



PAPER

A Mason Believes

Summary: A short homily concerning what it means to be a Freemason; our beliefs and moral principles.

People frequently ask questions such as, ‘*Why are you a Mason?*’ or ‘*What makes it last through the centuries?*’ and ‘*What does a Mason believe?*’

Those asking the questions, are not prying into our ritual or probing into our so-called secrets. They just want to know:

- Why has Freemasonry attracted millions of men to join it over hundreds of years?
- Why has Freemasonry earned its standing in history?
- Why are so many fine men of integrity and character part of it?

These are reasonable questions which deserve a simple answer.

Freemasons come together for mutual, intellectual, social and moral improvement. This is based upon Brotherly Love (friendship), Relief (charity) and Truth (integrity); both between Freemasons and to the world at large.

A Mason believes in charity in a much wider context than the giving of alms, although this is an important demonstration of our care for others. To him it includes the charity of thought and actions, which overlook the faults and defects of his fellow man.

A Mason believes in the great worth of the individual, regardless of wealth, position, or power, recognising every individual as a person of value.

A Mason believes in a just and righteous deity, be he known as Brahma, Allah, Jehovah, God or Jesus. He knows that when he visits a Masonic Lodge, he will always find the ‘Volume of Sacred Law’, prominently displayed. Depending where he is, it may be the Bible of the Christian, the Torah of the Jew, the Koran of the Muslim, or the Veda of the Hindu. Thus, in Masonry, there are Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus who meet together and pay homage to the Divine Creator whom they address as the Great Architect of the Universe.

History has shown clearly that whenever a totalitarian government has gained power it has, amongst other things, sought to destroy houses of worship, and Masonic Lodges. Both have stood pre-eminently for the worth of the individual whatever their ethnicity, class or creed.



A Mason believes in the Brotherhood-of-Man, and in the Lodge all the members meet on the same level as Brothers and treat each other as such. When Harry S. Truman, a Past Grand Master of Missouri, was President of the United States, he visited a Masonic Lodge in the District of Columbia. When someone immediately recognised him and addressed him as *'Mr President'*, Brother Truman immediately stopped him and said kindly but firmly, *'My Brother, when I entered the door of this Lodge, I became Brother Truman. When I leave through that door I will again be Mr. President'*.

A Mason believes in 'Love of Country'. He honours his Country's flag and obeys his country's laws.

A Mason believes that a man becomes a Freemason through his own volition. He believes that when a man seeks admission to a Masonic Lodge it should be of his own free will. The choice should be his. Masonry has never endeavoured to convert others to adopt its doctrines and principles. Neither has it knowingly received into its fraternal bonds any, save men of good character.

A Mason believes in being profoundly fraternal. He knows that Freemasonry is the oldest, largest and most widely known fraternal organisation on earth. He knows that Masonry survives and grows among men around the world because it seeks friendship, mutual assistance, and generosity to others. It binds men together in fraternal brotherhood, under God, and in the belief in the immortality of the soul. It espouses the golden rule: Always treat others as you would like them to treat you.

A Mason believes in honesty and integrity, and is in constant search of it. Masonry teaches its Brethren to lay the cornerstone and place their foundations upon the 'Rock of Truth', and build for eternity. It is in such a mansion that God abides.

Masonry consequently presents a formulation of moral principles which should be acceptable to all mankind. This is why it has lasted through the centuries and this is why men are Masons.

Freemasonry is still as relevant today as it has been through the ages. However, as in the past, it must adapt and change to meet the challenges of modern society, and while doing so, retain and promote those core values and beliefs that are at its very heart.

Recommended use of Papers

Papers offer a simple, direct means of advancement in a particular aspect of Masonic knowledge. They can be used in a variety of ways:

- Read at home for private study
- Shared for pre-reading by members of a discussion group
- Read aloud in Lodge or Chapter, or in an LOI/COI/new members forum
 - Followed by 'any questions'
 - As a precursor to a discussion (in which case much more time is needed, possibly more than double that allocated to the paper itself)
 - Supported by audio-visual aids, if necessary

They can be delivered by a single person or split into bite-sized pieces and read by multiple presenters (in which case, the speaker(s) should have read and practiced the delivery of the paper beforehand).

*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version unless otherwise specified.

If the paper is to be used to introduce a discussion, the presenter will need to have thought about the material, done a little research, and prepared some open questions to engage with the audience. Kipling's dictum can be of help in preparing open questions, which should begin with one of his 'serving men', as follows: *'I keep six honest serving men (they taught me all I knew). Their names are, What and Why and When and How and Where and Who'*. Rudyard Kipling

If used as part of an event, the paper should be advertised and promoted by way of trailers, flyers and announcements, in summonses, letters, emails, notice boards, and on social media.

For further papers and other learning materials visit *Solomon* at <http://solomon.ugle.org.uk>

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