

## **Yes, There Are Ritual Questions in the Leadership Correspondence Course**

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Why, you ask, would there be ritual questions in the Leadership Correspondence Courses? Especially when these courses are a product of the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education not the Grand Lodge Committee on Work and the Charter of the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education says that its purpose is to increase the knowledge of Masonic history, philosophy and symbolism, and enhance the leadership abilities of the members of the Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of Virginia.

To attempt to answer this question one must consider what is Masonic education? Does it stop at the teaching of noteworthy dates in Masonic history; at the symbolism utilized in Freemasonry; at the names of famous Masons and their accomplishments throughout history; at Masonic publications available for all to obtain and read? Or does it go deeper into all aspects of Masonry to include bits and pieces of all aspects of Freemasonry?

In actuality, the various aspects of the ritual of our degrees do provide snippets of Masonic education, and at times, it is very difficult to distinguish the point where “ritual” leaves off and “education” takes over or vice versa. I believe there is a huge symbiotic relationship between the two.

I will now try to give several examples of the educational aspects of various ritual questions that are found in the Leadership Correspondence Courses.

- We learn the proper place of the Lodge officers.
- The conditions when a Brother can pass between the Altar and the East in an open Lodge.
- The ritual questions enhance our knowledge of things such as to whom the Lodge is dedicated and who was the Judge of Israel.
- The duties of the various Lodge Officers are discussed in the courses and provide both ritual and educational value.

- Questions concerning the Jewels and their meaning of the Lodge officers again provide both ritual and Masonic education.
- The methodology used to deliver the degree lectures to the candidate is also covered in the course. This item not only is of a ritualistic nature but provides education to the student. It prepares/educates them in effective ritualistic lecture presentations and/or educational program presentations.
- Another example of the mixture of ritual and education concerns the “wages” of a Fellowcraft.
- And my favorite “ritual” question that, to me, will call upon exceptional Masonic education/ritual knowledge and that question is: “After the Master and Wardens cast their ballot, who is next?” Unfortunately very few of the Correspondence Course students correctly answer this question.

The whole objective of this little presentation is to demonstrate that even though you may not be a Ritualistic Gold card holder, the ritual questions in the Correspondence Courses do provide added information to the overall process of expanding your Masonic education and knowledge.