



## Nugget

# The Worshipful Master

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The office of Master.

### **Summary**

An exploration of the office of Master, in its wider sense.

### **Keywords**

Worshipful, Master, Office, Solomon, Wisdom

## The Worshipful Master

Who is Master of the Lodge? What a daft question. You can all see him now, in the East, sitting in his special seat, raised up above his Officers. He is wearing a distinguishing collar bearing the symbol of his Office, the Square. That elected Brother is the Master. It is plain for all to see...

Except that in Freemasonry, what may seem obvious may carry deeper meanings and that knowledge may give you some satisfaction, some enrichment of your Masonry, which is encouraging. More importantly, the hidden knowledge may provide something to aspire to, a fuller appreciation of the meaning and subtlety of our remarkable Craft. To pass this by is a shame. For Freemasonry has much meaningful depth for those who presume to learn its secrets; and so, it is as regards the Master.

We learn from the Ritual why he is placed in the East, *'as the Sun rises in the East to open and enliven the day, the Worshipful Master is placed in the East to open the Lodge and employ and instruct the Brethren in Freemasonry'*. We learn from the manner of his Installation that he is placed figuratively in the Chair of King Solomon. He presides over us to mirror, as far as he is able, the admirable qualities of that King, summed up in one word, wisdom. The Master represents wisdom, which starts with order, seeks understanding, proceeds with prudence and is an art rather than a science. Who hearing this counts himself worthy to sit in King Solomon's Chair? What an ideal.

Several of our early Masonic catechisms written in the 1720's ask the question, *'Who is Master of all Lodges?'*... and *'God and the Square'*. So, who is Master of this Lodge? The answer is not so simple. We have a human being at its head. We have him sitting in the Chair symbolic of the early King Solomon, who when building in Jerusalem 'the House of the Lord' the great temple, consulted with his late Father's friend, King Hiram of Tyre, and by King Hiram's advice employed Hiram Abiff. A man filled with *'wisdom, understanding and cunning to work all works in brass, he came to King Solomon, and wrought all his work'*. A text known as the Graham manuscript written in 1726 explains this more fully, *'...the word cunning implies ingenuity; as for wisdom and understanding, when they are both found in one person he can want nothing; so, by this present scripture it must be allowed that the widow's son whose name was Hiram had a holy inspiration, as well as the wise Solomon'*. Here we get to the nub of the matter. Solomon received his wisdom from God because he did not aspire to possess merely material things. He had a 'holy inspiration' as did Hiram Abif.

The Master of the Lodge at his Installation is held up in prayer, to *'be endued with wisdom to comprehend, judgment to define and ability to enforce obedience to Divine Law and also to be sanctified, strengthened and enriched with genuine knowledge to enlighten the minds of his Brethren so that, like Solomon and the Temple, he might consecrate our humble dwelling place, the Lodge, to the Almighty'*. The encompassing symbol of all this is the Square. The Master's simple Square around his neck speaks volumes to those who, with open eyes, can look, both at him and to the beyond; to the Master of all Lodges.

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Who wears the square upon his breast?  
Does in the face of God attest,  
and in the face of Man.  
That all his actions will compare  
with the divine unerring SQUARE  
That squares great Virtue's plan  
And he erects his edifice  
By this (1<sup>st</sup> movement of the Entered Apprentice sign)  
And this (2<sup>nd</sup> movement of the Entered Apprentice sign)  
And this (3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the Entered Apprentice sign)

You don't have to know all this, but isn't it interesting when you do?

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##END##

### Recommended use of Nuggets

Nuggets offer a short, simple and readily absorbed means of progressing Masonic knowledge and an easy way to introduce learning to Lodges and Chapters. It is hoped that they will become a regular feature of Lodge and Chapter meetings as well as a source for private-study.

Nuggets can be included as an item in the summons and read at most Lodge/Chapter meetings. They can be:

- Read by either a new or an experienced Mason with the minimum of preparation and practice; *though ideally, they need to be read a few times beforehand.*
- Themed with the meeting or activity.
- Used to initiate a discussion within a Lodge/Chapter, LOI/COI, or group.
- Read at home and shared as a topic for a future discussion.
- Used as a focus for an unplanned, informal discussion.

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

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