

The Square & Compasses and 3 Degrees of Masonry

Two of the principal symbolic tools always found in a Lodge are the square and compasses. Lodges and rituals explain these tools as lessons in conduct: for example, that Masons should "square their actions by the square of virtue" and to learn to "circumscribe their desires and keep their passions within due bounds toward all mankind."



These moral lessons are communicated in performance of allegorical ritual. A candidate progresses through degrees gaining knowledge and understanding of himself, his relationship with others and his relationship with the Supreme Being (per his own interpretation). While the philosophical aspects of Freemasonry tend to be discussed in Lodges of Instruction or Research, and sometimes informal groups, Freemasons, and others, frequently publish studies that are available to the public. Any Mason may speculate on the symbols and purpose of Freemasonry, and indeed all Masons are required to some extent to speculate on masonic meaning as a condition of advancing through the degrees. There is no one accepted meaning, and no one person "speaks" for the whole of Freemasonry.



There are 3 degrees Blue Lodge Freemasonry :

1. Entered Apprentice – the degree of an Initiate, which makes one a Freemason;
2. Fellow Craft – an intermediate degree, involved with learning; and
3. Master Mason – the "third degree", a necessity for participation in most aspects of Masonry.

The degrees represent stages of personal development. No Freemason is told that there is only one meaning to the allegories; as a Freemason works through the degrees and studies their lessons, he interprets them for himself, his personal interpretation being bounded only by the Constitution within which he works. A common symbolic structure and universal archetypes provide a means for each Freemason to come to his own answers to life's important philosophical questions. The highest degree in Masonry is the 3rd Degree - the Master Mason.