



# PAPER

## Making sense of your Initiation.

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome Brother. Having taken your first step into Freemasonry, it is likely that you wish to understand more of what you have experienced, its history, symbolism and more. Freemasonry is sometimes termed a *progressive system*. In part this relates to the formal experience of the ceremonies and business of the Lodge, but it also relates to the personal journey of development. It's a journey, best taken in the company of others. As you progress in your masonic career, various opportunities will arise for you to consider and, if right for you, will add to your enjoyment and development.

Freemasonry should always complement family, work and other commitments, which will rightly take priority. With care, effort and a little planning, Freemasonry can become an enjoyable and rewarding journey. Based on four guiding principles, which help Freemasons define their path through life:

#### **Integrity**

Freemasons focus on becoming people of integrity and membership provides the structure to help achieve that goal.

#### **Friendship**

Freemasonry provides the common foundation for friendships between members, many of which will last for life.

#### **Respect**

Freemasonry brings people together irrespective of their race, religion or perceived differences that can divide us a society.

#### **Charity**

Kindness and charitable giving are deeply ingrained in the principles of Freemasonry and individually and collectively we contribute generously to deserving causes.



## THE RITUAL AND REGALIA

Historically, by not reading the ritual, all were enabled to take part, whatever their level of literacy. Whilst not committing the ritual to print emphasised its secrecy which was fashionable at that time. What is more, it can't be denied that the ceremony has far more impact on the Candidate when delivered from memory.

Freemasonry endeavours to teach moral lessons and self-knowledge to new members. However, it is one thing to have aims and ideals and quite another to impress them upon the minds of the members. So, in our Lodge rooms we enact, for the benefit of the new member, what can be likened to the scenes from a play. The scenes are called degrees, because Freemasonry is a progressive system. The play is centred on the building of King Solomon's Temple where every part of the building and every implement used is given a deeper moral or spiritual interpretation, which is explained to the Candidate.

There are many versions of Masonic ritual, at a national and regional level, and even between Lodges meeting in the same town or building. Very different ceremonials have evolved, often with distinct signs, movements and customs. Regalia also varies between different Grand Lodges throughout the world, from the plain and simple to highly colourful and elaborate. All Masonic ritual, however, has the same purpose; to make Masons and to educate them further in the principles and precepts of the Craft and their beginnings.

Originally, each Lodge in England seems to have had its own ritual. More or less they followed a common pattern, but since many relied on memory rather than the precise written word, they differed greatly in content. After the union of the two Grand Lodges, known as the Antients and the Moderns, in 1813, the Lodge of Reconciliation, which had been formed to bring the union about, continued its work to bring about an agreed set of ceremonies, which was approved by Grand Lodge in 1816. It is essentially, the ritual still in regular use today, and though many Lodges still have their own idiosyncrasies of word or movement here and there, it is primarily the Emulation working that is in common use throughout much of the English Constitution.

The United Grand Lodge of England regalia is the same across the whole Constitution, however other Grand Lodges' regalia varies from the plain and simple to the colourful and elaborate.



## BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE CEREMONY

The Entered Apprentice Degree marks the beginning of your journey as a Freemason. The themes of the ceremony are the duties we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves.

The rituals of Freemasonry are our unique method of promoting good citizenship, and in the next seven steps we will re-visit your ceremony of initiation and point out some of the symbols that were used to illustrate our values of integrity, friendship, respect and charity.

Don't worry if it all seems a bit of a haze. In time it will start to make sense and you will get used to learning by way of watching and listening to the ritual; or even be doing some yourself. A Freemason is always learning, even after decades of experience. We never stop learning and we never stop developing.

Incidentally, this presentation uses Emulation Ritual, the most commonly used ritual and might be different to the ritual you use in your own lodge, but the sentiment and the message is the same.

### Preparation

The first stage of your initiation was to prepare you for your ceremony. You were taken to a convenient room adjoining the Lodge to be 'properly prepared'. Every action in that preparation had a symbolic meaning.

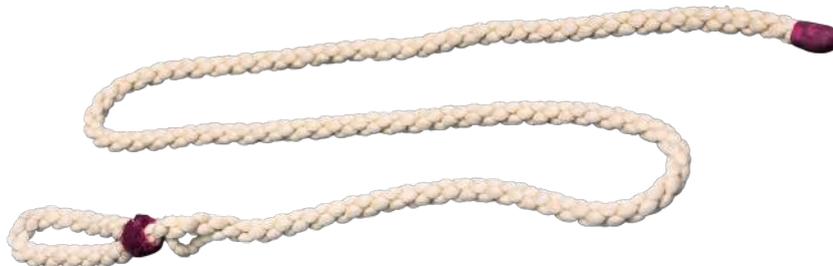
Firstly, you were deprived of your money, jewellery etc., to impress upon you that all Candidates enter the Order on a level, for their moral worth as men not on account of their worldly possessions.



Secondly, your left- breast was made bare, in token of your fidelity; your right-arm was uncovered, in token of your sincerity, and to show that you had no weapon about you, a legacy from the time in which Freemasonry was conceived; and your left-knee was made bare, in token of your humility, that being the knee, on which you later entered into a solemn Obligation in the presence of The Great Architect of the Universe.



Finally, your right-heel was slip-shod in allusion to the custom of removing a shoe to ratify a contract, as practiced by the ancient Hebrews; a cable-tow was placed around your neck in token of submission and as a link to your Lodge; and you were blindfolded to representing one in darkness wishing to approach the Light of Freemasonry.



## Entrance

Your entrance into Freemasonry was dramatic, so as to make an impression upon you. Added to which, you were blindfolded, so your other senses will have been heightened. No doubt you were a bit anxious, and this is natural. When we join Freemasonry, none of us know what to expect. It is important to remember that all Freemasons have been through a similar ceremony.

After a prayer, you were conducted around the Lodge to be introduced to the Junior Warden. In some Lodges you will have been guided by the Deacon to tap him on the shoulder to gain his attention. This process will have then been repeated with the Senior Warden. He will in turn have introduced you to the Worshipful Master, who will then have confirmed that your entry was of your own volition, confirmed your belief in God, and confirmed that you were of mature age. Then, arriving agreed to go through the Ceremony of your Initiation, you would have been advanced to the East to take your obligation.

## Obligation

Your obligation is an important part of the ceremony. It also includes an allusion to the ancient penalties, which were originally medieval oaths. These are gory by modern standards; fortunately, they were never meant to be taken literally.

Once you gave your assent, the Worshipful Master asked, *'What in your present situation is the predominant wish of your heart?'* You responded with the word *'Light'*. The light being your own moral and spiritual development. The blindfold was then removed, and your attention was drawn to the three great, though emblematical lights; the Square & Compasses and the Volume of the Sacred Law.

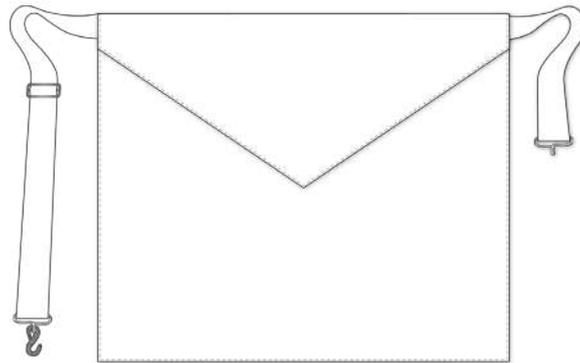
The Worshipful Master ended this phase of the ceremony with the words, *'Rise newly obligated brother amongst Masons'*. It is important to realise that at this was the point that you were accepted as a Freemason. You may remember that from that point you were no longer Mr. X, but Brother X.

You were then rewarded with the traditional modes of recognition of a Freemason; sometimes referred to as *'the secrets'*, one of which has an allusion to King Solomon's Temple. As you will now appreciate these are only of ceremonial value and have little value outside of Freemasonry.

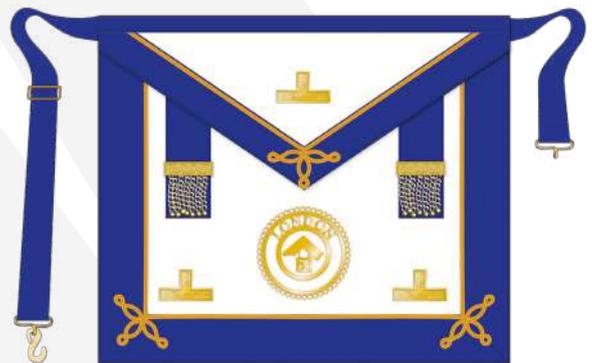
## Invested

You will have then been taken first to the Junior Warden and then on to the Senior Warden, where you repeated the traditional modes of recognition. These repetitions are a legacy from the last century, when Freemasonry had a strict oral tradition whereby all the ceremonies were committed to memory. So, repetition was used to help the candidate learn the traditional modes of recognition; a custom still in use today.

The Senior Warden, having presented you to the Worshipful Master, then invested you with the badge of an Entered Apprentice; a white leathern apron, derived from the Aprons worn by the Medieval Operative Masons, and a symbol of purity. A proud moment for every new mason, as it marks his acceptance into the Order.



You may have noticed that some of the brethren were wearing some fairly elaborate aprons. However, we all remember that first apron given to us when we joined. We also need to bear in mind that all our aprons, plain or fancy, have the same plain backing; reminding us that we are all of equal worth.



### The North-East Corner

Having been invested, you were taken to the North-East Corner of the Lodge. It is here that we are introduced to the three themes of the First Degree; the duties we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves.

It was the convention that the North-East Corner was the place where all building work began. So, it is in the North-East Corner that the metaphorical building work of your moral character begins. It also illustrates that charity is the cornerstone of Freemasonry.

In the North-East corner you are encouraged to build a superstructure; a building metaphor. Similarly, through our attention to Freemasonry, we develop from the rough to the perfect ashlar. The ashlar represents the individual and King Solomon's Temple represents society, such that through Freemasonry we are better able to fit into society.

The North-East corner also encourages you to relieve the distress of others, but not to the detriment of your own personal circumstances. Today we would talk about giving money to charity, giving our time to good causes, or to helping others. The wording comes from the period when Freemasonry first appeared, centuries before the birth of the National Health Service or the concept of Social Security, when those who could not provide for themselves had to rely on others for their survival. It was during this period that the ritual for the North-East Corner would have been formulated, though it remains equally relevant today.

## The Working Tools

Here we see the three themes of the First Degree repeated; the duties we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. We hear the 24-inch gauge represents, *'the twenty-four hours of the day, part to be spent in prayer to Almighty God, part in labour and refreshment, and part in serving a friend or Brother in time of need, without detriment to ourselves or our connections'*.

The Common Gavel represents the 'force of conscience'. Whilst the Chisel points out the 'advantages of education', in particular our moral education. Working together, they provide a metaphor, by knocking-off all knobs and excrescences our minds become moralised and we become fit to be members of a regular, well-ordered society.



This theme continues beyond the NE Corner, as the rough ashlar is transformed into the perfect ashlar by the more expert Craftsman; giving us a taste of what is to come in the next Degree.

## The Ancient Charge

As you will recall, the Ancient Charge is a long piece of ritual. It is also probably the oldest. Once more though, we see the three themes of the First Degree repeated:

*'As a Freemason, let me recommend to your most serious contemplation the Volume of the Sacred Law, charging you to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice, and to regulate your actions by the divine precepts it contains.*

*Therein you will be taught the important duties you owe to God, to your neighbour, and to yourself.*

*To God, by never mentioning His name but with that awe and reverence which are due from the creature to his Creator, by imploring his aid in all your lawful undertakings, and by looking up to Him in every emergency for comfort and support.*

*To your neighbour, by acting with him on the square, by rendering him every kind office which justice or mercy may require, by relieving his necessities and soothing his afflictions, and by doing to him as in similar cases you would wish he would do to you.*

*And to yourself, by such a prudent and well-regulated course of discipline as may best conduce to the preservation of your corporeal and mental faculties in their fullest energy, thereby enabling you to exert those talents wherewith God has blessed you, as well to His glory as the welfare of your fellow creatures.'*

Finally, the Ancient Charge offers another taste what is to come in the Fellow Craft Degree, *'to study more especially such of the liberal Arts and Sciences as may lie within the compass of your attainment, and without neglecting the ordinary duties of your station, to endeavour to make a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.'*

## Conclusion

Your Initiation Ceremony marked the beginning of your journey in Freemasonry. The ceremony has a great deal of symbolism and uses both metaphors and allegory, but three themes recur throughout. These are the duties we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. Thanks to the ceremony, they are forever impressed upon the mind of every Freemason.

## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE LODGE ROOM

Now let us explore the Lodge-room and familiarise you with some of its treasures, to help you make sense of what they are and why they are there. They come in fours sets of three:

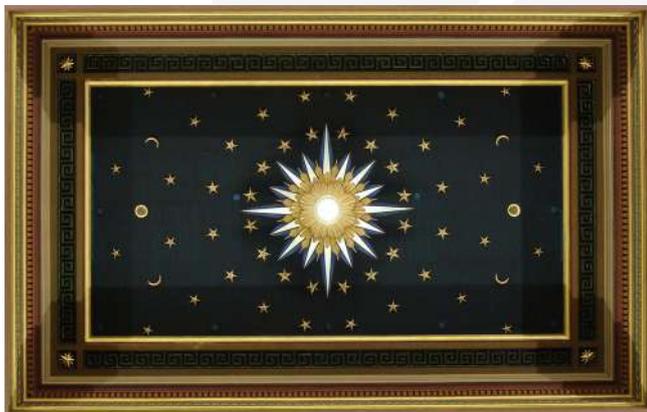
The Ornaments of the Lodge; the Furniture of the Lodge; the Movable Jewels; and the Immovable jewels.

Let's start with the ornaments of the Lodge.

### The Ornaments

The three ornaments of a Lodge are the Mosaic Pavement, the Blazing Star and the Indented or Tessellated Border.

The *Mosaic Pavement* is in fact a simple black-and-white pavement, usually a chequered carpet. It is one of Freemasonry's most recognised symbols. It represents light and darkness, good and evil, and symbolically the joys and sorrows of our chequered existence on Earth.



The *Blazing Star*, or the 'Glory in the Centre' is generally found in the centre of the Lodge, either on the floor or on the ceiling, and is often in the form of an irradiated star with the letter 'G' in the centre. In early Freemasonry it represented the nearness of God. Today it represents the sun which enlightens the earth.

The *Tessellated Border* surrounds the Lodge, and is often depicted at the edge of the carpet. Its origins link back to astrology, which was once considered to be a 'science'. It was thought that the planets which revolve around the sun influenced behaviour, hence the tessellated border represents something of the external influences on a Freemason's lodge.



### The Furniture

The Furniture of the Lodge is also composed of three elements the Volume of the Sacred Law, the Square and the Compasses.

The Volume of the Sacred Law lays open on the pedestal, to remind us that our faith is a guide to our conduct, and highlights the importance of Man's relation to God.

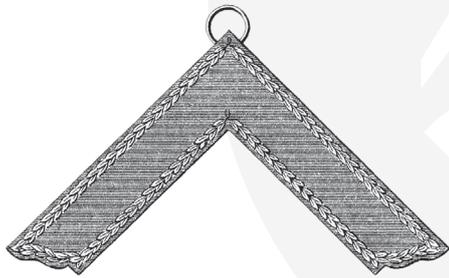
The conjoined Square and Compasses, the tools of the architect, brought together on the Volume of the Sacred Law, are the emblem of Freemasonry.



Together they regulate our life and actions, the Volume of the Sacred Law to rule and govern our faith, the Square to square our actions and the Compasses to keep us within bounds.

### The Movable Jewels

The Lodge's Movable Jewels are so named because of their moral teaching. They are comprised of the Square, the Level and the Plumb-Rule. They are called Movable Jewels because they are the 'Jewels of Office' attached to the collars of the Master and his Wardens, and transferred to their successors on installation.



Operative Masons used the Square to test and adjust the corners of buildings, and to check that rough-hewn stone had been made 'true'. The Level was used to check horizontals, and the Plumb-Rule to check verticals.

Among Freemasons, the Square, worn by the Master, teaches morality. The Level worn by the Senior Warden, teaches equality. The Plumb-Rule, worn by the Junior Warden, teaches justice and uprightness in life and actions.

## The Immovable Jewels

The Immovable Jewels are so called because they lay open and immovable in the Lodge for the Brethren to contemplate. They are the Rough and Perfect Ashlars and the Tracing Board.



An ashlar is a square cut stone used for building, and is shown in the lodge in the form of a cube, with all sides and faces equal. The *Rough Ashlar* is a stone taken from the quarry and passed to the Entered Apprentice to work, mark and indent on. He uses his working tools (the rule, gavel and chisel) to prepare it for the hands of the more expert workman. The *Perfect Ashlar* is a smooth, perfect cube of stone, of a true die or square, fit only to be tried by the Square and Compasses.

In Freemasonry, the Rough Ashlar represents a man with much to learn, who over time will become moralised, cultivated, and be of a benefit to civilised society. Whilst the Perfect Ashlar represents the level of perfection that a good man might achieve in his later years. In essence, a metamorphosis from Rough to Smooth, achieved through a life of piety and virtue, to become a man of conscience.

We are informed by the ritual that the *Tracing Board* is for the Master to lay lines and draw designs on. This refers back to the days of the operative mason, when the Master Mason would show the work required of his men. Today it has become stylised and there is one for each Degree. Collectively they might be considered a syllabus for Freemasonry, although coded through symbolism and allegory.

**For a further explanation please talk to your mentor.**



## **BASIC MASONIC ETIQUETTE**

### **Apologies**

If you are unable to attend a meeting for business or other personal reasons, you should advise the Secretary as soon as possible. If you are an Officer of the Lodge, you should also advise the Director of Ceremonies so that someone can be asked to take your place. Naturally, whoever is going to stand in for you will appreciate as much notice as is possible.

### **Late arrival**

If you arrive late do not panic! Your fellow members would rather you arrive late than not at all. It is not unknown for members or guests to arrive late for a meeting. When you have dressed appropriately, the Tyler will advise you how far the meeting has progressed. He will then give a report on the door of the Lodge to let them know that you are outside and will announce your name when someone comes to the door to enquire.

When you are admitted to the Lodge, the Director of Ceremonies or his Assistant will normally meet you. You should give the relevant sign for the Degree and, holding that sign, briefly apologise to the Worshipful Master for your late arrival; a single sentence is more than adequate. The Director of Ceremonies or his Assistant will then take you to a seat, give you a court-bow, and you should then sit. If you are unsure of the relevant sign prior to entering the Lodge, you should ask the Tyler who will be only too pleased to demonstrate it for you.

### **Entering the Lodge**

Never enter the Lodge unless you are properly dressed in regalia, except when you are taking part in a Ceremony of Passing or Raising, or at a rehearsal.

### **Perambulations, acknowledgements and forms of address**

When perambulating around the Lodge, remember to always start off with the left foot and never swing your arms or clench your fists.

Masonic acknowledgement in the Lodge is by means of a court bow, i.e. an inclination of the head, and not from the waist.

When addressing Officers or Brethren in the Lodge, remember that we are all Brothers. The correct form is, for example, Brother Secretary, or Worshipful Brother Smith, not Worshipful Brother Secretary. Traditionally, forenames are not used except to differentiate between two Brethren with the same surname; though many Lodges this tradition is relaxed at the Festive Board, but still always with Brother or Worshipful Brother.

The Worshipful Master is always referred to as such. When addressing, or responding to the Worshipful Master, always salute first (with step) in the current Degree, followed by the words 'Worshipful Master'. If your response is to be lengthy (except as part of the ritual), cut the sign after the address, say your piece and finish with the salute.

### General rules

It is bad form to talk to your neighbour in Lodge during the ceremony, or when anyone is speaking. If you do need to talk during a break in proceedings, ensure you do so discreetly.

Do not discuss religion or politics in your Lodge at any time, even in the bar or at the festive-board.

You should always feel your way on matters of etiquette as customs may vary from Lodge to Lodge. As a general rule, it is sensible (and polite) to follow the custom and practice adopted by any Lodge you may be visiting. If in doubt, ask.

### Finally

As a new member, you may find many of our rules of etiquette strange, and on occasion, feel that you have failed to follow them. This is quite understandable in the early days of membership, and you will find the brethren very sympathetic. Please do not worry unduly about such things, but rather enjoy your new experiences.

## SOLOMON

United Grand of England has developed an on-line learning platform called Solomon. It is easily accessible from a PC, tablet or smartphone and can be used to search for answers to specific questions or browsed to find out more of our history, ceremonies, symbolism and much more. Welcome and help videos are also included to help. You will also find audio and video material as well as reading lists and quizzes.

We would encourage you to register to use Solomon. It is a simple process of recording your email address and receiving a confirmatory email. Solomon content is organised into the separate degrees of the Craft and you will need to enrol to access each degree, so that you do not enter a degree beyond the stage that you have reached and not to spoil what lies ahead. That way you can enrol into the modules that are relevant to you.

You can register by scanning the QR Code with your mobile phone or copying the hyperlink shown ([solomon.ugle.org.uk](http://solomon.ugle.org.uk)) into the address line of your browser.

The purpose of Solomon is to assist you in making a regular advancement in your Masonic knowledge. We sincerely wish you well in your first step as a Freemason.

So, welcome to our fraternity, Brother.

We look forward to you completing your second step; the Fellow Craft Degree (see the questions below, but check that your Lodges uses Emulation Ritual before you learn; and you may need to learn a different wording based on your own lodge ritual.

**For a further explanation please talk to your mentor.**



## SECOND DEGREE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS - Abbreviated

<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>Where were you first prepared to be made a Mason?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>In my heart.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>Where next?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>In a convenient room adjoining the Lodge.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>Describe the mode of your preparation?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>I was divested of metal and hoodwinked. My right arm, left breast and knee were made bare. My right heel was slipshod and a cable-tow placed about my neck.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>Where were you made a Mason?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>In the body of a Lodge, just, perfect and regular.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>And when?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>When the Sun was at its meridian.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>In this country Freemasons' Lodges are usually held in the evening; how do you account for that which at the first view appears a paradox?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>The earth constantly revolving on its axis in its orbit round the Sun and Freemasonry being universally spread over its surface, it necessarily follows that the Sun must always be at its meridian with respect to Freemasonry.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>What is Freemasonry?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>A peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>Name the grand principles on which the Order is founded?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>Brotherly love, relief and truth.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>Who are fit and proper persons to be made Masons?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>Just, upright and free men, of mature age, sound judgement and strict morals.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>How do you know yourself to be a Mason?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>By the regularity of my initiation, repeated trials and approbations, and a willingness at all times to undergo an examination when properly called on.</i>
<b>Worshipful Master</b>	<i>How do you demonstrate the proof of your being a Mason to others?</i>
<b>Candidate</b>	<i>By signs, tokens and the perfect points of my entrance.</i>

**For a further explanation please talk to your mentor.**

## 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).

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

\*Note: All biblical passages are taken from the Authorized King James version and any reference to ritual will be from Emulation unless otherwise specified.

For further papers and other learning materials visit *Solomon* at [solomon.ugle.org.uk](https://solomon.ugle.org.uk)

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## Acknowledgement:

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