe is a dove with a sprig of olive in its mouth.

Some writers, such as Norman Senn (1980) and Jack Buta (2008), see a link here, as well as elsewhere, with the narrative of Noah and the ark, amongst others, in the Bible. Though we can indeed attest to some symbolism coming from the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) which was continued and built upon by masonic tradition we need to for the moment consider them as they are described by masons.

#### *3.1.4.4. Inner Guard (IG)*

The Inner Guard is situated just inside the lodge room and is in charge of announcing visitors and receiving brothers to the lodge. He is also tasked with ensuring no unauthorised persons enter the lodge. This jewel is one of two interlocking swords with their blades down. This is symbolic of protection against evil and attacks. (Dunlop 2012:10-11)

#### *3.1.4.5. Chaplain*

The Chaplain is illustrated by an open book referred to as the Volume of Sacred Law, or VoSL (VSL). This is instrumental as no lodge can operate without the VoSL which symbolises the aligning with a higher power or spiritual being, the Great Architect. The triangle behind the VoSL is indicative of the strong presence of three. For strong Christian lodges this signifies the Trinity as well amongst strictly masonic understandings. Some significant instance of three (3) would be the three moral virtues, the knocks, the first three degrees, the Greater lights and the Lesser lights and so on. (Senn 1980)

#### *3.1.4.6. Other Lodge Offices*

There remain quite a few lodge offices which are important for the effective and continued functioning of the lodge and these include but are not limited to some of the following examples.

The Tyler also has only one sword and not two. Whereas the Inner Guard guards the space of the lodge, the Tyler guards the constitution of the Lodge (Senn 1980).

Other offices are those of the Treasurer, a Director of Ceremonies (Cond.), an Organist, a Steward of Charities, and a Lodge Secretary. These positions seem to be more of a response to administrative and logistical needs than deriving from purely symbolic or historical significant meaning but this is only speculation.

By observing a brief structure of organisation as well as some of the duties and responsibilities of certain lodge officials, I cannot help but to compare this to my own

personal experience of the organisational structure to be found within many church or religious organisations. It has been made abundantly clear to me through contact with and researching Freemasonry that members do not consider Freemasonry to be a religion. It is clear that a lodge is not a trivial thing and it requires a number of persons to function correctly and effectively. Also, in looking at their lodge offices we see again the great focus on symbolism and this helps us to further understand the meaning behind the masonic symbols we are often so sceptical and afraid of.

Below we can see how a lodge room is set up and I include two images in order to accommodate amount of detail and simplicity.

### 3.2. [Becoming a member](#)

Before we may discuss the ritual practice within Freemasonry it is apt here to highlight some key points regarding admission into the fraternity as a means to formulate a total picture of how lodges operate on a ritual initiation process. The admission process further enforces the safekeeping of their traditions and culture and provides a unique lens into this fraternity.

There are a total of 33 degrees (ranks) within Irish Freemasonry and not nearly all can be dealt with here. It is important to note that each degree may have degree-specific requirements. For instance, in order to move to the 18<sup>th</sup> degree, one must be a confessing Christian believer and this can only be done outside of Ireland (McDade & Tonkin 2013:13). Since then, however, the chapters of Irish Rose Croix are no longer present in South Africa and so not possible. This is just one simple example to illustrate my point.

To be a Freemason is not easy. I say this as there are a number of requirements which must be met (some discussed in the previous chapter) and then only does the process begin. The requirements for consideration are merely the beginning of a rather strict and intense selection process.

First and foremost a person looking to join Freemasonry must be proposed and seconded at a lodge meeting by already good standing members of that lodge. Once the individual has been proposed and seconded the real process may begin. Each individual joins of his own free will (McDade & Tonkin 2013:12). The assertion is

made that the fraternity practices social and moral virtue and respects the free will of all men (Finlay n.d.).

Each person wishing to join the fraternity must be the subject of a democratic vote by all local lodge members. The voting process is done with white and black beans and voting is anonymous. If there are as many as one black beans ('no' votes), the applicant is rejected. This is interesting as it ensures that each existing member of the fraternity has power within the lodge in this regard and so maintains strong and secure boundaries between those on the inside and those on the outside.

During this process, once the lodge has been opened, the ballot box is inspected three times. The deacons proceed to the South-West corner of the lodge, in front of the Senior Warden's pedestal, facing each other with their wands grounded but crossed. The crossing of the wands is in order that no brethren may pass. Votes are done in order of seniority and the Worshipful Master declares the ballot open. Deacons then allow one person at a time to pass and to cast their vote. The Director of Ceremonies takes the ballot box to the Junior Warden to check the number of votes with number of voters. The same is then done by the Senior Warden and then the Worshipful Master. (McDade & Tonkin 2013:14-16)

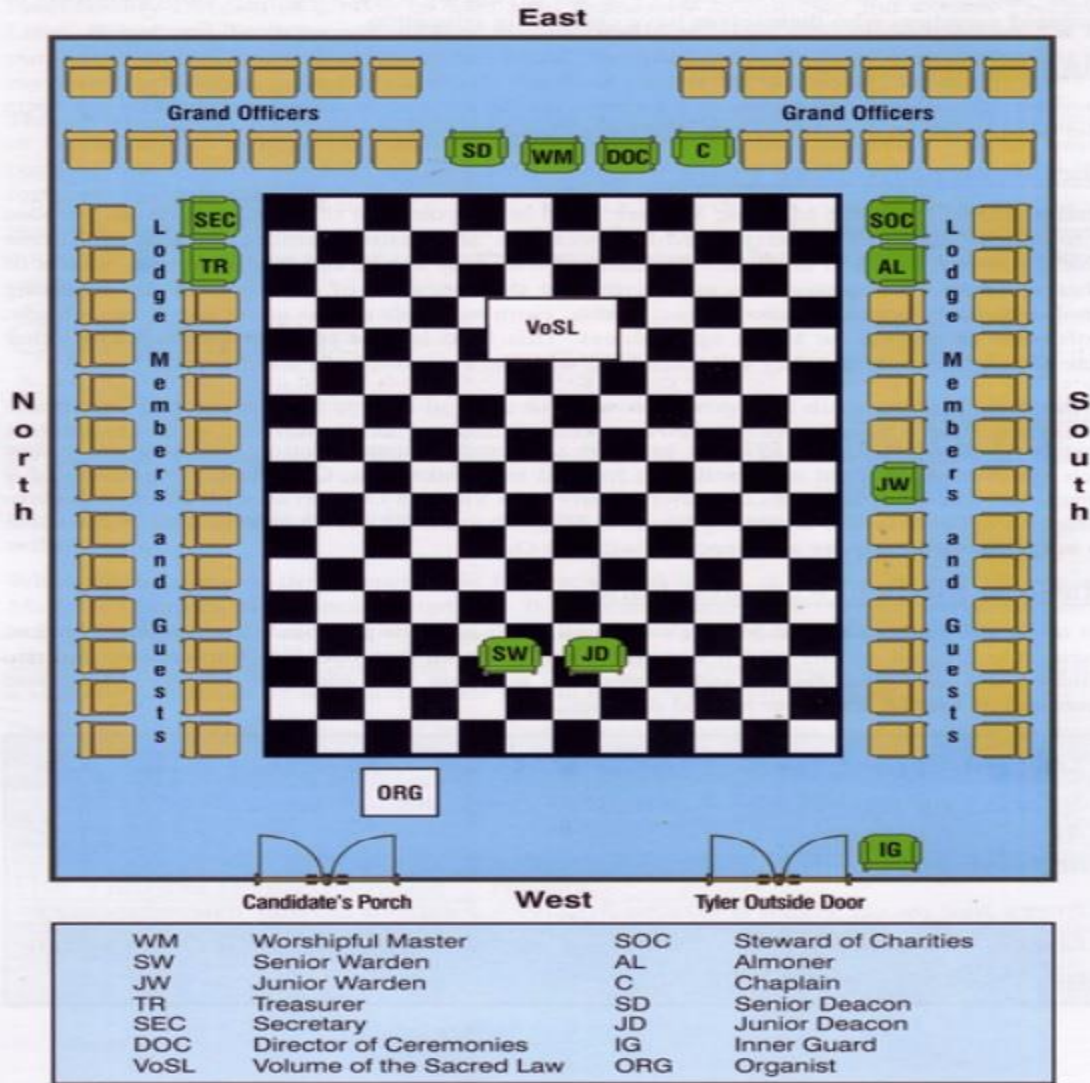
The Worshipful Master asks of the Junior Warden, "How do you find the ballot in the South?" A response according to outcome is given, all clear, cloudy (not clear) or irregular (discrepancy with number of votes). The Worshipful Master then asks the Senior Warden in the West and the reply is warranted. The Worshipful Master then gives his declaration of votes in the East, declaring clear, cloudy or irregular. Upon completion, the member is accepted or rejected or another ballot is prepared. (McDade & Tonkin 2013:17-19)

The process does not end here. This process is then followed by an inspection committee which assesses all details of applicant and this information is also forwarded to all lodges within the province or metropolitan area. Once these lodges have all approved the applicant he can be received into the fraternity. This is just the start of a journey which may well last a lifetime (Dunlop 2012:9).

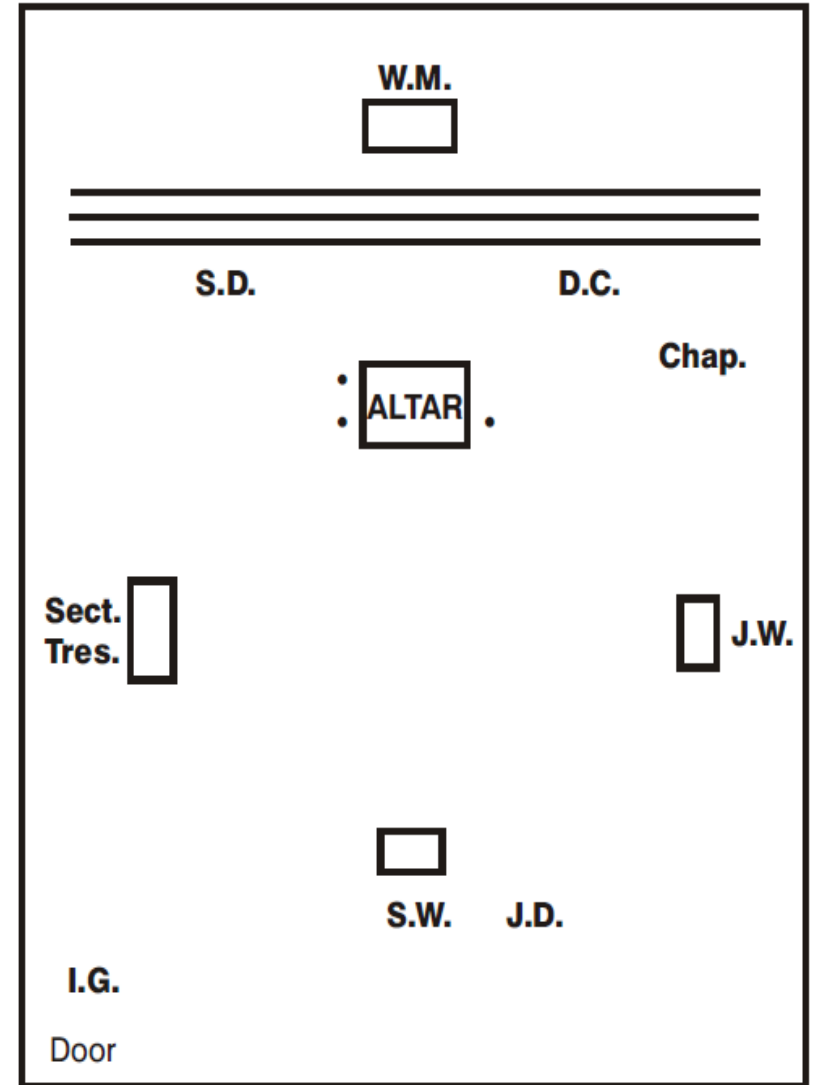
The following Entered Apprentice degree ritual is taken from McDade & Tonkin's, 'My Handbook and Rituals' (2013:41-73). This is the most recently revised edition which I could find which is still used in a lodge part of the Irish constitution of

Freemasons. Herein we assess the guidelines of an Irish Lodge in South Africa with the ritual handbook used during lodge events. There are a few places where guidelines are left out but this is in the case of conferring secret knocks, words, phrases, signs or grips. These are to be conveyed in person in secret on the degree of which the lodge is opened. A lodge cannot open on the Master Mason (3<sup>rd</sup>) degree if there are any brethren present who are not a Master Mason or further.

# Diagram of Lodge Room Layout



# CRAFT LODGE LAYOUT OF ROOM





### 3.3. Entered Apprentice Degree

This is the first step on the journey through the ranks of masonry and must be achieved by all wishing to be a part of this fraternity. Once new members are accepted according to the guidelines discussed above, there is an initiation ceremony. This first degree introduction to the group is a communal event and we see there are many roles to be fulfilled. Each interaction and dialogue explained is numbered on the diagram as the ritual unfolds.

There is no specific time of year or day or stellar or lunar cycle that dictates or governs the timing of this ritual as it is an initiation ceremony and is done at the convenience of the lodge during its labour. This means that time is not a significant factor on any level as the ritual itself does not make mention to time. The only instance of time is in mention to ancient custom but this is not significant and is only explanatory.

The preparation of the individual is described briefly by McDade & Tonkin (2013:44) and lets us know that the candidate was divested of his money, jewellery and all metal articles. The symbolic meaning here is that each candidate enters the order for their moral worth and not their material worth. Also, part of the clothing of the candidate is taken and the breast is exposed to show sincerity and vulnerability. The right arm and the left knee is also exposed to indicate willingness to work and humility respectively. The candidate is slipshod in order with ancient Hebrew custom of ratifying an agreement or contract. A halter is placed around the neck as a sign of submission to the process of initiation. The candidate is furthermore blindfolded to signify the darkness wherein the candidate resides before joining the fraternity.

We see that compass points and direction play a major role throughout this ritual and really highlights the symbolic significance behind these ritual actions. Unlike case studies performed by Grimes (2010b), here we see that candidates and participants are fully aware of the dramatic phenomena of this ritual. They are aware of their role and the success is what is described earlier as social or communal success rather than empirical success. Though one may argue that the empirical success may be found in the acceptance of a candidate into the group. In any case, it is in order to educate one about the culture and tradition of the group as well as a performance piece to situate oneself within the society. This ritual is through and through

concerned with the identity of the candidate as he becomes part of this fraternity. This process is one of change for the better. The masonic motto, “making good men better” rings in my head as I delve into the path these brethren take.

### 3.3.1. Preparation

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:65-66) Cond.** *“When you entered into the Tyler’s room to be prepared for Initiation, almost every action in that preparation was symbolic in its meaning. Firstly, you were divested of your money, jewellery and all articles of metal to impress upon you that all Candidates enter the Order strictly on a level, and for their moral worth as men.”*

*“Secondly, you were deprived of part of your clothing. Your Breast was bared in token of the Sincerity of your intention. Your Right Arm was bared meaning that you are willing to work for Freemasonry. Your Left Knee was bared in token of Humility. You were slipshod representing an ancient custom of ratifying a contract or bargain as was the practice of the Hebrews. A Halter was placed around your neck in token of submission to the ordeal of Initiation. You were Blindfolded, representing one in Darkness wishing to approach the Light, that is the Light of Freemasonry, which explains the first announcement made by the Tyler on announcing your admission into the Lodge room.”*

*“The second announcement by the Tyler, stating that you were a Man Freeborn, may be strange to you. But it will remind you, that in years gone by there were slaves in our land, and men who were under the power of an over-lord - slaves and bondsmen had no free will of their own; thus impressing on you the antiquity of the Order of Freemasonry. “*

**Cond.** *“No slave or bondsman could be admitted, nor can any man be coerced into joining our Order. The Candidate must enter of his own free will and accord.”*

Here we can clearly see the whole process of preparation focusing on two aspects; physical sphere as representative of the symbolic sphere. The shift away from commercialism and greed is made by divesting the candidate of anything of material value. Clearly the focus here is on the moral stature and social standing of the candidate in the eyes of the fraternity.

The breast of the candidate is exposed to symbolise the pure ‘heartfelt desire’ of the candidate to be a part of and work for Freemasonry, signified by the bare right arm. The left knee, bare, also the knee the candidate must kneel on, would make kneeling a lot more noticeable as the bare knee on a floor, carpet, even grass can become

quite uncomfortable. The importance of the ritual clothing and objects are paramount here. The things that the candidate brought are taken away and replaced by different symbolic items. The halter as submission, the blindfold representing the darkness before the impending enlightenment. The ritual language has clearly been altered over time as the ritual handbook feels it necessary to qualify a statement within its pages. We are all well aware that there were slaves. The ritual handbook is justifying the ritual through the mention of its antiquity. Considering slavery was abolished not that long ago in actuality this seems an unnecessary inclusion/alteration. Rather the focus here is redirected to the free will of the candidate in joining the group.

### 3.3.2. Ritual Begins

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:27-28).** *Once the candidate is prepared and readied outside the door of the lodge along with the conductor, the Tyler gives the appropriate knocks on the door of the lodge (undisclosed).*

**I.G.** *“Worshipful Master, there is an alarm at the Candidate's Porch”*

**W.M.** *“Ascertain the cause.” (IG replies to the knocks)*

**I.G.** *“Who comes here?”*

**Cond.** *“One in Darkness, who wishes to approach the Light, and to receive some of the rights and privileges of Freemasonry, as many good and true men have done before.”*

**I.G. (reports to the WM)** *“One in darkness, who wishes to approach the Light, and to receive some of the rights and privileges of Freemasonry, as many good and true men have done before.”*

**W.M.** *“How does he hope to obtain so great an honour?”*

**(I.G. gives the knocks on the door and waits until answered by the knocks from without)**

**I.G.** *“How does he hope to obtain so great an honour?”*

**Cond.** *“By ... .. , ... .. ”*

**I.G. (reports to the WM)** *“By ... .. , ... .. ”*

**W.M.** *“What good can be reported of him?”*

**(I.G. gives the knocks on the door and waits until answered by the knocks from without)**

**I.G.** *“What good can be reported of him?”*

**Cond.** *“That he is a man, free born, without maim or defect, living in good repute amongst his friends and neighbours.”*

**I.G. (reports to the WM)** “He is a man, free born, without maim or defect, living in good repute amongst his friends and neighbours.”

**W.M.** “His name, age and occupation?”

**(I.G. gives the knocks on the door and waits until answered by the knocks from without)**

**I.G.** “His name, age and occupation?”

**Cond. (Candidate's name in full), full Masonic age, (Occupation)**

**W.M.** “Let the Deacons attend in the North West.”

**W.M.** “Brother Inner Guard, admit him.”

**(I.G. gives the knocks on the door and waits until answered by the knocks from without)**

This initial part of the ritual is clearly a depiction of someone on the outside wanting to come into the lodge. The guard's role here is to ensure that no one is allowed in without consent or knowledge of the brethren within the lodge. The lodge space then may be considered a sacred space. This is not as a result of some historical event at this or another lodge but moreover sacred in the value of what can transpire during a lodge meeting. Perhaps a more suitable term such as ‘privileged space’ may allow us to distance this ritual from being religious. The space is rather large and open and this allows for a lot of movement (Ter Haar & Wepener 2014:95) around the altar which holds the Volume of Sacred Law appropriate to each lodge toward the east. We see that there is a knock used as a means of communication with those on the outside and those on the inside. This knock is secret and not provided in the ritual manual. Also, the means by which the newcomer is hoping to attain entry is not provided. This introduction is predetermined and rather stationary. The ritual space is divided between the inside and the outside of the lodge. Entry is not allowed to just anyone. A declaration of good health, freedom and of good social and moral standing is needed to be considered. So far, the ritual process has been rather stationary with dialogue back and forth between the W.M. and the I.G. and the candidate outside. These undisclosed phrases and knocks are claimed to be the only secrets of Freemasonry. When we read the entire exchange we may not know what it says, but we can see that according to the tone and tenor of the dialogue we can be sure that it is much of the same symbolic predefined liturgical elements we see elsewhere.

Ritual sound and language here is found in the discussion as well as the knocks on the door between the Tyler and the Inner Guard. These sounds are secret and convey meaning in the form of recognition and address. These ritual sounds are one of the secrets of Freemasonry. This is important because this secret knocks and words are not what we might consider 'essential' knowledge. Herein lay the misconception. The importance of symbolism and the ability to identify these symbols are paramount to Freemason culture (Mahmud 2012:425).

This space is guarded as it is connected with the identity of the group. He who is not Freemason cannot enter. To ensure that the fraternity stays exclusive they must be careful. The candidate must petition the guard who petitions the W.M. The hierarchy of the ritual is thus clear. There is an appropriate and predetermined way of becoming part of the group. This is not strange even in Christian circles as confirmation or baptism are also rituals which are employed in a slightly less rigid format and serve the same function of bringing those on the outside through to the post liminal phase where they are accepted as members of the community (Grimes 2010b:141).

*(McDade & Tonkin 2013:29-30). At this point the guard once again gives the knocks to allow the candidate to enter. By this time the Deacons have moved to the North West area of the lodge room illustrated by point 2. The Senior Deacon takes his position just north of the candidate and the Junior Warden to the south, facing inward. The Chaplain is situated near the altar with "an appropriate prayer".*

*I.G. "(Candidate's name in full), we believe that for the first time in your life, you now stand within a Lodge of Freemasons, in which the Brethren are engaged in their peculiar Labours. By direction of the Worshipful Master, I have to put to you certain questions, to which we expect straightforward and truthful answers."*

*"Do you come here of your own free-will and accord, unbiased by the improper solicitations of friends, and uninfluenced by any mercenary or other unworthy motive?"*

*(Candidate replies)*

*"Do you come, with a preconceived notion of the excellence of our Order, a desire for knowledge, and to make yourself more extensively useful among your fellow men?"*

*(Candidate replies)*

*“Will you cheerfully conform to the established customs and usages of the Fraternity?”*

***(Candidate replies.)***

***(I.G. places the point of the “Hostile Weapon” at the Candidate's breast.)***

*“Directed at your naked and defenceless breast is the point of a dagger. As this pricks your flesh, so may remembrance prick your conscience should you at any time be tempted to betray the trust we are now about to place in you.”*

***I.G.*** *“Worshipful Master, the Candidate has been received according to Ancient Custom.”*

***W.M.*** *“Let him kneel, and receive the benefit of prayer. Rise Brethren.”*

***(As the Candidate kneels, all brethren rise and place their right hand on their left breast in the sign of Devotion. The Chaplain reads the Prayer.)***

***Chap.*** *“Vouchsafe thy needful aid, Almighty Architect of the Universe to this our present convention; and grant that this Candidate for Masonry may dedicate his life to Thy service, and become a true and faithful Brother among us; endow him with a competence of Thy Divine wisdom, that he may be better enabled to display the beauties of Godliness to the honour of Thy Holy Name. Amen*

***All the Brethren respond*** *“So Mote it be.”*

***W.M.*** *“(Candidate's full name), in the hour of difficulty and danger, in whom do you put your trust?”*

***Candidate*** *“In God”*

***W.M.*** *“Let him who puts his trust in God, arise and follow his Conductor, fearing no evil. Be seated Brethren.”*

Presumably still with his blindfold on, the candidate is asked some questions in order to create a legal tone and emphasising the free will and participation of the candidate. Not only should they be certain that this person comes on their own accord, but also the role of secrecy here is seen again. The second goal of this act is to ensure that the candidate does not come with bad intentions. This threat has clearly been with the masons for many generations and as such, it has manifested itself in the Entered Apprentice ritual in a symbolic way. The act of the candidate being threatened with a hostile weapon is symbolic of the threat faced from within and from without. Specifically, it is mentioned here to be focused on the threat from within in the event of betrayal. As we discussed the function of the Inner Guard here

we see that role taken up again as he is the one who places the point of the hostile weapon at the chest of the candidate.

The following reference to the prick of the flesh may be taken as inferring a blood oath. This may be possible but it is not explicit that blood is drawn. The flesh is pricked but this does not presuppose a blood oath. This is used as a symbol and must be considered with the explanation, "so may remembrance prick your conscience" (McDade & Tonkin 2013:29-30). Again we see that these phenomena are serving a symbolic purpose.

The movement of the ritual begins to progress as the candidate kneels in order to receive a prayer of blessing from the chaplain. At this point all brethren adhere to the sign of devotion by placing their right hand on their left breast. All these actions are predetermined and formally carried out with the assistance of the director of ceremonies or the conductor. The prayer is for wisdom, loyalty and godliness, in the sense of displaying or living according to it.

*(McDade & Tonkin 2013:30-31). The candidate is led around the lodge three times, first, the entire procession passes behind the chairs of the Junior and Senior Wardens. The second time around, the Deacons halt just to the west of the Senior and Junior Warden's chairs. The candidate stops just west of the Junior Warden's seat. At this point the conductor takes the fist of the candidate and performs the knocks of the Entered Apprentice degree on the right shoulder of the Junior Warden.*

**J.W.** "Who comes here?"

**Cond.** "One in darkness who wishes to approach the Light, and to receive some of the rights and privileges of Freemasonry as many good and true men have done before."

**J.W.** "How does he hope to obtain so great an honour?"

**Cond.** "By ... .. , ... .."

**J.W.** "What good can be reported of him?"

**Cond.** "That he is a man, free born, without maim or defect, living in good repute amongst his friends and neighbours."

**J.W.** "Let him enter."

The ritual movement is still formal and liturgical but more space of the lodge is being used as the candidate is lead, presumably still blindfolded. The candidate walks in a set direction, from standing in the North West, moving to the east, south and then back to the North West. This is repeated but altered in that a secret knock is

received with the help of the Junior Warden and the conductor. This is peculiar as the ritual action and sound is both emphasised and withheld by performing the knock on the J.W.'s shoulder. Obviously, as we have already observed, the sound of the knock is important and this means the action must be as well. If you do not knock correctly it will not sound the way it should. By performing the knock this specific way, the ritual action is emphasised above the sound of the knock.

The language continues in its fashion and the candidate repeats the secret phrase which qualified him entrance to the lodge and now as justification for his petition. The response shows us that only men who are of good social and moral standing and do not have any defects may be suitable.

*(McDade & Tonkin 2013:31-32). The procession continues with the third walk around and the candidate is brought facing the east of the lodge between the Deacons (senior on left (north) and Junior on right (south)).*

**Cond.** *“Worshipful Master, I present to you this Candidate for Freemasonry; he has duly entered the Southern Gate.”*

**W.M.** *“Take him to the Senior Warden, and crave his fraternal assistance in having the Candidate placed in the proper position in order to take an Obligation.”*

*The senior deacon crosses from the North to the South to join the Junior Deacon. The procession then proceeds South of the Altar and as the Deacons pass the Altar, the Junior Deacon turns right and crosses to the North side of the chequered carpet, and the conductor and candidate position themselves between the Deacons, all facing the Senior Warden in the West, and about one step to the West of the three steps on the West of the Altar.*

Again the procession is significant and is not stated in the manual why. The routine of the ritual shows clearly the hierarchy as the candidate is made to petition a number of times in order to gain acceptance. The use of the space around the altar is important as it shows a growing tension as movement around the lodge room has brought them to the centre-piece of the lodge, the VoSL. The spacing of actors during the ritual requires only general guidelines and what is more important than their proximity is on which side which officer is standing. We have seen that direction plays a huge role and so here too.

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:32-33). Cond.** *“Brother Senior Warden, by direction of the Worshipful Master, I present to you this candidate for Freemasonry, and crave your*



*fraternal assistance in having him placed in the proper position in order to take an Obligation”*

**S.W.** *“Let the candidate stand upright, and face the East.”*

**(The Conductor turns the Candidate so that he faces east towards the Altar)**

*(The Deacons turn inwards to face each other, and remain in that position moving East and West as necessary to remain aligned with the candidate throughout the workings, until after the “Working Tools” have been presented.)*

The working tools are symbols used regarding the workings of masons today as a response to the difference between operative and speculative masons. The work of the masons is used symbolically as a means to teach and guide along the righteous path. For the Entered Apprentice degree, the tools are the twenty-four-inch gauge as well as the common gavel (McDade & Tonkin 2013:44-45).

The gauge is used to represent the twenty-four-hour day and how it should be equally divided between rest and work and service of your creator. This is the symbol of time well spent.

The gavel was used to knock corners during building and is symbolic of doing the same to negative or immoral things or habits in our lives in order to better shape oneself. These items are symbolic and appear as ritual objects which are not divine but serve as icons which teach through their symbolic meaning and are not used functionally (Grimes 2014:270).

**S.W.** *“Let him take a step forward with his left foot, placing the heel of his right foot in the hollow of the left, forming a square. Let him kneel on his left knee on the first of a series of steps, squaring his right leg.”*

**(The Candidate’s right foot should be positioned on the floor in line with the first step he is kneeling on.)**

**S.W.** *“Let him place his left hand under the Volume of the Sacred Law, and his right hand on the same and certain emblems thereon.”*

**Cond.** *“Worshipful Master, the candidate is now in the proper position to take an Obligation.”*

**(The W.M. is the proper person to give the assurances and to administer the Obligation, but this may be done by the conductor or another brother on his behalf.)**

**W.M. “(Candidate's name in full),** as we are now about to communicate to you certain secrets, we require you to take an Obligation of secrecy.”

“With regard to this Obligation, I give you my assurance that there is nothing in it contrary to your religious belief, political opinions, or the allegiance you owe to your Sovereign or to the rulers of the state in which you reside; neither does it contain anything hurtful to your feelings as a man of honour.”

“I can further assure you, that with the exception of yourself, everyone here present, has already take this or a similar Obligation.”

“Having these assurances from me, are you now willing to take this Obligation, and by it to become bound to us, as we are to one another?”

**(The Candidate gives his assent.)**

**W.M.** “Since none but the free can take a voluntary obligation, I now symbolically release you.”

**(Conductor takes the Halter off the Candidate)**

**W.M. (One knock)** “Rise Brethren.”

The candidate assumes a new position as the ritual unfolds and the hierarchy is again ratified with the Worshipful master providing the assurance before the candidate makes takes an obligation. This assurance is interesting in that it presupposes misunderstanding of Freemasonry and its belief and confessions. It distances itself from being a religious or a political movement and shows the social dimension of this fraternity coming to the fore. The brethren rise as part of the ritual and whom function as an active audience, serving as witnesses and supporters of the candidate.

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:33-34).** **W.M.** “You will say the pronoun “I”, followed by your name in full, and repeat the Obligation after me.”

“I, **(Candidate states his name in full)**, of my own free will and accord, in the presence of the Most High God, the Great Architect of the Universe, and of this worthy, worshipful and warranted Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, regularly constituted, properly assembled and duly dedicated in His Most Holy Name, do hereby and hereon, solemnly and sincerely promise, vow and declare, that I will ever hele, conceal and never will reveal unlawfully, aught of the hidden points, secrets or mysteries, of or belonging to Ancient Craft Masonry, which have heretofore, shall now or may hereafter become known to me in any way whatsoever.”

*“I will not communicate, divulge or discover those secrets to anyone in the whole world, except to him or to them to whom the same do surely, justly and of right belong, that is to say, in the body of a Lodge of Freemasons, just, perfect and regular; to a well-known Brother Freemason; to one who is duly vouched to me at the mouth of a well-known Brother Freemason; or to one whom after due trial and strict examination I shall find to be lawfully entitled to the same.”*

*“I will not write or print, or in any way delineate those secrets on anything movable or immovable beneath the canopy of heaven whereby or whereon any letter, character or symbol or even the least trace thereof may become unlawfully known, legible or intelligible to myself or to anyone else in the whole world through my inadvertence, negligence or misconduct.”*

*“All these points I solemnly promise, vow and declare that I will observe without any evasion, equivocation or mental reservation whatsoever, bearing in mind the Ancient Penalty, of having the throat cut across, the tongue torn out at the root and buried in the rough sands of the sea, a cable-tow’s length from the shore where the tide ebbs and flows twice daily, and binding myself under the real penalty of being deservedly branded as a wretch, base, faithless and unworthy to be received among men of honour should I knowingly or wilfully violate in letter or in spirit this my most solemn, sincere and voluntary obligation as an Entered Apprentice Freemason.”*

**W.M.** You will now ratify the Obligation you have just taken by sealing, with your lips the “Holy Bible” which lies between your hands, or in any other manner equally binding on your conscience.

**(The Candidate ratifies the Obligation by saluting with his lips the VoSL, or in a manner which can be acknowledged as acceptable.)**

**W.M.** “Having been for a considerable time in a state of Darkness, what is now your predominant wish?”

**Cond.** “Light.”

**W.M.** Let that blessing be restored to the Candidate, for in the beginning God said “Let there be light”, and there was Light.

**(Some of the Brethren have gathered around the altar facing the candidate. Those holding hostile weapons pointed towards the candidate, stand to the south of the altar all other brethren extend the right hand. The W.M. and Wardens do not leave their chairs. The Conductor will slowly remove the hoodwink placing his right Hand over the brow of the candidate, so that the Candidate will look upon the VoSL)**

*W.M. "The first object that meets your eyes in a Masonic Lodge is the VoSL on which you took your solemn Obligation in darkness. That VoSL is the book known to us all as the "Holy Bible" (any other appropriate book). We ask you to assure yourself that it is the "Holy Bible" and if you are satisfied, will you once again ratify the Obligation, this time in the light, in a like manner as you did in darkness.*

***(The candidate should examine the VoSL and then repeat the ratification.)***

***Cond. "Brother (Candidate's name), for as such I am now permitted to address you, Freemasonry may be described as a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols, so that everything done in this ceremony of your initiation has its symbolic significance and Masonic meaning. I would first ask you to observe the attitude of the brethren assembled round this altar, some have the right hand extended to you, signifying that as long as you prove true to your obligation, the right hand of Masonic fellowship ever will be held out to greet you. Others have hostile weapons pointed towards your naked and defenceless breast, indicative of the undying hostility which would pursue you, should you ever prove false to your obligation. But, believing that you will prove a true and trusty brother amongst us, I ask the brethren who are holding the hostile weapons, to lay them aside, and with the other brethren extend the right hand, thus assuring you of a welcome into our order as a brother Freemason."***

***(The brethren return to their seats)***

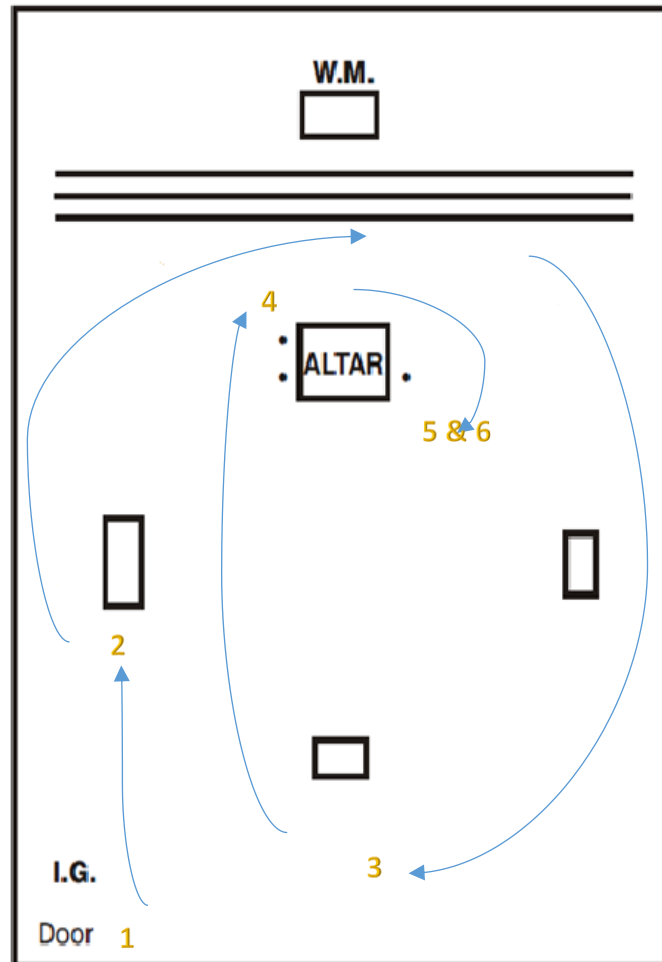
This obligation serves as a promise and vow to loyalty and to secrecy. The secrets mentioned are those pertaining to knocks, signs, grips and phrases which are conveyed during these rituals and used in some lodge meetings.

Though this example of the ritual uses the Holy Bible as its Volume of Sacred Law, it is reiterated a number of times that this does not have to be the case. The emphasis of the VoSL is that all men have a belief in some or other higher power and are guided morally and ethically by this belief. For this reason, religion is fundamental to the Freemasons but in itself cannot be considered religious. There is reference to the creation narrative of the Old Testament but we do know that Freemasons are generally accepting of the idea that they originated in the time of King Solomon and thus feel connected to the Bible in many ways but even so are still adamant to be understood as non-religious (not areligious).

Hereafter follows certain explanations given to the candidate, also the working tools discussed previously. We will use the explanation of the lights (McDade & Tonkin 2013:53-55) to illustrate further the mammoth role of symbolism in Freemason

culture and tradition. Other teachings given but not dealt with here are signs and tokens (McDade & Tonkin 2013:55-58), secret word and grip (2013:58-60) and the signs of the degree (2013:60-61).

### CRAFT LODGE



4. Adapted from McDade, D., & Tonkin, M., 2013, My Hand Book and Ritual, pp. 10

#### 3.3.2.1. The Lights of Freemasonry

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:53-55) Cond.** “On this Altar before you, are the “Lights of Freemasonry” known to us as the Three Great Lights, and they lie between your hands.

*They are the V- - - - of the S- - - - L - -, the S - - - - and the C - - - - - .  
The V.S.L. is recommended to your consideration and study without comment, believing that if you follow its teachings and precepts, you will find them as a “Light to your feet, and a Lamp to your path.”*

*The S- - - - is to us an emblem of Morality, and teaches us that our actions towards our fellow-men should stand the test of the Moral Square.*

*The C- - - - - -, which form that perfect figure the Circle, remind us that we should endeavour to surround our conduct by a line to keep in check unruly passions and unlawful desires.*

*Thus the Three Great Lights teach the Freemason, his duty to his God, to his neighbour, and to himself. There are also Three Lesser Lights, represented by the three tapers burning before you. That in the South represents the Sun which rules the Day, that in the North, the Moon which governs the Night, and that in the East, the presiding officer of the Lodge who is called the Worshipful Master. As the Sun and Moon perform their duty regularly and harmoniously according to the unalterable Laws of Nature, so they remind the Worshipful Master that his work in the Lodge should be done in a like manner. When we assemble together to take part in our meetings or, as we call it, "Labour", we all meet, for the time being, strictly on a fraternal level, without any distinction of outside rank. We meet as Brethren, but we are permitted to elect from our company one who shall preside over our assemblies for the period of twelve months, and that Brother is given the title of Worshipful Master. During his term of office his rulings must be implicitly obeyed, his decisions cannot be questioned in open Lodge, but if at any time you consider that an unfair decision has been given, or that you have not had just treatment, there is a higher authority in our Order, to whom the Worshipful Master is responsible for the correctness of his conduct.*

*That authority is known as the Grand Lodge of Ireland, the governing body over all the Lodges under the jurisdiction of the Irish Constitution of Freemasonry, (**represented in this Province by the Provincial Grand Lodge of.....**)"*

The altar is central to the procession and holds the symbolic volume of sacred law. This in many Freemason Lodges is a Masonic Bible, which is found not much different than any other translation of the biblical text. The encouragement is made that the candidate should hold this in high regard as a point of accountability and teaching. Not only the physical VoSL which is placed upon the altar, signifying its importance as a ritual object in the ritual.

Shapes are used to provide symbols and used as ritual objects meant to teach certain lessons. The square symbolises the 'squared' individual which is the same

length on all sides. Being a character of integrity and morality toward all. The instrument assumed to be a compass; that which forms a circle is used to symbolise and remind one to act according to the line that is drawn by morality and the teachings and precepts of the VoSL.

It is clear that the nature of the Freemason past as speculative masons has left a clear mark on the ritual language and symbolism in the Irish Constitution of Freemasonry. We see that common shapes and tools are used to teach symbolic truths and a reference for guiding one in daily life.

#### 3.3.2.2. Signs and Tokens (Conductor)

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:55-58)** *It is possible that you may have heard Freemasonry described as a Secret Society by people who know nothing of our teaching and principles, or who are not in sympathy with us. But I can assure you that Freemasonry is not a secret society, as our meeting places are well known to the Rulers of the State wherein we reside. Our Laws and constitutions are published and may be obtained and read by any person who so desires, and further there is nothing in our teaching in any way contrary to the Law of the land in which we reside, nor is there anything contrary to the religious or political opinions of any man. In fact, so careful are we that nothing of this nature shall arise, it is a fundamental rule of our Order, that no discussion upon Religion or upon Politics is permitted either at Labour in the Lodge meeting or at the Festive Board. But, Freemasonry is a society possessing secrets which are used as a means of recognition amongst its members. It is my privilege, as well as duty, now to communicate some of these secrets to you.*

*We are known to one another by Sound, by Touch, and by Sight.*

*In Sound, by knocks and words, in Touch, by grips, and in Sight, by regular signs.*

*The Knocks of the Degree are given thus (. . .).*

#### **(W.M. or Conductor gives the knocks of the Degree).**

*Should you, at any time, find yourself outside the closed door of a Masonic Lodge room, and hear these Knocks given on the door, you will understand that within there is a*

*Lodge at Labour on this, the Entered Apprentice Degree.*

*To gain admission to a Lodge meeting it is necessary to be in possession of what is known to us as “the Word.” Cond. Strictly speaking it is a phrase, and is called the “Entrance Phrase.” You have heard this given on your behalf twice during the earlier*

part of the ceremony. It is "By --- ---, --- ---  
---".

*It is important to remember this phrase, because without it you would not be permitted to remain in the Lodge room for the Opening Ceremony. At a certain time in the Opening, two of the Officers, called the Deacons, will be instructed to receive "the Word" from each one present, and when one of the Deacons comes to you, you will quietly whisper this Entrance Phrase, when he will be satisfied that you are qualified to remain in the room.*

*To impress this important phrase on your memory I shall give you a brief account of the manner of your election into Freemasonry.*

*Your name was proposed and seconded in what we call Open Lodge, similar to our present assembly. Certain Brethren were appointed to make enquiries as to your suitability and fitness for membership.*

*At the next meeting these Brethren reported favourably on your behalf, a ballot was taken, which proved unanimous. So strict is our method of election that one black bean or adverse vote would have disqualified you for immediate admission.*

*Your election did not finish at this point. Your name was then submitted to a meeting where a representative from every Lodge in this Province was entitled to be present. Here your name was considered, and again passed. You will thus understand that we are all here "By --- ---". But, the Candidate especially "By --- ---  
---  
---".*

In the discussion surrounding the signs and tokens of Freemasonry we see that the assertion is made that Freemasonry is in fact not secret. This confession is concerned with the acknowledgement of the work and existence of Freemasons and not the words and grips and signs conferred elsewhere. There are three senses mentioned here as a means for ritual enhancement as well as identifying fellow masons. The sense of sound is used by the various knocks of the degree which are constantly a crucial part of opening and closing a lodge, ritual processions, member identification and so forth. Ritual sounds and subsequently language is crucial for proper ritual procedure. Some of the ritual language is omitted here and there can be no way of identifying what is said or what sounds are used without being able to physically and empirically observe the ritual.



Touch is employed by the ritual action of certain hand grips as well as feet position. Throughout the various rituals we can observe how touch plays a role in the ritual experience of the candidate. Again, these grips are not explained in the ritual handbook and remain inaccessible to the outsider. One may note that these are only transmitted as a means of identification and justification for participation in the Freemason fraternity and not a means of some power outside of social power within Freemason hierarchy.

#### 3.3.2.3. Secret Word and Grip

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:58-60) Cond.** *“The Secret Word of this Degree is accompanied by a certain handshake or “Grip.” If you are under examination proving yourself to be an Entered Apprentice Freemason, there is a certain method by which that Word and Grip must be given, which I will now illustrate with the assistance of a well instructed Brother.”*

**(Conductor now asks one of the Brethren of the Lodge to come forward. Conductor gives the covered grip of an Entered Apprentice to the well-instructed Brother (Bro. W.) and says;**

**Cond.** *“What is that?”*

**Bro. W.** *“The Secret Grip of an Entered Apprentice Freemason.”*

**Cond. to Cand.** *“Brother ..... You cannot see the Grip.”*

**Cond. to Bro. W.** *“What is the use of a Mason’s left hand?”*

**Bro. W.** *“To cover his work.”*

**(The Conductor then explains to the Candidate, that under the ruling of Irish Freemasonry, grips are given covered, but for the purpose of demonstration and instruction the grip can be given uncovered in a tyled Lodge.)**

The grip is given covered so the brethren may not see and acts as a certain type of security against potential outsiders wishing to gain unlawful entry into the Lodge and the ritual. The Lodge at this point in the ritual has already been determined right and proper and in the opening of the Lodge to the first degree each brother was tested and confirmed to be able to be present. This is a safety measure embedded into the ritual emphasising what was previously discussed regarding the nature of the ritual actions associated with the different degrees. Only those of a certain social honour

are entitled to the knowledge of the knocks, words and grips. The ritual characters cannot take part or even be present if they do not fulfil the requirements of the test.

**(The Conductor proceeds to explain the method of giving of the grip, reminding the Candidate that it must be given covered. The Conductor then continues to question the well-instructed Brother.)**

**Cond.** *“Wherein did you receive this Grip?”*

**Bro. W.** *“In the body of a Lodge of Freemasons, just, perfect and regular.”*

**Cond.** *“Why just?”*

**Bro. W.** *“Because the V- - - - of the S - - - - L - - was open and to view on the Altar.”*

**Cond.** *“Why perfect?”*

**Bro. W.** *“Because at least seven Brethren were present.”*

**Cond.** *“Why Regular?”*

**Bro. W.** *“Because we were working under a Warrant issued by Grand Lodge.”*

**Cond.** *“Whereon did you receive this Grip?”*

**Bro. W.** *“Kneeling on my left knee on the first of a series of steps leading to the Altar.”*

**Cond.** *“Whereby did you receive it?”*

**Bro. W.** *“By virtue of an Obligation of secrecy, taken and ratified.”*

**Cond.** *“Did you receive anything with this Grip?”*

**Bro. W.** *“Yes, I received a ‘Word’.”*

**Cond.** *“Will you give me that Word?”*

**Bro. W.** *“No, at my initiation I was taught caution, but I will letter it or halve it with you.”*

**Cond.** *“Begin.”*

**Bro. W.** *“No, you being the challenger, you must begin.”*

**(The Word is then spelt alternatively letter by letter by the Cond. with the well-instructed Brother, and then pronounced in its two syllables.)**

**Cond.** *“This Word is known to us as the Secret Word of the degree and must be given accompanied by the Grip as demonstrated to you.”*

***(The Conductor now repeats the foregoing with the Candidate and impresses the necessity of caution if asked for the “Word”.)***

***(The Conductor also will explain that the “Word” and the Grip are not ordinarily used in the ceremonies of the Lodge.)***

The ritual progression picks up a certain pace in the back and forth between the conductor and the well instructed brother. We are reminded that the ritual space of the lodge allows for the various ritual movements. Direct attention is drawn to the altar facing east as a ritual object necessary for the ritual to continue.

The ritual actors of the brethren form a method of teaching and recital for the candidate which is to be repeated by the candidate with the conductor. This shows great character progression as the role of the brethren shift from witness and spectators to more involved. We see that no prerequisites are given for the selection of the ritual actor except that he be well instructed. This would ensure no disruption in the ritual flow and progression whilst serving as a proper example of how the candidate needs to fulfil their own role in the ritual.

***Cond.*** *“With this Grip and this Word - - -, I assist you to rise from the kneeling position, as a duly Obligated Brother Entered Apprentice Freemason.”*

***(The Conductor should move the Candidate back from the Altar at this point, so that he has sufficient space in which to demonstrate the Signs of the Degree. The Candidate still faces East)***

The word is omitted from the ritual directive but is transferred from the conductor to the candidate in the witness of the brethren present. This ritual space is one of teaching the candidate and inferring the ‘secrets’ of Freemasonry upon the candidate. The ritual text reminds constantly the need to almost revere the word as it is not even used in general lodge ceremonies. The special use of language and actions make the ritual more mystical and aid in transferring the participants into the ritual sphere (time, space, orientation, etc.).

The teaching is given whilst the candidate is kneeling and once the candidate has been enlightened by the ritual teaching the candidate is helped up, illustrating the help received from the instructor which enables the candidate to stand upright. This uprightness is not only physical but very much symbolic of the moral and ethical upstanding of the candidate. Still facing east, toward the cornerstone, the candidate

is prepared to receive further teaching in the signs of the first degree of Freemasonry.

The social normative structure is constantly being reinforced with the reference to the witness of the social group, the presence and adherence to the VoSL, correct physical posture and conformity as well as the conference of honour values reinforcing a power hierarchy within the ritual. The conductor in the primary role explicates along with the well-instructed brother and the ritual language is very specific in how many brothers must be present, which ritual objects are of major importance as well as the physical posture associated with the ritual is specifically mentioned and demonstrated by ritual actors throughout the ritual.

#### 3.3.2.4. Signs of the Degree

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:60-61) Cond.** *“The Signs of the Degree are the ‘Due Guard’ and the ‘True Guard’ or ‘Salute’. A few moments ago you were instructed how to advance to the Altar in order to take an Obligation. Place your feet as you were directed by taking a pace forward with your left foot and then bringing your right heel into the hollow of your left foot, so that your feet form a square. Now place your hands as if in the position when taking the Obligation.”*

**(The conductor goes through the movement of advancing as directed, and at the same time directs the Candidate to repeat these same movements.)**

**Cond.** *“You are now standing with the Sign of the “Due Guard”, meaning that the secrets communicated to you will be well and truly guarded by you. The Sign of the “Due Guard” is not used in our ceremonies under the Irish Constitution. It is, however, used elsewhere and might be asked for if you were undergoing examination. You can now drop both hands to your sides.”*

The signs are demonstrated by the conductor as the director of the ritual. The position of the feet as a ritual action serves to bring forth ‘the square’. The square symbolises the way in which the candidate should guard the secrets entrusted to them. These signs, though omitted, cannot be considered crucial or essential truths but only hold special meaning within the freemason fraternity. It is a natural body position symbolically given meaning within Freemason ritual for dramatic emphasis and total sensory envelopment of the ritual candidate as well as actors. The conductor informs the candidate that the ‘Due Guard’ sign is not used in Irish Freemasonry and further halts the notion that these secrets can be considered

essential truths necessary for the society at large to excel and prosper or to understand some great truth.

The ritual actions are employed here as a means of conferring social honour through the knowledge of the signs and brings the candidate to a new level within the social structure.

#### 3.3.2.5. Clauses of Obligation

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:61-63) Cond.** *“Now referring to the Obligation, this may be summed up in one word and that is ‘Secrecy’. You will note that you took the Obligation in the presence of the Most High God, the G - - - - A - - - - - O - T - - U - - - - - , for as such is the Deity referred to in this Degree.*

*Secrecy is impressed upon you. Therefore, you will be especially careful not to discuss or communicate the information you have received with anyone except those lawfully entitled thereto.*

*These are as follows; firstly, to one whom you meet in the body of a Lodge of Freemasons, just, perfect and regular, as we are meeting here now, so that you can recognise each person present as a Brother Entered Apprentice Freemason.*

*Secondly, to a well-known Brother Entered Apprentice Freemason, and that means a Brother whom you have met in a Lodge at Labour.*

*Thirdly, to one vouched to you at the mouth of a well-known Brother Freemason. Masonic vouching can be done only, as we say, “by word of mouth”. That is to say, it must be done in the presence of all concerned. You cannot vouch one Brother to another by writing a letter to that effect, nor can you point to a certain person and say “that man (Fred Brown) is a Brother Freemason”. Let me illustrate this; I meet you in town say, I know you are a Brother Freemason as I have met you in Lodge at Labour. Whilst we are talking, another man joins us whom I also know to be a Brother Freemason, because I have met him in a Lodge at Labour. Therefore, I am perfectly in order and can vouch you to this other man as a Brother Entered Apprentice Freemason. Thus you can vouch, only by word of mouth in the presence of all concerned.*

*Fourthly, by examination, proving to your satisfaction that the stranger is a Freemason. As you have yet a considerable amount to learn in Masonic matters, we ask you not to be tempted to test strangers upon Masonic matters, but rather to wait until you are better instructed as to the correct method of examination.*

*You have promised that you will not write any of the secrets which have been communicated to you. By the secrets we mean the words, signs and grips. Nor may you give a description of the same by any intelligible means, such as depicting or drawing.*

*For by doing so, you are liable to the punishment of suspension from your Lodge, and, although it is not exactly expressed in your Obligation, yet we ask you to do all in your power to prevent anyone else from unlawfully communicating our secrets.*

The obligations here are clear enough. We have noted in our previous discussion that the need for secrecy regarding certain signs, knocks, words and grips is means to create knowledge values which are transferred as part of the social structures within the group. If the secrets were to be divulged, they would lose their value. These clauses serve to protect these ritual phenomena and their value. These clauses are why we can see some omission in the ritual directives of McDade & Tonkin (2013) as they themselves were, and must have been Freemasons to be tasked with and have the knowledge to write a ritual handbook. The punishment for this is very similar to what is known as excommunication which many churches have practiced and some continue to practice today.

#### 3.3.2.6. Penalty and Salute

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:63-64) Cond.** “The Obligation closes by calling to mind the Ancient, though now symbolic, Penalty meted out to the traitor, and the more real Penalty of being deservedly branded as a wretch and unfit for the society of men of honour should you ever knowingly or wilfully violate aught of this your solemn, sincere and voluntary Obligation, being that of an Entered Apprentice Freemason.

Again, may I remind you to pay attention to the position of the feet when giving Salutes, and calling to mind the Ancient Penalty referred to in the Obligation, you give the Salute or ‘True Guard’ as follows;”

***(The Conductor places his own feet in the proper position and directs the Candidate to do likewise, and then explains and directs the Candidate to follow his movements for the Salute.)***

**Cond.** “Should you, at any time, address the Worshipful Master, you would give him this Salute when you rise to speak and repeat the Salute when you finish speaking; or, when crossing the floor of the Lodge room, you would halt when passing the Worshipful Master, face him and salute as instructed, and then proceed across the room.

At a certain part of the Opening ceremony of the Lodge meeting the Brethren will be instructed to 'stand to order in that Degree of Freemasonry on which the Lodge is about to be opened'.

You would stand with your feet thus, as already explained, and with your right hand give the first part of the Sign, and wait until it is ratified by the Worshipful Master; then you would complete the Salute, thus.”

***(Now that the Salute of the Degree has been explained to the Candidate, it must be given from here onwards in the conferring of this degree, at all the proper occasions i.e. When crossing the Lodge Room and after directions from the W.M. It should not be used before this time.)***

The conductor interestingly mentions that the punishment for betrayal in days past no longer applies and is merely employed here symbolically. The clause of secrecy and betrayal if broken, is excommunication from the group. This removes honour and shames the individual. Removing the individual from this sphere, no longer present or impacting on the group, can in many ways be considered a death of social status and value within these normative social structures. This can be understood in the following way. The knowledge (secrets, word, knocks, etc.) is only conferred upon a candidate should they fulfil certain criteria. These criteria are not a 'once-off' but rather subject to constant re-evaluation. If the subject in question fails, at one time or another to satisfy the requirements they are cut off from the group and must justify themselves amongst the lodge members to be recognized as part of the group.

The stance and posture as part of the ritual actions is necessary for the obligation and salutes to be considered proper. The focus on the stance of the feet and arms is significant as it may indicate the understanding and worldview in that one makes an oath not only with one's spirit but also with one's body. This twofold requirement highlights the importance of the oath as multiple parts, physical, emotional, intellectual and physical are involved and important at this point in the ritual.

In this ritual we see that the candidate is instructed to salute the Worshipful Master as the highest within the lodge space and shows the honour of the Master. This ritual repetition also serves as a means to teach the candidate the proper way and more effectively transition the candidate from the liminal to the new orientation of the

Entered Apprentice. Cognitively this ritual repetition makes sense and ratifies the salute and physical expectations. The response is used in addressing the Worshipful Master as well as when taking direction from the Worshipful Master. The conductor is still the primary ritual role player fulfilling much of the ritual actions and speaker of the ritual language, serving as a teacher, guider and supervisor to the ritual.

#### 3.3.2.7. Working Tools

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:66-67) Cond.** *Now, from what you have heard of Freemasonry in general, you will realise that although we call ourselves Masons, yet we do not take part in any manual labour as performed by the Operative Mason. But we do use certain implements of the Operative mason to impress upon us moral lessons, and these implements are called the Working Tools.*

*The Working Tools of the Entered Apprentice are the Twenty-four Inch Gauge and the Common Gavel.*

*The Twenty-four Inch Gauge is an implement twenty-four inches long divided by marks into twenty-four equal parts.*

*The Operative Mason uses it to bring the work he is engaged upon to the required dimensions.*

*It has been adopted in Speculative Masonry to represent the twenty-four hours of the day by its main divisions, hence its symbolic use is to teach us so to dispose of our daily life, that we may spend a part in our usual vocation, part in rest and recreation, not forgetting a part in the service in our Creator. In the symbolic language of Freemasonry, the Cond. Twenty-four-inch Gauge becomes the symbol of Time well spent.*

*The Common Gavel is made use of by the Operative Mason to knock off the corners and excrescences of the rough stone, and thus fit it better for the builders' use.*

*It has been adopted in Speculative Masonry as a symbol to admonish us of the duty of divesting our minds and consciences of all vices and impurities of life, thereby fitting ourselves as living stones for that spiritual building, not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.*

**(When the Conductor doing the working has completed the instruction, the Conductor leading the Candidate will direct the Candidate to salute the W.M.)**

**Cond.** *“Salute the Worshipful Master as an Entered Apprentice Freemason.”*



***(The S.D. will then pass behind the Candidate and Conductor and join the J.D. to form the procession in the North. The Candidate will then be conducted to the East preceded by the Deacons, who will divide at the foot of the dais to allow the Candidate and Conductor to stand between them, all will face the East.)***

***Cond. "Salute the Worshipful Master as an Entered Apprentice Freemason."***

***(The W.M. will clothe the Candidate with the appropriate Apron or he may ask another Brother to do this on his behalf.)***

The first symbolic ritual object, the Twenty-Four-Inch gauge is explained as a symbol for the candidate to divide their time in a day in a way which is balanced and proper in the opinion of the group. The ritual object is described functionally by its operative use and then by its symbolic or speculative understanding. The Gavel can be used symbolically in the candidate's life to 'smooth the edges' of their spiritual existence to better conform to the ethics and values of Freemasonry based upon the VoSL. After receiving the ritual instruction, the acknowledgement is given to the worshipful master by the candidate and then be joined by the deacons as part of further ritual movement. We see that east still holds special significance as they continue to face east as the candidate salutes the Worshipful Master and prepares to receive the apron.

#### 3.3.2.8. Investiture of Apron (Conductor)

***(McDade & Tonkin 2013:68-69) "Brother ....., I invest you with the Distinguishing Badge of an Entered Apprentice Freemason. This Badge is more ancient than the Roman Eagle or the Golden Fleece, more honourable than the Garter, or any known Order of Chivalry, since it is the bond of friendship and the badge of brotherhood.***

***You will observe that this Apron is made from the Skin of a Lamb and as the Lamb has been from time immemorial the universally acknowledged Emblem of purity and innocence, it will therefore remind you of that purity of life and action that should always characterise a Freemason and which is essential to your gaining admittance to that Grand Lodge above, where the blessed ever rest in peace.***

***We trust you will live many years to wear this Badge with pleasure to yourself, usefulness to the Craft and honour to the Lodge in which you have been initiated; and let me further exhort you never to disgrace this Badge, for be assured it will never disgrace you.***

*Let me add to the foregoing observations that you are never to put on this Badge and enter a Lodge where there is a Brother against whom you may entertain any feelings of animosity. In such a case it is expected that you will invite him to withdraw in order that you may settle your differences amicably, which having been effected, you may then clothe yourselves and enter the Lodge and work together with that Love and Harmony which should always characterise Freemasons. But if, unfortunately, your differences should be of such a nature as not to be so easily adjusted, it was better that one or both of you retire rather than the harmony of the Lodge should be interrupted by your presence.*

*Furthermore, I must strongly impress upon you that all subjects touching on Religion and Politics are strictly forbidden at our meetings, and you must be careful never to introduce anything connected with these subjects which could in any way diminish or mar the Peace, Love and Harmony which prevails at our gatherings.”*

**(The W.M. will then recite or read the Charge or he may request another Brother to deliver it on his behalf. The Charge, which is to be found in the Laws and Constitutions)**

This apron closes the ritual with the further endowment of symbolic value object. Along with the investiture, an explanation of the material is given as a symbol of purity and innocence, the lamb. The apron of the mason is used when working and symbolises the spirit in which the candidate (or wearer) should work. The honour is ratified in this part of the ritual as before they were divested of part of their own clothing they are given a new orientation symbolised by the apron and the Badge of the Entered Apprentice. The candidate has been on the receiving end as the primary reason for the ritual itself. The ritual aims at bringing someone on the outside, to within the ranks of Freemasonry as a means to bestow upon them the ways and teachings of Freemasonry. The candidate is at this point regarded as an Entered Apprentice of Freemasonry within the Irish constitution in South Africa.

Furthermore, the candidate is implored not to bring and disruption or ill-feelings into the lodge or its works. This is connected with rather sensitive issues such as politics and religion. What may be peculiar is that Freemasons do not consider Freemasonry a religion, as how would a religion not be allowed to discuss religious matters or interests? The focus is clearly on something beyond mere religion but focuses on a greater common spirituality and value system.

### 3.4. Degree of the Fellow Craft

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:83-85) (It is recommended that the Conductor should retire from the Lodge Room, and assist in the preparation of the Candidate. When the Candidate is ready, the Knocks for the Degree are given by the Tyler.)**

#### 3.4.1. Ritual begins

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:83-84) I.G.** “Worshipful Master, there is an alarm at the Candidate’s Porch.”

**(If there is not a special door for Candidates, the I.G. should use the following:**

- “Worshipful Master, there is an alarm at the door of the Porch.”)

**W.M.** “Ascertain the cause.”

**(I.G. knocks on the door, opens the door and enquires.)**

**I.G.** “Who comes here?”

**(The Conductor or the Tyler may give the replies to the I.G.)**

**Cond.** “Brother ....., who has served his just and lawful time as an Entered Apprentice, now seeks to be passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft.”

**(The I.G. closes the door and reports to the W.M.)**

**I.G.** “Brother ....., who has served his just and lawful time as an Entered Apprentice, now seeks to be passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft.”

**W.M.** “How does he hope to obtain so great an honour?”

**(I.G. knocks on the door, and waits until answered by the knocks from without.)**

**I.G.** “How does he hope to obtain so great an honour?”

**Cond.** “By the benefit of a password which he has not yet received, but which his Conductor will give for him, by permission of the Worshipful Master.”

**(The I.G. reports to the W.M.)**

**I.G.** “By the benefit of a password which he has not yet received, but which his Conductor will give for him, by permission of the Worshipful Master.”

**W.M.** “Let the Deacons attend in the North West.”

**(The W.M. should wait until the Deacons are in position in the North West before continuing.)**

**W.M.** “Admit him on receiving the ‘word’ from his Conductor.”

***(I.G. knocks on the door, waits until answered by the knocks from without; takes the Word and Grip from the Conductor, and admits the Candidate and Conductor.)***

The ritual begins very much in the same way as the entered apprentice degree ritual. There are no special requirements for the qualification of the space wherein the ritual may be performed different to the first ritual. The lodge must be considered right and proper as a consecrated space with the VoSL open upon the altar, where all brethren present are vouched and proven to be brothers of the Fraternity. However, the hierarchy within Freemasonry is here further exemplified as this ritual space cannot hold any participant/observer who has not been conferred the degree of the Fellow craft Mason. Each brother present is tested and vouched for on the signs and words of the Fellow craft degree upon admittance and opening as well as calling up of the lodge. Only once this has been done is the ritual space considered right and proper. The introductory actions remain a back and forth qualifying process for admittance of the candidate at the porch which is situated in the western side of the lodge. The inner guard protects the space from potential intruders and also in that way guards the secrets of the society and their rituals.

***(The Conductor leads the Candidate to the North-West. corner, to a position to the North of the Senior Warden, and halts the Candidate in a position about two (2) meters in front of a kneeling cushion/stool. The Deacons should be in a position just to the East of the kneeling cushion, with the Senior Deacon. to the North of the Candidate and the Junior Deacon. to the South, both facing inwards.)***

***(The Chaplain will have the appropriate prayer ready and may stand at the Altar or near the Candidate, if more convenient.)***

The conductor again is the primary character here who leads the candidate throughout the ritual and ensures that everything is done according to the tradition and directives set out by this ritual handbook. The candidate is taken to a north western space where the deacons attend as the chaplain reads or performs a prayer not included in our discussion here. The deacons act as ritual witnesses at the beginning of this ritual and provide a blessing upon the candidate.

***(McDade & Tonkin 2013:85) I.G. "Brother ....., on being admitted to receive the Degree of Entered Apprentice, you were received as a stranger in darkness, with a halter about your neck and a hostile weapon pointed at your naked and***

*defenceless breast. The Masonic significance of these various points having been duly explained to you, we now receive you as a Brother in the Light, on the angle of the Square, thereby enjoining upon you to see that all your dealings with your fellow men are strictly honourable, straight-forward and on the Square."*

**(The I.G. turns towards W.M.)**

*I.G. "Worshipful Master, the Candidate has been received according to ancient custom."*

*W.M. "Let him kneel, and receive the benefit of prayer. Rise Brethren."*

**(As the Candidate kneels, all the brethren rise. The Chaplain reads the prayer.)**

*Chap. "We supplicate Thine aid, O Merciful Lord, on behalf of ourselves and of him who now kneels before Thee: may the Work begun in Thy Name be continued to Thy glory, and evermore established in us, by obedience to Thy Holy precepts. Amen"*

**All the Brethren respond:** *"So mote it be."*

*W.M. "Let the Candidate rise and follow his Conductor."*

*"Brethren, be seated."*

The worshipful master is petitioned by the inner guard here and is vouched for according to the right and proper way as previously discussed. The worshipful master again at the top of the ritual hierarchy gives his consent for the ritual to continue. The recalling of the phenomena of the first ritual is prominent because it takes the candidate back to the ritual space and time not only of the actual first entered apprentice ritual but again to the ancient masonic tradition. The stance of the feet is emphasised as symbolic to the symbolism of the square, that squared behaviour of the Freemason.

The Chaplain reads a prayer as a blessing on the journey toward the degree of the fellow craft. The prayer calls for intercession on behalf of a great deity. The language is positive toward the intercession of this deity in the life of the individual. No explicit reference is made to the source or context of the prayer but it is significant in that it directs the source of the knowledge and precepts to a deity and not to themselves.

The brethren in attendance act again here as witnesses to the candidate's initiation into the second degree. The language may still be considered traditional and show only small revisions compared to what we may imagine existed in the first ritual handbook of the freemasons. It is clear that the ritual space is significantly

connected to the ritual actors as each actor has their own allocated space within the lodge. This means the space is rigid in its substantive understanding but more functional in its use of this ritual space as can be seen from the ritual movement.

***(McDade & Tonkin 2013:86-87) (Candidate rises, and is led by the Conductor three times round the Lodge room, preceded by the Deacons. On the first time round, when passing the W.M., the Deacons should halt at the South-East corner of the Altar, the Candidate and Conductor will halt, face the W.M. and salute him with the sign of the Entered Apprentice. All will then proceed, passing in front of the J.W. and behind the S.W.)***

The candidate is led by the conductor in front and the deacons behind and move in a clockwise direction and halt to salute the worshipful Master with the sign of the first degree. This is important for bringing the candidate into the ritual time and reinforcing the ritual progression, linking the second ritual further with the first ritual in a way that creates a larger narrative and greater ritual progression. Once the sign has been given, the ritual continues with the procession continuing clockwise around the lodge room, moving between the Wardens.

***(On the second time round, following the same salute and sign in front of the W.M., all will proceed passing in front of the J.W., but in the West the Deacons should pass in front of the S.W. halting just to the North of the Senior Warden's table, facing East in readiness to proceed East along the North side of the Lodge whilst the Candidate with the Conductor halt at the Senior Warden's right hand.***

***The Conductor takes the Candidate's right hand and with it gives the knocks of the degree on the right shoulder of the S.W. The Conductor then moves the Candidate back about two paces. The Senior Warden waits until the Conductor and Candidate are in position.)***

The second circular movement around the room follows the same movement as before but instead of passing behind the Senior Warden they pass in front of both Senior and Junior Wardens.

The candidate and other ritual actors are now placed facing east, the direction symbolic of truth and enlightenment, justice and foundation. The candidate's hand is used by the conductor to demonstrate the knocks of the degree of the fellow craft on the shoulder of the Senior Warden. The right hand is used, which is the same hand bore to show the intention and readiness to work for Freemasonry in the ritual of the

first degree. The senior warden here, and in the ritual dialogue to follow, acts as a doorway that must be passed before the candidate can continue. This supersedes the permission of the Worshipful Master that the candidate may proceed. The conductor petitions on behalf of the candidate to the Warden. The qualification for this progression within the ranks of Freemasonry is conferred by means of a secret password. This secret knowledge may be non-essential to an outsider but within the Masonic social structures the secrets and passwords as well as teachings of freemasonry carry great social value. The conductor first seeks permission from the warden before he continues to seek permission from the worshipful master.

An employee of a company must first approach his supervisor regarding a promotion, his supervisor will then contact the manager, the manager then may contact the owner of the business or CEO. In very much the same way here the dialogue and ritual process highlights the social hierarchy of the Freemason ritual space with the Worshipful Master at the top.

**S.W.** *“Who comes here?”*

**Cond.** *“Brother....., who has served his just and lawful time as and Entered Apprentice, now seeks to be passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft.”*

**S.W.** *“How does he hope to obtain so great an honour?”*

**Cond.** *“By the benefit of a password which he has not yet received, but which I, his Conductor, will give for him, by permission of the Worshipful Master.”*

**S.W.** *“Advance and give it.”*

***(The Conductor alone approaches the S.W., to whom he gives the word and grip of a Fellow Craft.)***

**S.W.** *“Let him pass.”*

***(The Conductor leads the Candidate forward between the Senior Warden and the table. The procession now resumes and on coming in front of the Worshipful Master the Deacons divide and come to a halt facing the East, with sufficient space between them for the Conductor and the Candidate. The Conductor halts the Candidate facing towards the Worshipful Master and both salute as Entered Apprentices.)***

The conductor qualifies himself to the warden by providing the grip and word of the second degree and continues to lead the candidate around the lodge space. The deacons halt on either side of the candidate and conductor, as escorts and

witnesses to the journey and initiation of the candidate. Facing east once again the candidate and conductor salute the worshipful master as an entered apprentice. Ritual repetition here continues to create a flow to the ritual and highlight the journey that the candidate is on, grounding the ritual experience in the ritual experience of the first degree. Emotionally and psychologically this is an effective way of submersing the candidate or ritual participant in the ritual time and space, more affected by the ritual phenomena. The conductor, with the permission of the Senior Warden (gate in the west) now petitions the worshipful master on behalf of the candidate. Once petitioned the ritual continues as more petitions must be made. As the candidate is still only an Entered Apprentice the entered apprentice salute is used. This reminds the candidate of the previous dispensation, orientation and in fact the journey from an entered apprentice to the new teaching and transition through the liminal phase to reintegration as a Fellow Craft Mason.

***Cond.** "Worshipful Master, I present to you our Brother Entered Apprentice....., who seeks to be passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft. He has duly passed the Western Gate."*

***W.M.** "Take him to the Senior Warden and crave his fraternal assistance in having the Candidate placed in the proper position in order to take the Obligation peculiar to this Degree."*

***(The Conductor and the Candidate should salute as Entered Apprentices and then take one step back, so that the Senior Deacon can cross from North to South to join the Junior Deacon. The procession proceeds South and then West of the Altar to a position facing the Senior Warden and about two steps to the West of the Altar. As they come to this position the Deacons again divide and come to a halt facing the Senior Warden, the Senior Deacon to the South and the Junior Deacon to the North. The Conductor halts the Candidate between the Deacons also facing the S.W. in the West.)***

The deacons continue to be a part of the ritual procession as they escort the candidate, acting as witnesses and ritual actors. The ritual procession halts in front of the altar holding the VoSL which has been ratified as being binding on the conscience of the individual candidate or the Lodge at large. The conductor again petitions the senior warden and the candidate is placed in the proper ritual position to take an obligation. Facing east as symbolic of facing and being ready to receive the truth and enlightenment of masonic teachings. The Senior Warden now too takes



up the role of a teacher in the ritual as the warden instructs the candidate, with the help of the conductor, to be in the appropriate position. This position is very specific and is explained below. The symbolism of the square shines through at many points in the first and second ritual and reminds the candidate that their words, actions and thoughts are all to be measured against the conduct of the square, fair and just and righteous, equal on all sides.

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:89) Cond.** *“Brother Senior Warden, by direction of the Worshipful Master, I present to you our Brother Entered Apprentice who seeks to be passed to the Degree of Fellow Craft and crave your fraternal assistance in having him placed in the proper position in order to take the Obligation peculiar to this Degree.”*

**S.W.** *“Let the Candidate stand upright, and face the East.”*

**(The Conductor turns the Candidate right about so that he faces East towards the Altar. As they do this, the Deacons turn inwards to face each other, and remain in that position until after the “Working Tools” have been presented. They will move East and West as necessary to remain aligned with the Candidate throughout the workings, until after the “Working Tools” have been presented).**

**(The S.W. should proceed slowly through the following instructions so that the Conductor can guide and direct the Candidate, and ensure that he is in the proper position. The W.M. will not acknowledge the following salutes.)**

**S.W.** *“Let him advance and salute as an Entered Apprentice.”*

*“Let him take one step forward with his right foot, placing the heel of his left foot in the hollow of the right forming a square.”*

*“Let him kneel on his right knee on the second of a series of steps, squaring his left leg.”*

*“Let him place his right hand on the V- - - - of the S- - - - L- - and raise his left arm squared from the forearm.”*

**(The Conductor should see that the Candidate is in the proper position, directing the J.D. to support the upraised arm with the aid of a Square and the Director’s wand. The Square is placed under the Candidate’s elbow. The conductor should also ensure that the Candidate is comfortable so that he is not distracted during the Obligation.)**

**Cond.** *“Worshipful Master, the Candidate is now in the proper position to take the Obligation.”*

**(The W.M. is the proper person to give the assurances and to administer the Obligation, but this may be done by the Conductor or another Brother on his behalf.)**

The conductor and the candidate have received affirmation from the Worshipful Master and so return to the Senior Warden and escalate the role of the Senior warden to a ritual character necessary for the ritual. After the candidate rises and is facing the east, signifying the impending teachings and the candidate’s readiness to receive them, the senior warden assists the candidate to be in the proper position. The position described by the ritual text are for the feet, legs, arms and hands. The feet are to form a square by placing the heel of the left in the hollow of the right. This does form a square with some imagination. However, this is only one part of the position. The right knee must be on the second of a series of steps squaring the left leg in addition to the feet. The right hand of the candidate is then placed on the VoSL which is upon the altar and the left arm is raised, squared from the forearm.

I have attempted this position many times but I do not imagine I am doing it right. It is difficult to execute, requires quite a lot of concentration and is rather uncomfortable to remain in. This would explain the need for the Senior warden to assist the candidate. If the candidate would be unable to achieve the proper position without assistance, it would be quite interesting to note with regards to the social dynamic of the group as well as the transmission of knowledge within Freemasonry.

Unfortunately, without further access we are unable to conclude the likelihood or even the right and proper position used here.

**W.M.** *“Brother....., as we are now about to communicate to you the secrets peculiar to this Degree, we require you to take a further Obligation.”*

*“With regard to this Obligation, I give you my assurance that there is nothing in it contrary to your religious belief, political opinion, or the allegiance you owe to your Sovereign or the Rulers of the State in which you reside; neither does it contain anything hurtful to your feelings as a man of honour.”*

*“I can further assure you, that with the exception of yourself, each Brother here present has already taken this or a similar Obligation.”*

*“Having these assurances from me, are you now willing to take this Obligation, and by it become further bound to us, as we are to one another?”*

**(Candidate gives his assent.)**

**W.M. (One knock)** *“Rise Brethren.”*

#### 3.4.1.1. Obligation

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:90-91) W.M.** *“You will now say the pronoun ‘I’, followed by your name in full and then repeat the Obligation after me.”*

*“I, **(Candidate’s name in full)** of my own free-will and accord, in the presence of the Most High God, the **Great Geometrician of the Universe**, and of this worthy, worshipful and warranted Lodge of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons regularly constituted, properly assembled and duly dedicated in His Most Holy Name, do hereby and hereon, solemnly and sincerely promise, vow and declare that I will ever hele, conceal and never will reveal unlawfully aught of the hidden points, secrets or mysteries of or belonging to this the Second or Fellow Craft Degree, which have heretofore, shall now or may hereafter become known to me in any way whatsoever.”*

This obligation of secrecy is the same for all three degrees and so will not be included in its entirety for the second and third degrees. The only difference is the reference to a fellow Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft or Master Mason respectively. The clauses of the obligation however are different and this will be considered. Importantly, the candidate is encouraged to commit only on their own free will and personal belief that they can fulfil the expected obligations.

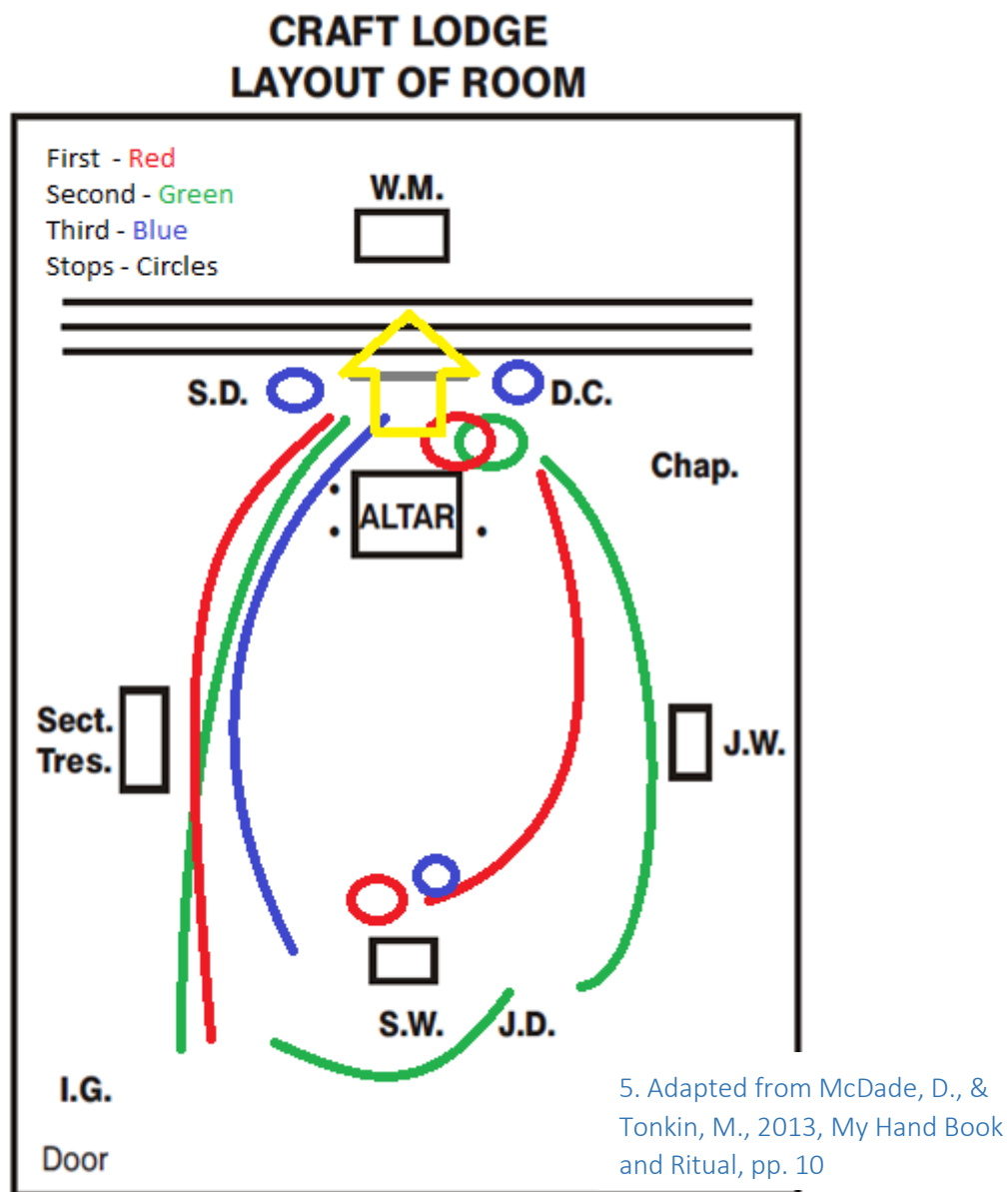
We see that the rituals follow the same ritual procedure. We will map this out in the ensuing discussion by means of tabulating the phenomena in a way that clearly illustrates the similarity in structure and execution. Even though we do see variation in the ritual movements between the rituals we must note that the core variation is purely content based. The structure remains greatly unchanged.

The ritual movement observed so far is crucial to the flow and progression of the ritual. The movement is interceded by salutes and teachings as part of the journey of the candidate. Major focus is placed upon the direction of facing and direction of movement. The procession follows a clockwise direction focusing on the eastern direction. We know that the East is indicative of the cornerstone and core foundational point within masonry and Freemasons here illustrate the same symbolism. This ritual movement is made possible and relies greatly on the set up of

the lodge room. If the Worshipful Master and the altar were placed in the West, for instance, the direction from which the candidate receives teaching and receives the obligation would no longer be the East and thus would not be in line with masonic theory. All characters are firmly placed and though some have a role in the movement of the ritual the structure is rigid and predefined.

***(The Candidate ratifies the Obligation by saluting with his lips the VoSL., or in a manner which can be acknowledged as acceptable.)***

*\*(The ritual movement is depicted below with the ritual starting at the entrance or door)*



### 3.4.1.2. Signs and Tokens

***(McDade & Tonkin 2013:92-93) Cond. "As in your previous Degree, so once again in this Degree we are known to one another by Sound, by Touch, and by Sight. In***

*Sound, by knocks and words, in Touch, by grips, and in Sight, by certain regular signs.”*

***The Knocks of the Degree are given thus***

*( ... .. )*

***(The W.M. or Conductor gives the Knocks of the Degree.)***

*“Should you, at any time, find yourself outside the closed door of a Masonic Lodge room, and hear these Knocks given on the door, you will understand that within there is a Lodge at Labour on this the Degree of Fellow Craft.”*

*“To gain admission to a Lodge working in this Degree you would have to be in possession of a “password”, which is accompanied by a certain Grip or handshake. The Password is revealed in a certain portion of Scripture which refers to an incident in the history of the Israelites when they were ruled over by Judges. At this particular time Jephthah was judge over Israel and had succeeded in subduing the turbulent Ammonites. The Ephraimites were jealous of Jephthah’s victory, and annoyed that they were not called to take part in the fight against the Ammonites and so share in the spoils of war.”*

***Cond.*** *“They angered Jephthah so greatly that he was determined to punish them. You will now hear the first six verses of the twelfth Chapter of Judges read, which will tell you how Jephthah punished the Ephraimites, and also reveal the word which is used as the Password for this Degree.”*

*(The conductor, Chaplain or any other Brother, should now read the portion of Scripture mentioned above. The Conductor will explain the Password with its accompanying Grip, impressing the fact that the Word and the Grip must be given at the same time.)*

Though we can surely recall the biblical tale mentioned and look at the text with a simple textual analysis and note all the words which could possibly be used as the word for this degree. However, the first six verses of chapter twelve of judges has over one hundred words in the Hebrew and more than 150 words in the NKJV translation. Therefore, it would be irresponsible and rather unfruitful to make any assumptions as to the word without any further hints or indication from the ritual text and dialogue. Unfortunately, we do not have these indicators and so cannot determine, even with some certainty what the word may be.

The ritual text here is specific and amidst declarations elsewhere in the ritual handbook we can understand that the Volume of Sacred Law used here would be some Christian or Masonic Bible. The Bible being the conventional VoSL in the Irish

constitution cannot be ratified. It is clear that the specific Lodge, Erin-Go-Bragh, where this ritual handbook was obtained uses the Christian Bible as its VoSL. This could purely be contextual but without further guidelines any discussion would ultimately end in assumptions. We can only use what we can observe from the ritual handbook in the description of the ritual phenomena.

**Cond.** *“Thus to gain admission to a Lodge at Labour on this the Degree of Fellow Craft, after the knocks of the Degree have been given by the Tyler and the door is opened, you will give this Password and Grip, covered with the Left hand, to the Inner Guard, who should permit you to enter.”*

*“At a certain part of the Ceremony of calling up the Lodge from the Degree of Entered Apprentice to this the Degree of Fellow Craft, the Deacons may be instructed to receive the Word from each Brother present, and when one of the Deacons comes to you, you will quietly whisper the Word accompanied by the Grip covered with the Left hand, when he will be satisfied that you are qualified to remain in the room.”*

The word, grip and knocks are crucial for being part of the community of Freemasons of the degree of the Fellow Craft. The role of these rituals words, sounds and grips are for identification and justification for being able to actively partake in the happenings, both ritual and administrative aspects of the Freemason society. These qualifiers are protecting the social value and hierarchies of the group by being defined as ‘secret’ and being conferred only in specific circumstances. The structure of this section is similar to the entered apprentice teaching, except, naturally, the content of the sound, touch and sight.

#### 3.4.1.3. Secret Word and Grip (**Conductor**)

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:94)** *“The Secret Word of this Degree is - - - - -. It is also accompanied by a Grip given thus .... (**Demonstrate**) and covered. In giving this Word under examination you will use the same caution as was impressed upon you in your previous Degree. The Word and Grip are not used ordinarily in our ceremonies, but may be asked for, from you, if proving yourself as a Brother Fellow Craft.”*

*“At the door of the porch in the Great Temple of King Solomon there were placed two pillars of brass, one at the left and other at the right side of the entrance. That on the left was called - - - -, that on the right was called - - - - -. In the Hebrew tongue- - - -*

means “In Strength” and - - - - - means “To Establish”. Thus the combined words may be interpreted as ‘I, the Lord, will establish this my house in strength’.”

“The Pillars were placed there also to remind the people of Israel of the wonderful protection of the Almighty who led their forefathers through the wilderness with a Pillar of Cloud by day and a Pillar of Fire by night.”

“With this Secret Word - - - - - and this Secret Grip, I assist you to rise from the kneeling position, as a duly obligated Fellow Craft Freemason.”

The following section gives some indication of the grip and how the accompanying word plays a role in the ritual phenomena and not merely in the functional aspect of social or administrative lodge procedures.

#### 3.4.1.4. Signs of the Degree (**Conductor**)

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:95)** “The manner of your preparation for this degree is similar to that for your first Degree, but this time your Right breast was bared, your Left arm and your Right knee. Again you were divested of all money and articles of value. You were not blindfolded as you have previously been admitted to the Light of Freemasonry.”

“When you advanced to the Altar to take the Obligation, you advanced and saluted first as an Entered Apprentice. You then took a step forward with your right foot and placed the heel of your left foot in the hollow of the right foot forming a square. Now place your feet in that position, and your hands as when taking the Obligation.”

**(The Conductor goes through the movement of advancing as directed and at the same time directs the Candidate to repeat these same movements.)**

**Cond.** “Now with your feet in that position, you give the Signs of the Degree and they are the ‘Due Guard’ and the ‘True Guard’ or the ‘Salute’.

“Now position your hands as when taking the Obligation. You are now standing with the Sign of the ‘Due Guard’ of the Degree. The Sign is not used in our ceremonies under the Irish Constitution. It is, however, used elsewhere and might be asked for if you were undergoing examination. You can now drop both hands to your sides.”

The signs of the degree are given here and some of the preparation of the candidate is explained. The candidate is clearly divested of money and articles of value as in the first degree. The divestiture of these elements is symbolic of coming into the fraternity “on a level” and not because of material justification. The baring of certain parts of the candidate’s body is slightly different in that this time it is the right breast, the left arm and the right knee. This shift is peculiar and one is left here to wonder

what role the difference in preparation of the candidate has on other ritual phenomena such as the salutes and signs of the degree. Unfortunately, no specific explanation is given as to the symbolic value or meaning of the preparation as in the previous degree. We are reminded not to make assumptions or value judgements but rather reserve such exercises for the reflective task. It is important that we merely describe what is provided by ritual observation.

The following table illustrates some key differences in the preparation of the candidate between the first and second degree of Freemasonry of the Irish Constitution in South Africa. The candidate is not blindfolded as before because of the enlightenment of the candidate as indicated by the introduction to the lights of Freemasonry in the Entered Apprentice Degree. There is also no mention of a halter being placed around the neck of the candidate here, even though the hint is given that “the manner of your preparation for this Degree is similar to that for your first Degree”. The candidate previously knelt on their right knee, indicating that the right knee being bare is significant to the ritual and acts in more than a purely visual sense in that if one was kneeling on an exposed knee versus a covered knee, the former would be felt more. The ritual phenomena clearly utilises a number of senses to further bring the candidate into the ritual realm and increase the ritual experience.

<b>Entered Apprentice Degree</b>	<b>Degree of the Fellow Craft</b>
Bare Breast – Token of Sincerity	Bare Right Breast
Bare Right Arm – Willingness to Work	Bare Left Arm
Bare Left Knee – Humility	Bare Right Knee
Blindfolded – ‘Unenlightened’	Not Blindfolded
Divested of material things	Divested of material things
Slipshod – Ratifying obligation	
Halter around the Neck - Submission	

Table 1 – Comparison of Key Ritual Phenomena 1

#### 3.4.1.5. Clauses of Obligation (**Conductor**)

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:96-97)** “Now referring to the Obligation, it is composed of three clauses, Secrecy,

*Obedience and Charity. You will note that the name of the Deity is changed, and in this Degree the Most High God is referred to as the G- - - - G- - - - - - - - - - O- T- - U- - - - - .”*



*“You will be careful to preserve the Secrets of this Degree, and not communicate them, except to those lawfully entitled thereto, as set out in the Obligation.”*

*“When being vouched, or vouching others, you will see that you are vouched as Brother Fellow Crafts, before entering into any conversation concerning this Degree.”*

*“As regards satisfying yourself by examination of an unknown person, we would ask you to wait a little longer before you attempt such an experiment, so that you may learn more of our teaching, and in due time receive instruction as to the proper method of examination.”*

*“The second clause of obedience impresses on you the necessity of attending to the meetings and observing the duties of your Lodge. You have promised to answer all regular signs and summonses. We believe, that in years gone by, it was the custom of the Master, or some Brother deputed by him, to visit personally the members of the particular Lodge, giving the members notice of a meeting about to be held, and also giving a certain sign”*

The name of the deity differs from the first degree. Previously, the Great Architect of the Universe, here it is omitted. We can tell by the missing characters and the direction from the conductor that the name is different here. Though it is omitted here, we note that the authors were sloppy and did not remove all instances from the ritual handbook. We see that in the ‘Obligation’ prior (McDade & Tonkin 2013:90-91), the text includes the full name for the deity in this degree. It is the Great Geometrician of the Universe. We see that both names are largely based on Masonic terminology but very clearly demonstrate the hybridity between operative and speculative masonic philosophic or spiritual framing of a supreme deity. Without more information not much more can be said about this here. The indication is given that the deity is in fact the same and it is only the name by which Freemasons refer to as this deity that changes. This does correlate with the fact that a certain religious confession is not necessary for Freemason membership so long as there is some kind of religious or spiritual accountability for the individual.

A call to secrecy regarding the signs, knocks, words, tokens and salutes is affirmed here. Obedience refers to adherence to attend and be involved in lodge matters and fulfilling duties expected. For instance, the Worshipful Master would be obliged to attend the ritual ceremony or else the Lodge would no longer be considered ‘Tyled’

and right for ritual. That is that all ritual characters, objects and spaces have been determined so according to the guidelines set out in our introductory discussion.

#### 3.4.1.6. Charity Clause and Penalty

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:97-99) Cond.** *“In the third clause of Charity, you have promised to help, relieve and assist poor and necessitous Fellow Crafts, they making application to you as such.”*

*“Before you grant any such request, you will note you are expected to satisfy yourself that the Brother making the request is a fit and worthy object of relief, and further, you are protected by the provision made in the Obligation which releases you from giving the required assistance should it be likely to prove prejudicial to your own interests, or those of your family or close personal friends.”*

*“As a test of your sincerity I now ask you, can you give me anything to assist the well deserving case of a destitute Brother? Can you place any contribution of money on this Square?”*

**(The Conductor holds out a square or trowel to the Candidate and waits until the Candidate gives some reply, probably stating that he has no money at the moment. No contribution should be offered on his behalf.)**

**Cond.** *“Brother, this is not done to cause embarrassment, but for certain reasons.”*

*“Firstly, to prove to the assembled Brethren that you are properly prepared, because if you were able to produce even the smallest coin or article of value, the conferring of this Degree would have proved irregular.”*

*“Secondly, to remind you in years to come that at one time in your life you stood actually penniless in the midst of plenty.”*

*“Thirdly, to impress on you to be ever ready to listen to the requests of necessitous Brethren, and to make every effort to assist them, guided by the provisions made as to the giving of such relief.”*

*“You have promised to observe this Obligation by bearing in mind the Ancient, though now symbolic Penalty, and binding yourself under the real penalty of being deservedly branded as a wretch, base, faithless and unworthy to be received among men of honour should you ever violate this your solemn Obligation.”*

#### 3.4.1.7 True Guard and Salute

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:99-100) Cond.** *“Again may I remind you to pay attention to the position of the feet when giving Salutes, and calling to mind the Ancient Penalty*

referred to in the Obligation of this degree, you give the Salute or 'True Guard' as follows;"

**(The Conductor places his own feet in the proper position and directs the Candidate to do likewise, and then explains and directs the Candidate to follow his movements for the Salute.)**

**Cond.** "Should you have occasion to address the Worshipful Master when the Lodge should be at Labour on this Degree, you would give him this Salute when you rise to speak and repeat the Salute when you finish speaking; or, when crossing the floor of the Lodge room, you would halt when passing the Worshipful Master, face him and salute as instructed, and then proceed across the room."

"At a certain part of the ceremony of "Calling up" the Lodge, the Brethren may be instructed to 'stand to order in that Degree of Code. Freemasonry to which the Lodge is about to be called up'. You would stand with your feet thus, and give the first part of the Salute thus, wait until it is ratified by the Worshipful Master, and then would complete the Salute, thus."

**(Now that the Salute of the Degree has been explained to the Candidate, it must be given from here onwards in the conferring of this degree, at all the proper occasions i.e. When crossing the Lodge Room and after directions from the W.M. It should not be used before this time.)**

#### 3.4.1.8. Working Tools

**(McDade & Tonkin 2013:101-102) Cond.** "As in your former Degree, so in this, we use certain implements of the Operative Mason which teach us moral lessons, and known as the Working Tools of the Degree."

"The Working Tools of the Fellow Craft Degree are the Square, the Level and the Plumb-rule."

"The Square is an implement made to an angle of ninety degrees or the fourth part of a circle. It is an important implement in the hands of the Operative Mason, for by it they are enabled to correct the errors of the eye, and to adjust with precision the edges, angles and sides of the work they are engaged upon. The truest joints are thus constructed, and stones fitted to fill with accuracy their destined position."

"To the Speculative Mason, the Square is an emblem of Morality, as by the application of Cond. the Square the stone is tried and proved, so by the principles of Morality each action of human life is judged."

"The Level is an implement used for testing horizontals, and to the Speculative Mason an emblem of Equality. Not that social equality, which levelling all distinctions

*of Rank would tend to beget confusion and anarchy, but that of the Fraternal Equality which should always be found in the Lodge.”*

*“It teaches us that in the sight of God, all men are equal, subject to the same infirmities, hastening to the same goal and preparing to be judged by the same immutable laws, and it reminds us of that vast level of time on which all men are travelling to its limit in Eternity.”*

*“The Plumb-rule is an implement used for testing perpendiculars and to the Speculative Mason an emblem of Rectitude of Conduct.”*

*“As a building which is not erected on a perpendicular line, but leaning one way or the other becomes insecure and must eventually fall, so he, whose life is not supported by an upright course of conduct, cannot long sustain a worthy reputation and must soon sink beneath the estimation of every good and virtuous man.”*

***(When the Conductor has completed the instruction, he will direct the Candidate to salute the W.M. as a Fellow Craft Freemason.)***

***Cond. “Salute the Worshipful Master as a Fellow Craft Freemason.”***

***(The S.D. will then pass behind the Candidate and Conductor and join the J.D. to form the procession in the North. The Candidate will then be conducted to the East preceded by the Deacons, who will divide at the foot of the dais to allow the Candidate and Conductor to stand between them. All will face the East.)***

***Cond. “Salute the Worshipful Master as a Fellow Craft Freemason.”***

***(The W.M. will clothe the Candidate with the appropriate Apron or he may ask another Brother to do this on his behalf.)***

#### **3.4.1.9. Investiture of Apron (Conductor)**

***(McDade & Tonkin 2013:102-104) “Brother....., I invest you with the Distinguishing Badge of a Fellow Craft Freemason to mark the progress you have made in the Science. I will add that the Badge with which you have now been invested is intended to point out that as a Craftsman you are expected to make the liberal arts and sciences your future study, in order that you may be enabled to discharge your duties as a Freemason and to estimate the wonderful works of the Almighty Craftsman.***

***(The W.M. will then recite or read the Charge or he may request another Brother to deliver it on his behalf. The Charge, which is to be found in the Laws and Constitutions)***

Entered Apprentice	Fellow Craft	Master Mason
Preparation of candidate	Preparation of candidate	Preparation of candidate
Alarm at the porch followed by justification of candidate	Alarm at the porch followed by prayer as introduction	Alarm at the porch followed by prayer as introduction
Introduction and petition of candidate followed by prayer	Introduction and petition of candidate	Introduction and petition of candidate
Obligation	Obligation	Obligation
Lights of Freemasonry Teaching	Signs and Tokens Teaching	Signs and Tokens
Signs and Tokens Teaching	Secret Word and Grip Teaching	Clauses of obligation
Secret Word and Grip Teaching	Signs of the Degree Teaching	Penalty and Salute
Signs of the Degree Teaching	Clauses of Obligation	The Legend** Ritual enactment accompanying legend as teachings
Clauses of Obligation	Charity Clause and Penalty	Signs of the Degree**
Penalty and Salute	True Guard and Salute	Secret Word and Grip teaching**
Working tools	Working Tools	Rights and Privileges, Procedure of Entry
Investiture of Apron	Investiture of Apron	Working Tools
Charge to a new Entered Apprentice	Charge to a new Fellow Craft Mason	Investiture of Apron
		Charge to a new Master Mason

Table 2 - Ritual Structure Comparison

## Chapter 4

### 4.1. Reflection

#### 4.1.1. Limitations of this study

This study has seen a number of limitations such as a difficulty in finding credible and informative sources discussing Freemasonry and freemason rituals. Our scope had to be quite narrow and focus on some key aspects within a much larger picture. The extrapolation of the ritual phenomena may benefit from the researcher actually being physically present at the ritual in order to contextualise certain pertinent information such as excluded symbolic references involving all the senses. This naturally may have an impact on our understanding of the rituals but due to the strict conditions upon which one may be present, this would not be possible for this researcher.

#### 4.1.2. Implications for the study of rituals

The model presented above has yielded valuable information regarding Freemason ritual and symbols in South Africa within the Irish Constitution of Lodges. We have avoided comparative exercises in order to remain within the liminal phase as far as possible. In doing this, the method invites the researcher or observer into the symbolic ritual world of a group or movement and highlights ritual phenomena and symbolic understanding from a variety of perspectives. Note that the result is an earnest venture into the world of symbols and understanding of another with respect and humility. This holds the practice of observing and reporting at the forefront whilst keeping analysis in its crucial place. The key difference being a keen consideration on value judgements but merely aims to utilise the ritual phenomena of one group to reach a deeper cultural, social, political and psychological understanding of clearly defined focus groups.

#### 4.1.3. Possibility for future study

Methodological and phenomenological discussions may be expanded to include key historic works and the development of key streams of thought in phenomenology, ritual studies and the understanding of religion and its relationship with culture, politics and social existence in light of sociological and psychological understandings.

## 4.2. Conclusion

As a precursor to our larger discussion it was necessary to recount a few key concepts within ritual theory and focused on the work of Grimes, Osmer and Turner to guide our methodology. This study did deviate from general practical theological methods and Osmer's fourfold task in reducing the impact and focus given to the comparative task. It is the opinion of this study that to compare Freemason ritual and Christian theological perspectives does not do anything to bridge the gap between different groups which may be defined as religious in one way or another, especially those confessing to work for similar outcomes, regardless of individual justification or understanding. As part of the introductory points we discussed some significant ritual phenomena which would be applicable to our study.

We have discussed much of the symbolic world and highlighted the role of symbols within Freemasonry and specifically their rituals. We have also determined and redefined religion as an anthropological discourse, along with the existential epistemological framework that one places that discourse within. This discourse is primarily concerned with defining, enforcing and maintaining certain normative social structures which are largely based on the aforementioned discourse and corresponding framework. This has allowed us to address the third and final question of this study. How can different religious groups foster a relationship through a consideration of one another's rituals and symbols? It is now clear that a thorough consideration of ritual and symbols provides keen insight into a world which may be otherwise shut off and so considered 'foreign' or strange. This consideration allows the individual to engage personally and reflect with different religious groups and symbolism with renewed understanding and respect. Echoing the fact that this study refrains from any value judgements but seeks understanding primarily. The best way to learn is to constantly be traversing the lines between the liminal and post-liminal spheres of rituals.

In our study of Freemasonry and ritual in South Africa we have begun to lift the 'veil of secrecy' surrounding the Freemasons and their ritual. We have determined that Freemasons in South Africa are not secret at all but quite public and strikingly open. We have recounted the process for becoming a member, the different lodge offices and their symbols and tools, whilst also considering the lodge itself in a physical spatial sense. We have described the history of the group known as Freemasons

both abroad as well as in South Africa in three distinct parts, namely; documented, undocumented and legendary history. These starkly contrasting accounts and the limitations regarding available, credible sources are of special importance and we note that the fraternity emerged across the world at different times but appeared as early as the 12<sup>th</sup> Century ACE. Freemasons do not consider themselves part of a religion even though we may define Freemasonry as a religion. However, on their own account, you cannot be considered a Freemason if you are not religious in some sense. In many ways there is beauty here in Freemasonry, that a group of people from different religious confessions may talk, eat, teach and learn from one another without value judgements but a rigid appreciation for the moral integrity of all people and the betterment of society as a whole as a result of the teachings of Freemasonry. This ultimately boils down to our core approach and rationality. Our conversational praxis allows for co-determination of knowledge and understanding and is the clear outcome of this study. There is value in the study of Freemason Ritual in South Africa for more than academic purposes, but socially, the whole of the country cries out for cooperation as we realize that we can only succeed and grow together.



## 5. References

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