

A DISCUSSION ON MASONIC SYMBOLISM

Part Three, The Entrance

PLEASE NOTE: In all of these essays, I am referring only to the Symbolism in the Ritual as used within the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York.

In due time, the preparation of a Candidate is finished and he is conducted to a door of the Lodge and caused to give an alarm at the door – three distinct knocks. In this section we'll take a look at the symbolism of the alarm to the candidate – and begin to dig into the symbolism of the number three.

Eventually, the candidate will learn to what the three knocks allude – to a certain passage of scripture that reads, “Ask and ye shall be given, seek and ye shall find, knock and a door shall be opened unto you.” But, it will not be further explained until the FC Degree. It is no coincidence that this particular portion of scripture, containing *three* specific instructions was selected to represent the Alarm at the door – or perhaps it should be the other way around. Either way, the first instruction refers directly to our time honored tradition of non-solicitation of members. Any man who desires to join our Craft must ask for more information ... he must come of his own free will and accord. The second instruction, to seek and ye shall find, of course refers to the process of the seeking more information and of seeking membership within the Lodge – the process in which he asks to join. And the third, and final instruction, to knock at the door of a Lodge where it will be opened to him for membership in the Craft.

And, so, in the complete mystery of darkness, he is led to a door of the Lodge. He is led there because, at this point in his journey, he is completely in the dark as to what Masonry has to offer to him – he has not yet been introduced to any of our mysteries, either symbolic or real. To compound the mystery – and anticipation – he is clothed in a most unusual manner, up to and including that mysterious cabletow. He is bringing with him nothing ... nothing of his outside world and he does not know why. He is escorted by several members of the Lodge whom he can hear and feel, but cannot see. And, finally, he is caused to give those three distinct knocks at the door. For what must seem like an eternity to him, he stands in silence, wondering and anticipating. Finally, he hears three knocks in reply. The door opens and a voice loudly demands, “Who comes here?” Before he can form a reply, someone answers for him in a way he could never have imagined, stating that he is standing there seeking to have a part in the Rights, Light, and Benefits of this Lodge. He is asked several (3?) more questions, after which he is told to wait while his request to enter into our mysteries is conveyed to the Worshipful Master. Symbolically, he is being introduced to the first lesson of a Petitioner – Patience. The door is closed in his face and he is left standing there, wondering what will come next.

Finally, the door to the Lodge is opened to him and he is led, still in his darkness, into the body of the Lodge where he is about to be introduced to a new pathway through life, that pathway upon which we are all treading, arm in arm, with Freemasonry's finest craftsmen.

Three knocks, three instructions, and the entry to the first of three degrees. And this is just the beginning of the curious connection of the number three to the Symbolic Lodge – some of which may be just coincidental...or not. Read, listen, study, and learn...

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