

## SKS PART4: RESEARCH AND REFLECTION

### OVERVIEW OF COURSES

This part of the curriculum encourages those wishing to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Craft to go into more depth on a topic which particularly interests them.

To accomplish this, six areas for further study have been selected. The student is encouraged to select **one topic** of particular interest to him.

He will see that there are three books suggested for each topic. He is asked to select **two books** from among these three, and read them thoroughly. He is also encouraged to do further research on the internet if he wishes (always bearing in mind that the quality of education to be found on the internet is greatly variable, and that he should use discernment in selecting materials, always preferring scholarship over opinion. Two guiding factors to this should be to find out about the author of the article or paper (is he an expert in the area?); and whether the article or paper conforms to accepted scholarship (are sources quoted?). The student is encouraged to take notes of the books and articles he reads.

The student is asked to submit a paper on what he has read, both summarizing the key points and offering his own opinion on the subject chosen. It is suggested that this paper be no less than 3,000 words long.

Since this is an exercise in scholarship, the student is encouraged to cite his sources in the paper. This may be done in footnotes or as a series of source notes at the end of the paper. Either way, the source of any quotations or ideas should be given by naming the book, author, date and publisher and ISBN number, together with the pages being cited; or in the case on an internet quote, the website ([www.x.com/xxx](http://www.x.com/xxx)) together with the page title, author and precise date (since web pages are subject to change).

While the full requirements of an academic paper are not being looked for, evidence of an orderly approach and understanding of how to back up our assertions with evidence is a reflection of the *Trivium*, or original University syllabus which we learn about in the Middle Chamber Lecture. **Grammar** is the art of putting together coherent and correctly spelled sentences; **Logic** is the ability to draw conclusions and back them up with evidence; while **Rhetoric** is the art of presenting these findings orally or in a written format which communicates these ideas to others. It is appropriate that this exercise should reflect the ideals.

*Note:* for all the books, the ISBN and publisher details are given simply to help the student find the book. In many cases newer editions have been published, new publishers have purchased the copyright, new ISBNs exist, or the book might even be available in a library or free on-line. Not all books will necessarily be easy to find, but at least two of the three books listed for each course will be cheap, readily available, or free. The 'keen student' may enjoy finding a copy of the more elusive one! And, while this education focuses on one course, possession of all the books recommended would give the student one of the better libraries in the State, by which time he would know which aspects he would wish to expand with future purchases. This course is the culmination of the formal process of learning, but we hope will inspire the student to a lifetime of further Masonic education.

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### 1. The History of Freemasonry.

#### *Abstract*

A standard look at our origins, fictitious and genuine, with a focus its English and French roots, and the rise of American Freemasonry. From the earliest days of Freemasonry, taken as beginning with the founding of the Premier Grand Lodge of England in 1717, there have been hints of a far older origin. Theories have ranged from Ancient Egypt, the Tower of Babel, Noah's Ark, King Solomon's Temple, King Athelstan of York, the Knights Templar, the Rosicrucians and Operative Stonemasons. Its founding has even been attributed to Adam (after all, he wore an apron!).

The three books recommended below are all written by Americans, which is appropriate given the course is for New Jersey. They cover the topic from three differing aspects. The first, by Mackey, summarizes many of the popular theories and legends around in 1861, the time of this book's initial publication. The second, by Tabbert, concentrates more especially on American Masonry and its effects on American history and life; while the third, by Hodapp, while being a very introductory text, nevertheless provides an excellent '60,000 feet' overall view of Freemasonry.

#### *Question*

What do you believe is the most likely origin of Free and Accepted, or Ancient and Honorable Freemasonry, and how – if at all – do you think it contributed to the shaping of America immediately after the War of Independence?

#### *Books*

**The History of Freemasonry**, by Albert G. Mackey, repub. Random House/Gramercy House, New York 1996, ISBN 0-517-14982-6

**American Freemasons – Three Centuries of Building Communities**, by Mark A. Tabbert, New York University Press, New York 2005, ISBN 0-8147-8292-2

**Freemasonry For Dummies**, by Christopher Hodapp, pub. Wiley Publishing, New Jersey 2005, ISBN 978-0-9645-9796-1

### 2. Symbolism and Allegory in Freemasonry.

#### *Abstract*

Masonry has been described as “a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.” At every step in our journey through the Degrees, we encounter symbols, bot those which we see and are immediately explained to us; or those of which we are unaware due to the blindfold, and only being to understand later. Some are explicitly referred to in the ritual; while others are left for our private contemplation. However, we can see that these symbols and these allegories were not introduced into the rituals merely for entertainment, but to teach us important lessons, the purpose of which is to change our behavior and make us better, more spiritual and

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more contemplative human beings. This course, encourages an exploration of these symbols and allegories in greater depth, in order to become more familiar with their possible meanings.

One thing the readings have hopefully conveyed is the fact that there is no single, perfect, true interpretation of a symbol or allegory. While any book or any man may speak in generalities, the purpose of a symbol or allegory is its personal meaning to an individual.

### *Question*

Give a definition of a symbol and an allegory, and briefly trace how these have been used in societies (both Masonic and Civil – for example, flags and National images such as the Statue of Liberty or Uncle Sam as embodiments of a Nation's ideals). Secondly, focus on four symbols within the Three Degrees which particularly spoke to you, explore the possible meanings of behind them from your personal perspective, and how their lessons can be applied in your daily life.

Wilmshurst was a giant in Masonic esoteric interpretation. He was also a senior member of the Theosophical Society of Madame Blavatsky and a founder of the Liberal Catholic Church. Pike should need no introduction. As well as his copious writings on the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, he also wrote extensively on Blue Lodge symbolism, as evidenced by this book. Finally, Waite is a mainstay of English Masonic symbolic writing, and no library would be complete without at least one of his many books.

### *Books*

**The Meaning of Masonry**, by W.L. Wilmshurst, pub. Gramercy Books, New York 1980 (initially 1927), ISBN 0-517-33194-2

**Albert Pike's Esoterika – The Symbolism Of The Blue Degree Of Freemasonry**, ed. Arturo de Hoyos, pub. The Scottish Rite Research Society, Washington 2008, ISBN 978-0-9708749-4-8

**Some Deeper Aspects of Masonic Symbolism**, by Arthur, E. Waite, repub. British Library 2015, London, ISBN 978-1-4733-0450-5

## 3. The Development of Masonic Ritual.

### *Abstract*

The establishment of the Premier Grand of England in 1717 provided a semi-standard for ritual working in Masonic Lodges, and while there were – and are – many local variations, the essential points were adhered to. The rituals of Ireland, Scotland and the Antients only varied in incidentals, and never in substance. This commonality holds today, and any member of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey will be able to visit any Lodge in America and see only minor differences. Indeed, he can visit any Lodge in amity around the world, and through he may not know the language, he will recognize just about everything which takes place. This is the strength of Masonry's universality.

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When Masonry came to the colonies, through the Premier Grand Lodge, through the military groups chartered by the Antients, Ireland and Scotland, and spread by the wandering lecturers and initiators, it took a famous man, Thomas Smith Webb, to codify and standardize the rituals now known as the York Rite or American Rite Degrees across the United States. While it is not the intention of this course to simply compare ritual variations between different States and Countries, this course looks at how Masonry took off in Britain and Europe, and how quickly variations arose from the earliest times, despite the common foundation. This also leads to the question of regularity, or whether a Lodge – or Grand Lodge – is recognized, regular and not considered clandestine, definitions which confuse many Masons.

The first book, by Waite, paints a picture of the state of Freemasonry in Europe and its various currents in the mid-1900s. While it has a focus on Christian Orders, it must be remembered that for many European countries, at least until recently, Christianity was the established religion (indeed, there is still a religious tax in Germany – the *Kirchensteuer* – as well as Austria, Italy, Sweden and Iceland, among others). Nevertheless, the book provides valuable insights into the various currents appropriated by Freemasonry. The second, by Davis, focuses more on the practical development of Masonry since 1717, and in particular the development of Masonic ritual in the United States. The third book, by Bernheim, takes the reader into the realm of regularity and recognition, and reminds us that we must still be cautious when travelling, and never to assume a Lodger we are invited to attend is necessarily in amity with the Grand Lodge of New Jersey.

### ***Question***

Why do you think that Freemasonry diversified so much, so quickly, following its founding (or reappearance) in 1717? What influence did nationalism, politics and culture have on this process? Are the rules about which Lodges you may visit while traveling in the U.S. or abroad petty and unnecessary, or important to maintain the common Landmarks of the Craft? Given the many examples of Freemasonry transcending conflict<sup>1</sup>, how do you think Masonry might contribute to the current uncertainties in the world?

<sup>1</sup>Examples include: Christmas in the trenches in the First World War when English and German soldiers met in No Man's Land to celebrate together; or the many stories of help being offered by Masons on opposing sides in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War.

### ***Books***

**Emblematic Freemasonry**, by Arthur, E. Waite, pub. Kessinger Publishing (originally 1925), Montana, ISBN 978-0922802234

**The Mason's Words**, by Robert G. Davis, pub. Building Stone Publishing, Oklahoma 2013, ISBN 978-0-6158538-2-6

**Masonic Regularity**, by Alain Bernheim, pub. Westphalia Press 2016, ISBN 978-1-63391-408-7

## **4. New Jersey Freemasonry.**

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### *Abstract*

How Masonry came to New Jersey. Its early beginnings as a Provincial Grand Lodge, and how, when and why it became a sovereign Grand Lodge. The development of its Constitution. A focused look at the first Grand Master, M.:W.: Brearley and his contribution to the founding of the United States of America.

For this course, it is recommended that all three suggestions are followed. Firstly, select one of the first two books to learn about the background, founding and development of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey. Secondly, read the book about our first Grand Master, M.:W.: David Brearley, who was a major contributor to the Constitution of the United States, as a reminder of how interrelated Freemasonry and the Founding Father of the country were. Finally, you should do some research on your own Lodge, its founding and its contribution to Masonic and Civic life in your part of New Jersey. If you are fortunate and a member of an older Lodge, a history may have been produced. If not, or if you belong to a newer Lodge, a search of the internet and a few conversations with older Lodge Brothers may reveal fascinating insights.

### *Question*

Provide a brief synopsis of the founding of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey and how it obtained the authority to do so. Outline major and noteworthy events in its history to present times. Give a basic history of your Lodge, noting anything important in its history. How can the Grand Lodge in general and your Lodge in particular contribute to the life of New Jerseyites in the future?

### *Books*

**A History of the Grand Lodge of the Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons for the State of New Jersey, Commemorating the 175th Anniversary 1786-1961**, by William Davis & Lewis Parker, pub. Bloomfield, New Jersey 1961, ASIN B000GKOEEC

### *OR*

**History of Freemasonry in New Jersey, Commemorating the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**, prepared by the History Committee, privately published (available on this site in PDF format for download).

**David Brearley And The Making Of The United States Constitution**, by Donald Scarinci, pub. NJ Heritage Press 2005, ISBN 978-0943136363

**Your Lodge History** – see your Lodge Historian or your older members

## 5. Esoteric Freemasonry.

### *Abstract*

This provides an introduction to the esoteric viewpoint of Freemasonry, and the fact that this aspect existed from the moment the Order was formed. In this course, some themes which have entered Freemasonry are considered. These include Rosicrucianism, Alchemy, the Kabbalah, and other Anglo-Saxon currents.

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To provide a Kabbalistic viewpoint, McNulty's book is very well-known and has gone through several reprints. In the maps the Lodge-room onto the Tree of Life, and also introduces the Jungian interpretation for good measure. Students wishing to expand their understanding of the Kabbalah in general are referred to Dion Fortune's book *The Kabbalah*, and Israel Regardie's books *The Tree of Life* and *A Garden Of Pomegranates* (the versions annotated by the Chic Cicero (former Grand Commander of Knights Templar of Florida) are particularly useful. A Rosicrucian and Alchemical perspective is provided by Churton's excellent book on these harbingers of Masonic thought, which found their proselyte in Elias Ashmole, that famous apologist of early Freemasonry. Finally, Gilbert provides insight into the esoteric writings of an English Victorian luminary, William Wynn Westcott, who was both Supreme Magus of the English Masonic Rosicrucians, and a founder of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a Magical Order in England.

European Masonry is not covered here, since our Blue Lodge Degrees traditionally come from the Grand Lodges of England, Scotland or Ireland. However, the keen student will find much of interest in investigating the early Degrees in France, Germany and Italy.

### ***Question***

There is no question that esoteric Masonry was not an afterthought, but rather the source and fount from which most Masonic symbolism and teaching arose. Select two schools of esoteric thought (e.g. Greek and Roman Mystery Schools, Ancient Greece, Kabbalah, Rosicrucianism, Templarism, Gnosticism) and show how symbols and/or ideas from these currents have found their way into the Blue Lodge Degrees.

### ***Books***

**The Way Of The Craftsman**, by Kirk McNulty, pub. Central Regalia, London 2002, ISBN 0-9542516-0-1

**The Golden Builders**, by Tobias Churton, pub. Weiser Books, London 2005, ISBN 1-57863-329-X

**The Magical Mason**, by Robert A. Gilbert, pub. The Aquarian Press, UK 1983, ISBN 0-85030-373-7

## **6. Masonic Controversies & Conspiracies.**

### ***Abstract***

The fact that a secretive society will always have its detractors and those who are scared of things they don't or can't understand. Early 'exposes' which in fact help our understanding of the early society. The papal bull 'In Eminentia' and why the Catholic Church was concerned. Leo Taxil and French attacks. The Morgan Affair. Modern conspiracy theories ranging from Illuminati to Lizard People! How an understanding of these can guide us to determine how best to present ourselves to the general public.

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The three books recommended below refer to intelligent and dispassionate looks at the problem, rather than recommending an anti-Masonic text itself. There are enough tracts available on the internet, but you are recommended not to spend too much time on these, since they can be irritating! All three books are very readable and cover slightly different aspects of the problem; and the third book provides a broader picture to remind the reader that it isn't only Masons who have to suffer gross misinterpretation and misrepresentation. In an age where the phrase 'fake news' is thrown at any information the partisan reader disagrees with, the ability to review evidence calmly before reaching an informed conclusion has never been more critical.

### *Question*

Identify between three and five major themes or topics used by the anti-Masons to attack the Fraternity. Why do you think certain groups hate Freemasonry so much? What do you think of their accusations? What can Freemasonry do to counter these attacks and better inform the public? Should this be done at a high level (e.g. newspapers) or at a 'grass roots' level (e.g. beginning with family and friends)?

### *Books*

**Is It True What They Say About Freemasonry?**, by Arturo de Hoyos & S. Brent Morris, pub. M. Evans & Company, Inc., New York 2004, ISBN 1-59077-030-7

**The Red Triangle: A History of Anti-Masonry**, by Robert L.D. Cooper, pub. Macoy, Virginia 2012, ISBN 978-0-8531833-2-7

**Secret Societies: From The Ancient And Arcane To The Modern And Clandestine**, by David V. Barrett, pub. Blandford, London 1997, ISBN 0-7137-2647-4