

The Qualifications of a Mason

Article by W.Bro. Rob Lund

At the door of the Lodge, the Junior Deacon announces the new candidate as being “a poor man, in a state of darkness, humbly soliciting to be admitted to the mysteries and privileges of ancient Freemasonry, for which purpose, he comes properly prepared”. Having dealt with the first two qualifications in a previous paper, they will not be revisited here.

“Humbly soliciting”. *Humility* is the key to the gateway of the upward path . The humble man realizes that it is not his own prowess that lifts him up. To emphasize this, the candidate is later told to “follow his guide with firm but *humble* confidence”. Remember that the guide referred to here, is one’s own inner guide or inner voice. Humility is a trait of a person of ideals, who is never self-satisfied. It is the exact opposite of that of the man of pride, who is content to look down, enjoying his own greatness.

Soliciting admission requires that the candidate comes properly prepared. What does that mean? He later declares, on examination, that he was first made a Mason in his heart. I.e., he was prepared, internally, to take the steps, has asked the questions, feels the impulse within himself, has the attitude (including humility) and the lack of satisfaction with the things in the outer world, an inner hunger for things of the spirit (which among Hindus is called *mumukshatva*), desires knowledge, and something greater than himself.

“How does he hope to obtain those privileges?” , the Master wants to know. “By being a man, free born, and under the tongue of good report”.

Why free born? The candidate has to be free, mentally and physically, to make the decision to take the steps; free to follow the path to enlightenment; free to join and support the Lodge.

The “tongue of good report” refers not only to the report by his sponsors and the investigating committee, but he must be found mentally and spiritually responsive to the ideals of the order. His answers to the Brethrens’ questions must ring true. When I was learning to read Egyptian hieroglyphs, some of my first exercises, in translating some funerary stela, referred often to an epithet given to the person being memorialized: they were said to be



(*pronounced ma'a herew*) translated as “true of voice”, meaning that his voice and words rang true, and reflected the true person, and his spirit.

Only a man with the right character (being humble, properly prepared, free, and of good report) is a candidate that is “a fit and proper person to be made a Mason” , and to be able to take the steps to enlightenment.