

## Symbols of the Reflection Room

Worshipful Master, my brethren, I chose to talk about the symbols of the Reflection Room, as it seemed to me that this is when my masonic journey began.

Indeed, it all became real once I step foot into the reflection room. The candle lit room made it clear that something was amiss, and this something was light, the masonic light, the knowledge that will come from masonry and make me and my fellow brethren better men.

As you enter this dimmed room, it is overwhelming, so many things around you, all of which have their own significances which I will describe next.

A Brother, set the tone as soon as I entered, "Tonight, you will die! Are you sure you want to continue?" he said. Once he heard my affirmative answer he closed the door and left me to my thoughts. "What's going on? What are those things in this room? What does he mean, when he said I'm going to die tonight?"

As my eyes are trying to get used to the darkness, I see a single sheet of paper with few questions and a pen. I promptly answers the questions as truthfully as I could. The last one, "Write your will and testament" set the final tone, tonight the old me will be gone, replaced by the new me with a chance to improve myself and enlightened myself in Masonry, all of which while honoring my God, my country and my family. This single sheet of paper made finally sense, and helped me focus and kept me from being overwhelmed.

Brethren Antony opened the door, asked if I was done with the questions, took the sheet of paper, tilted the hourglass and closed the door, leaving alone in the dark with my thoughts and those various objects around me. My eyes started getting use to the dark and the and small lit candle started to allow me to observe the symbols around me.

There was 5 frames hanged on the walls around me, all of which were in order, from left to right:

1. "If curiosity has led you here. GO AWAY!" setting the tone, do not come here just out of curiosity but with the true purpose of seeking light in Masonry, do not be hesitant, only serious candidates are accepted. Do not waste the other brethren's time.

2. "If you lie, you will be exposed" Do not lie to be accepted, as your true self will always come to light sooner or later. Do not join the Masonry for your own gain or as a mercenary. If you do so, you will be revealed, tried and expelled.
3. "V.I.T.R.I.O.L." "visita interiora terrae, rectificandoque, invenies occultum lapidem", meaning "visit the interior of the earth, and purifying it, you will find the hidden stone." The meaning of this acronym can be the subject of a deeper research, but here, for the sake of keeping it short, it means that the truth about yourself is within you, you and only you can better and improve yourself.
4. "Know thyself" is within the continuity of the previous frame, it emphasizes that the solution is within you, by knowing yourself you will unlock the infinity of ways to be a better human being overall. If you don't know who you are, the secrets and knowledge of Masonry won't have any effects. It's like being given a tool, but not knowing how to use it.
5. "If you persevere, you will come out of the abyss of darkness and you will see the light." This sums up the previous ones, if you really want to join the Masonry, if you didn't lie about your true intentions, if you learn to know yourself and work hard at it, in the end you will be reborn and find the light in Masonry and become a better man. It's all within you.

In addition to the frames, some other symbols were laid out on the table:

- The Holy Bible with the Square and Compasses on top, is a symbol that God is forever present, it also allows the candidate to pray as he is about to die and be reborn. Looking back after being initiated, it also represents the solemn Obligation that the candidate is about to take.
- The skull represents mortality, our life on earth is not eternal and will someday leave this earth. It is a reminder that death is certain upon all of us no matter what.
- The hourglass emphasizes the skull, as it reminds us that our time on earth is counted and it cannot be reversed. Time is precious and must be used wisely. Time and death are the two things no one can escape.
- The still painting represents a frozen moment, it can be any moment in our life, and hence it is important to always live rightfully, as often it represents a memory for the people that survive us. This is how we will be remembered.
- The burning candle serves as two purposes, the first one being to lighten the room but the second one also to remind the candidate of the time going by, once the candle fully burns down, it is gone, same as life.

- The bread and water represents the two bare elements necessary for life. Bread is the simplest forms of food, to remind the candidate to live life simply and humbly. It also represents the circle of life. Bread is made from a seed that grows and with some work becomes an essential element of life, refueling and replenishing those who eat it.

Water is one the most essential elements of life, without water there is no life and no living creature can survive without it. Thirst hurts faster than hunger. Water also represents purity and allow the cleansing of the body as well as the soul with the Holy Water.

- The rooster is the animal that calls in the dawn announcing the arrival of light. It shows vigilance and perseverance that will be needed in order to obtain the light in Masonry.
- A direct connection to the rooster is the Mercury, it is the “symbol of the emergence of the darkness of ignorance and fear. It is the omen foretelling spiritual trial and testing. Just as we need vigilance and perseverance to seek truth and the light, we must also have the courage to acknowledge it when our social standing, ego, and perception from others challenge it.”
- Salt hints to the human soul. It is a preservative and remind us that our actions on earth will be remembered and we need to act positively to be remember as such. But too much salt also spoil the food, as a reminder to temper our desires and passions.
- Sulfur reminds us that all things are temporary. As true as the sulfur smells will disappear over time, so will our failures and rejections that we encounter through life. We learn from it and move on so that we can do and be better.
- Those three elements together remind us to subdue our passions, learn from our mistakes and not fear our ignorance but recognize it to better and improve ourselves through trials and tribulations.

Overall the chamber of reflection is a glimpse of what we can expect in Masonry, time to think and learn, but also time to reflect on ourselves which will lead to the light we are looking for. The chamber of reflection kills you as a man but revives you as a Mason. Especially in today’s society, this time alone in darkness is primordial. We constantly complain that we are too busy to think and to know ourselves. We are constantly bothered by shiny objects, such as computers, TVs, smartphones, tablets, constantly notifying us to do something. And most of the time those things are futile. Whereas, in this room, there is no cellphones, no TVs, nothing to occupy your mind. You have to face yourself and your own thoughts. But this is essential to find the hidden stone, the light within that shines for each and all of us.

The chamber of reflection is when it became clear to me that my journey as a Mason began, it also reminded me that I was mortal, that my time was counted and that I shouldn't waste it with futile desires and passions but make my decisions and actions count and to start looking within myself in order to know myself. As it only then that the light of Masonry will be able to shine.

Worshipful Master, Brethren, I want to thank you for your time but also I want to thank you for this incredible opportunity. I'm honored and blessed to be here today and being given the amazing chance to become a Mason and to better myself in Masonry.

I have Spoken W.:M.:

Bro.: Hugo Prochason

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