

## **Ask Hiram (Summer 2005)**

### **I have a question. How do I contact Hiram?**

You may contact Hiram through the editor at:

David A. Burkus, Editor  
74 Wellington Drive  
Hampton, Virginia 23666-2855

or via telephone at:

(Home) 757-469-6727

or via e-mail at:

[heraldeditor@cox.net](mailto:heraldeditor@cox.net)

No matter how you contact the editor, he is always more than willing to forward your questions to Hiram.

### **Who may ask a question?**

Any Freemason under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of Virginia. I will also try to answer any questions from spouses and children of Virginia Freemasons.

### **What type of questions may I ask?**

You may ask any question, however, I answer questions as they relate to Freemasonry under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of Virginia. As you may know, each Grand jurisdiction varies slightly from one to another. Before publishing an answer, Hiram always consults with the Grand Provost and the Grand Lecturer, as they are responsible for Masonic Education and ritual (Custodians of the Work) respectively.

### **Our Chaplain says the opening and closing prayers from his station in the southeast corner of the Lodge. Is there any reason he can or should not go to the Altar to say the prayers?**

First, to avoid any confusion, let me address a technicality. The Chaplain is not a "Stationed Officer," and as such, his "place" is in the Southeast corner of the Lodge, in front of, and between the Worshipful Master and Secretary. He does not have a "Station." The "Stationed Officers" are the: Worshipful Master, Senior Warden and Junior Warden.

Now to answer your question. The opening and closing of a Lodge is part of our ritual. According to the Methodical Digest, Section 2.07, "Every Lodge shall practice the Ancient York Ritual as taught by the Grand Lodge Committee on Work, who are the custodians." If you continue to read section 2.07 you will see that the Chaplain must stay in his prescribed officer's place while reciting the prayers. It goes on to say "No Lodge shall be opened or closed in any other manner than as required by the Ancient York Ritual prescribed in this section."

Right Worshipful Steven Arthur Moss, Grand Lecturer, adds, in part, "The best/only answer that I can provide is that the Altar is only employed for a time of prayer by the candidate as he begins his "journey" through the second section of the Master Mason's Degree. Further, the Altar is more or less the candidate's "property" if you will from the time of the ballot on his petition until he is raised to the Sublime Degree."

## **What are the proper names for the Degree?**

The only proper name for each of the three degrees is: the "Degree of Entered Apprentice", the "Degree of Fellowcraft" and the "Degree of Master Mason." There are no Degrees called the first, second or third degree.

## **When closing a Master Mason's Lodge, I have noticed some of the Worshipful Masters will close the Bible before the door is opened and some will wait until they hear the words stating that the Lodge is closed...what is the proper way for this to be done?**

The Worshipful Master should begin SLOWLY closing the Bible as soon as the Jr. Deacon turns to walk toward the door and the Bible should be closed no later than the time the Jr. Deacon has completed delivering the declaration to the Tiler.

## **During introductions, I have noticed some of the Brethren will salute the Worshipful Master (Give the *due guard*) when introduced and some salute the Altar. Which way is the proper way?**

The *due guard* is given to the Worshipful Master, as you are showing your respect to him. You do not give the *due guard* however, until **after** the Worshipful Master addresses you, and you prepare to respond. Saluting the Worshipful Master while he is talking to you would show a lack of respect.

## **I wanted to place Masonic decals over my tail light lenses and my high mount stop lamp, can I do that?**

This is a question of local and or state law, which I would normally refer to the governmental authorities; however this same question keeps coming up.

Hiram contacted the Virginia State Police, who advised that it was a violation of Virginia law to operate a vehicle with Masonic (or any other) emblem over any light. It is also unlawful for a Virginia State Safety Inspector to pass a vehicle during a Periodic Motor Vehicle Safety Inspection with anything on or in front of any light.

Article: ask hiram.txt