SECRET Master FOURTH Degree

Translated from the Spanish Edition 2005

The Apron and Collar are white with black piping and equally black straps. These two colors symbolize the pain suffered by the Masons upon hearing the news of Master Hiram's death and the loss of the Word. Likewise, they are illustrative of the dual nature of the Universe, which contains light and darkness, good and evil, truth and error. The basin is azure blue with an open eye embroidered in gold on it, denoting the sun as the great archetype of light, the Ineffable Deity. In its center there is a “Z” also embroidered in gold around which there are two crossed branches of laurel and olive tree.

The jewel is a small ivory key with a black Z on its “notches”. It is worn suspended from a wide white collar bordered in black. The jewel of the Master is a

small equilateral gold triangle engraved with the Greek letters Iota, Alpha and Omega at the vertices. Pike tells us: “The Name of the Deity, in many nations, consisted of three letters: among the Greeks, Iota, Alpha,

Omega… ”(p. 632). On its reverse are the Samaritan characters Yod, He and Vau; these three letters, with the He doubled, are used to form the ineffable name of the Deity, called the Tetragrammaton, usually pronounced as "Yahweh." Pike, while using the Hebrew forms, also explains their meaning as representing three of the ten Sephirot, or Deity emanations, from the Kabalah: Gedulah, Geburah, and Tephareth; that is, Grace, Justice and Beauty (p. 798).

The meaning of the letter Z is esoteric and therefore it is not appropriate to discuss it here. It is the initial of the password of this Degree. In the Hebrew numerology of the Kabalah its equivalent letter had the value of seven, a number familiar to all Masons.

DUTIES: Practice silence, obedience, fidelity.

LESSONS: The teachings of Masonry are not to be taken lightly. Learning far surpasses physical monuments.

Duties are not to be fulfilled expecting reward, but personal satisfaction.

FOR REFLECTION: Can one command someone who does not know how to obey?

IMPORTANT SYMBOLS: The black color with the silver tears, Adonhiram, ivory key, the shining star, the laurel branch and the olive leaves.

The concept of duty in Scottish Rite Masonry demands attention, reflection, and understanding. Since the Fourth Degree is the first of the Lodge of Perfection, it lays the foundation for the following and provides instruction on specific virtues. Pike says:

DUTY IS THE GREAT LAW OF FREEMASONRY.

And furthermore, in the Fourth Degree powerful voices from three directions characterize duty as

Unyielding as fate and pressing as necessity,

He gets up with us in the morning and looks at us on our pillows at night.

Duty is with us always, imperative as Destiny.

In each Degree, we are directly confronted with our duty or it is reminded of us through the opening and closing of the ritual or the characterization of heroic figures such as the Master Architect Hiram, King Solomon, Adonhiram or Jacques de Molay. Duty forms the center of philosophical and religious instructions from the ancestors: Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Jesus, Confucius. We behave as Princes, Knights, Chiefs and Masters, not in the earthly sense of titles by which a man may be seen as better in one way than another; but rather by assuming such titles we take on the duties inherent in them so that they become the examples of proper conduct to the leaders that we all are, or should be.

Beyond all the relationships of life, duties stand out, as leaves naturally and undeniably grow on trees.

**Ceremony**

The Lodge of Secret Masters represents the meeting of the Princes of Israel at the death of Hiram. The area behind the balustrade with a door is called The Holy of Holies where, as we learned in the allegory of the Third Degree in the Symbolic Lodge, our Master Hiram used to offer his devotions and requests for wisdom; symbolizes the most secret mysteries of Masonry that are being sought by the candidate. To remind us of the tragedy of Hiram's death, the hangings or curtains and the covering of the Altar are black and sprinkled with silver tears. They also remind us of the loss of the True Word that the candidate seeks. How the work in the Temple has been suspended, no tools visible. The main characters are King Solomon, chosen to build the Temple (Kings 1, 5: 6), and Adonhiram who was in charge of "the tribute" or collector; that is, he was the Superintendent of conscript workers (Kings 1, 4: 6).

The ceremony represents a familiar scene but there is no plot because the purpose of this degree is not so much to illustrate virtues but to lay the foundation for the entire Scottish Rite degree system. Duty and its importance in Scottish Rite Masonry are highlighted in the ceremony. The duties of a Scottish Rite Mason are not fulfilled in the expectation of earthly rewards or honors, but in the simple hope of personal satisfaction. These duties make up the path that leads to the goal of the Masonic quest, the True Word. The laurel and olive branches symbolize the expectation of success in that search. The squad is a reminder that the candidate has started a great journey; this is not, however, an easy journey. He has gone from squad to compass;

The lights of the Lodge represent the first 2x2x2 cube. It is not until the 28th Degree reading that the significance of this number to the ancients is explained. For them he represents perfection, friendship, prudence, advice, justice. Through the concepts of light and dark, truth and error, we see the projection of the dualistic doctrine that is an important part of the Scottish Rite teachings. Dualism teaches by way of analogy the idea of opposites, both in the Universe and in human experience. This doctrine is explained more concretely at the end of the reading in Morals and Dogma by the Knight of the East and the West.

The Scottish Rite shares many of the symbols with the York Rite Symbolic Lodge. The interpretation of these symbols in the Scottish Rite agrees closely with the ancient meanings. This Degree explains some of this symbolism: the Wisdom, Strength and Beauty Columns are now called Wisdom, Power and Harmony, anticipating a more complete explanation of the contributions of the school of Judaic mysticism called the Kabalah. The All-Seeing Eye now also represents the Sun as the source of light without attempting to offend its more traditional interpretation; the Shining Star symbolizes the search for truth; and the letter G is now a Samaritan letter, still representative of the true God.

The virtues taught in this degree - silence, obedience and fidelity - are imparted directly through openness, the obligation assumed by the candidate and the oratory given to him. These virtues are also symbolically illustrated. The placement of the candidate's right hand on his lips is a symbol of silence or secrecy. This position is derived from the statues of the Greek child Deity Harpocrates, which was adopted from the Deity Egyptian Horus, also represented in the apron of the 21st Degree. The son of Osiris and Isis, Horus, was the victor in the battle against Set (or Tiphon as he was called by the Greeks and Pike) who was the main agent of evil in the Egyptian Pantheon. Thus, silence is one of the virtues by which good triumphs over evil. The jewel of this Degree, an ivory key, is also an emblem of secrecy and serves as a reminder that we are the custodians of the True Word; she must be locked away in our hearts.

Prepare to command, learning to obey We find the personification of faithfulness in the character of

Adonhiram who is "faithful unto death." This is a rather dark

reference to the biblical account (Kings 1, 12:18), which narrates the death of Adonhiram by stoning during his attempt to strengthen the tax collection in the reign of Rehoboam, Solomon's successor. The length of his tenure (more than 50 years) suggests the possibility of two Adonhirams.

The placement of the hand over the heart in the ritual is a symbol of fidelity. This may remind us of the usual way to pledge allegiance to the flag. Both point to the ancient representation of fidelity by the hand holding the heart.

**Lecture**

n Morals and Dogma, Pike expands on the foundation of the ceremony. The truth must be sought through study, reflection and discrimination. He says that "the learning flows that now emanate completely and widely must be traced back to their origins in the sources that are located in the very remote past and there the origin and meaning of Masonry will be found." Learning is the highest achievement of human purpose and far surpasses the physical monuments erected by the hand of man. Thus, the teachings of Masonry are not to be taken lightly or superficially acquired after they are taught.

Silence is important because it warns us of the demands that we are only obliged to make for the benefit of a truly needy Brother, demands that can be measured far beyond simple human charity.

Obedience is not blind towards tyranny, but is the very submission of the individual will to the necessary demands of living in society.

Fidelity was already one of the highest virtues among the ancients. We must always strive to keep faith in God and in our Brethren, otherwise our obligations would be meaningless and our words would be empty.

**Silence**

"Secrecy is indispensable in a Mason of any Degree ... what a profound fault it would be to reveal our secrets to those who, not bound to us by a bond of common obligation, could, knowing them, use them against us in extreme cases when the urgency of the occasion will not leave us time for an answer, and the peremptory mandate of our obligation will oblige us to make the duty of Brother what is a basis for the impostor ”(p. 109).

**Obedience**:

"... Obedience to the law does not mean submission to tyranny" (p. 110).

*“There is a true and original Law,… that which calls for the fulfillment of duty,… that is felt in all its authority wherever it is heard. This Law cannot be repealed or diminished, or its sanctions affected by any human Law ”(p. 110).*

*"All the general measures of justice are Laws of God, and therefore they constitute the general rules of government of the conscience ..." (p. 111).*

**Fidelity**

*When you make a solemn promise to God, beware of breaking it (p. 111).*

*Weigh well what you promise; but once the promise is made, remember that he who breaches his obligation will fail to do so towards his family, his friends, his country and his God (pp. 111-112).*

*Pledged fidelity is to be kept forever, maxim and axiom even among pagans (p. 112)*

*The word of a Mason, like the word of a Knight in Chivalric times, once given, must be sacred… (p. 112).*

*Be faithful to your family, and fulfill all the duties of a good father, good son, good husband and good brother. (p. 112).*

*Be faithful to your friends… be faithful to your country… be faithful to Masonry… so you will be faithful to yourself (pp. 112-113).*