



PAPER

Questions after Raising

Summary: The background to the use of *Questions after Raising*; still used in many Lodges.

'*Questions before Passing*' and '*Questions before Raising*' we know very well – but '*Questions after Raising*?' 'I didn't think there were any...' might well be the response from most of us in the southern Provinces and yet, they have been a versatile, even essential, piece of ritual elsewhere within the bounds of United Grand Lodge. Do they still concern us? If we travel widely and wish to guarantee enjoying our Freemasonry on arrival then the answer may well be 'yes'.

The *Questions* are normally seventeen in number (this can vary slightly) and are drawn from the Third Lecture of the *Three Degrees in Craft Masonry*. While not contained in many standard rituals, e.g. '*Emulation*', they can be found in several other handbooks such as '*Logic*' or '*The Three Lectures*'.

Examination before taking Office: The idea of testing a Brother before his taking office as Master or Warden had its origins in Anderson's Constitutions of 1723. At that time a prospective Master was required to show that he was '*well skill'd in the Noble Science*'. There is little evidence of any wider requirement for testing until some 90 years later, shortly before the formation of the United Grand Lodge.

The fact that the *Questions after Raising* were drawn from the Third Lecture, shows that it is unlikely any of the questions could have been in general use before the very late 18th or early 19th centuries. Certainly no references to any other testing in Minutes or Exposures are known before Dr Hemming had written to the Grand Master in 1814 seeking his approval for the inclusion of a brief test or examination in '*all three degrees*' Later that year, the phrase '*The Necessary Examination was gone through before taking Office*' (or similar) was often recorded in the Minutes. Indeed in 1814, in the case of a Bro. John Millward, during the very same meeting at which he was Raised, he even underwent such questioning before being permitted to take Office. This would indicate that all Master Masons were required to undergo a formal examination, *Questions after Raising*, before they could be appointed to any office in a Lodge, not just to that of Master.



Third Degree Tracing Board, Josiah Bowring, 1757-1832
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The Lodge of Reconciliation submitted their jointly agreed rituals of the Three Degrees for approval by a Special Grand Lodge on 5th June 1816, and it is reasonable to assume that the set of 17 questions was not widely nor formally asked before this date. Sadly, there is little evidence still available today of the extent of their later use as a test for taking Office.

Examination of Visitors: The earliest appearance in print of the *Questions after Raising* was in *The Perfect Ceremonies of Craft Masonry* of 1874. It is of interest that the sub-heading to the title was: '*Test questions to be put to a Master Mason as a Visitor*'. No such mention is made within the rituals common to the London area, such as Taylor's, Universal, West-End or Emulation. However, confirmation that the Questions were still in widespread use for visitors in e.g. the North West of England can be judged from the vigorous objections, raised to the withdrawal of '*Perfect*' in 1970, because as alternative books of ritual had by then all omitted the Questions there remained no readily available printed source.

Examination before entry to the Royal Arch: W. Bro. Harry Carr offers evidence that the *Questions after Raising* formed part of the actual Ceremony of Raising as a preparation for entry into the Order of the Holy Royal Arch. He refers to two Lodges. In the Britannia Lodge, No. 139 (constituted in 1761 and working the Sheffield Ritual) the Questions were asked in the Third at the end of 'Working Tools'. The Worshipful Master advised, within the formal Ceremony, that after a delay of one month the Candidate would then be entitled to enter the Royal Arch, and in preparation he should become acquainted with the answers to certain information. These were demonstrated in the form of the *Questions after Raising*.

The Lodge of Friendship, No. 202 (constituted in 1771 and working a Plymouth ritual) also contained exactly the same advice to prepare for membership of the Royal Arch, but here the Questions were delivered at the end of the Charge, but the wording is similar. As in the Sheffield Ceremony the Questions were directly linked to the qualifications for Exaltation into the Royal Arch, but they were demonstrated to the Candidate by the Worshipful Master and the Senior Deacon, again within the actual Ceremony of Raising. It is understood that several other Lodges also followed this pattern. The practise may well be derived from earlier membership of the Antient Grand Lodge; both the above Lodges were formed before the Unification. The Antients considered that the Royal Arch was an intrinsic element of the Third Degree and inclusion of the Questions leading on to Exaltation would be a logical step.

Examination before Presentation of the Grand Lodge Certificate: At least two modern rituals use the *Questions after Raising* as a preliminary to the address on presentation of the Grand Lodge Certificate. They are the Logic and the Benefactum Rituals. The Questions are asked before the Address, while still in the Third Degree, although the actual Certificate would be presented later during the First-Rising (Grand Lodge). The Questions provided the Candidate with a useful reminder of the significant elements of the Third Degree. In this working the Candidate himself is expected to answer the questions.

Questions after Raising: So, what then were the *Questions after Raising*? The number occasionally varied according to the ritual in use but were normally as follows:

How were you Raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason?

To where were you then conducted?

How were you prepared?

What enabled you to claim admission?

Which I will thank you to give.

The import of the word?

How did you gain admission?

On what were you admitted?

On your admission into the Lodge did you observe anything different from its usual appearance?

To what does the death allude?

Am I to understand that death is the peculiar subject of this Degree?

From what circumstance?

What were the working tools with which our Master H..... was slain?

How became you acquainted with his Death.

Were you Raised...?

... and on what?

There often followed a practical examination of the Five Points of Fellowship and the answers were held to be secret. Should you be unsure your Lodge Preceptor can normally provide you with the approved answers.

Afterthoughts: United Grand Lodge in 1816 approved three sets of questions to be used to examine Candidates for fitness to ascend to higher Degrees and to merit Lodge responsibilities. They have never been rescinded and so remain valid. In the years following, the *Questions after Raising* have been used in four differing ways: as a test of merit for Lodge Office, to seek Exaltation to the Royal Arch, as a test for visitors and as an assurance of competence before receiving a Grand Lodge Certificate.

Of the four roles the first seemingly had but a brief or limited life. The *Questions after Raising* are still in use today, though perhaps only locally, and travelling Masons may well come across them as a test for visitors. They may be heard as a prelude to a rather longer Third or during an enhanced Address when the Grand Lodge Certificate is presented.

Just be aware – and enjoy! *Vive la difference...*

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 and any reference to ritual will be from Emulation 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.

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