

Orators Report
on the 5th Degree
Perfect Master
March 2, 2011



The apron of the 5th Degree is white and green, with a cubic stone and a Hebrew YOD. The jewel is represented by a compass open on a segment of a circle, to an angle of sixty degrees.

Bremerton Valley of the Scottish Rite

The Legend: the Blue Lodge 3rd degree is based on the legend of Hiram. This legend loosely has its historical basis

in 1st Kings 7 and 2nd Chronicles 2. The Rites are based largely upon the Hiram legend that follows after Hiram Abiff's death.

The ancient mythical Legend of the fifth degree, found in the old Rituals, is as follows:

King Solomon, having learned that the body of Hiram had been discovered, and deposited in the western part of the unfinished Temple, and being greatly rejoiced that the precious remains of his brother the Artificer were found, immediately ordered Adoniram ben Abada, who was afterward appointed Chief Architect and Inspector of the Works in his stead, to prepare a funeral that should correspond with the eminent virtues of the deceased.

All the workmen upon the Temple, on Mount Lebanon and in the quarries, were ordered to be present at the funeral ceremonies. In nine days, Adoniram completed a superb mausoleum to the memory of the Master, destined to receive his body—a tomb of white marble, surmounted by a triangular obelisk of the black marble of Egypt, upon which was a great urn of the same, pierced with a sword. In this urn his heart was to be deposited, it having for that purpose been embalmed.

Three days after the monument was completed, the remains of the murdered Master were deposited therein by King Solomon. He was assisted by all the workmen, in particular, Adoniram and Zabud, as well as all the princes, nobles, and captains. Hiram, King of Tyre had come from his own country to be present at the imposing ceremony.

Annually afterward, the anniversary of this funeral was religiously observed and on each such occasion some brother represented the deceased, and was thereafter called a Perfect Master (Morah Salam), because he was thenceforward required to be, in his character and conduct, a representative of the Master Hiram, whose place he had occupied in the coffin, and whose clothing and jewel he had worn.

Who is the Perfect Master? It is Grand Master Hiram Abiff.

The Setting: The Lodge is in sorrow for it is the anniversary of the burial of the Master Hiram.

Until 1935, it was the custom and practice of the Scottish Rite to require initiates in this Degree to execute a last will and testament before initiation. There were two reasons for this ceremony and requirement. The first was to impress upon the initiates the uncertainty of life, and that death might call them at any moment; and, second, to impress upon the initiates the wisdom and duty of making proper provision for the protection and welfare of their families and dependents. Now you are urged to think seriously upon this subject. If any of you do not have a will, you should make one.

The Ritual: The Candidate has been initiated into the fourth degree, Secret Master, and has been reminded of its lessons: Secrecy, Obedience, and Fidelity. He is placed in a coffin and represents the GMHA in the annual reenactment of the funeral ceremonies.

The main roles are Adoniram, King Solomon, and Hiram, King of Tyre. Their orations are reminiscent of the Rose Croix Funeral service e.g. **KING SOLOMON:** "It is a great act of piety to inter our friends according to their station and so to give evidence that we appreciate and desire to imitate their virtues." While in the Rose Croix the **Jr. Warden says:** "It is a great act of piety, and honorable, to inter our Brethren according to the proportions of their condition, and so to give evidence that we appreciate and desire to imitate their virtues."

Upon completion of the orations, the coffin is placed in the tomb and the assembly promises and vows to forgive all wrongs and injuries that were inflicted by others and to cherish peace and concord among Masons. The Candidate is raised from the coffin, his eyes are uncovered, and is relieved of the cord around his neck and the white robe, and is invested with the collar, apron, and jewel of the degree.

The Lecture: The Master Hiram was an industrious and an honest man. What he was employed to do he did diligently, and he did it well and faithfully. He received no wages that were not his due. Industry and honesty are the virtues peculiarly inculcated in this Degree. Perfect honesty, which ought to be the common qualification of all, is rarer than diamonds. To do earnestly and steadily, and to do faithfully and honestly that which we have to do, these virtues belong to the character of a Perfect Master.

We Think, at the age of twenty, that life is much too long for that which we have to learn and do. But when we are sixty we halt and look back along the way we have come and cast up and endeavor to balance our accounts with time and opportunity, we find that we have made life much too short, and thrown away a huge portion of our time.

The Moral Teaching of this degree is that we live in peace with our own conscience and are honored by good people when we perform our duties honestly and diligently. When honesty, diligence, justice and brotherhood do not exist, freedom and independence are meaningless. Masonry values man as a person.

DUTIES: Be honest and industrious.

LESSONS: Life is uncertain. Virtue should be for virtue's sake.

FOR REFLECTION: Can you measure your age, not by years, but by good deeds? Does a life well lived prepare one for death?

"To sleep little, and to study much; to say little, and to hear and think much; to learn, that we may be able to do, and then to do, earnestly and vigorously, whatever may be required of us by duty, and by the good of our fellows, our country, and mankind, these are the duties of every Mason who desires to imitate the Master Hiram."- Albert Pike

IMPORTANT SYMBOLS: Branches of acacia, coffin, the Master Hiram.