

## The Mystic Implications in the Mark Master Mason Degree

Brothers, today we will explore the Mark Master Mason degree and mystic implications that are veiled behind its symbolism. This is the first degree of the American York Rite, picking up the story of the building of KST. What's key to note here is that this story's perspective focuses entirely on the Fellowcraft Degree than that of the Master Mason Degree.

In the Fellowcraft Degree, the Middle Chamber represents an allegorical workplace of the mind or the medium between body and spirit. Think deeper about the wages of corn, wine, and oil: the corn which nourishes his physical body, the oil, the refresher of his physical body, "that which makes his face shine", and pleasure and satisfaction from the wine of mystic experience (note: the wine described here is symbolic, as in the Sufi "Divine Wine" or Divine Knowledge).

Now, being ADVANCED as a Mark Master, he is paid in COIN, which he can use to purchase that of his own choosing. Now, he's expected to have a greater sense of discernment. As the coin is gold, one can associate this with an alchemical symbol meaning the perfection of matter. Allegorically, in receiving the coin he has now achieved advanced knowledge. Before, he was under the tutelage of his superiors and had no freedom of choice. Now, he is paid and has the latitude to select the fruits of his own labors. So the quality of the work that takes place here in order to earn such a privilege is of great importance. Each craft worker is thus held to the highest standard by their word, and must cement that work by their own stamp or mark, thereby swearing that they have earned their proper share for their good work, true work, square work. As stated in The Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Illinois website:

"The degree of Mark Master is believed to be the oldest degree in Freemasonry and to predate all others by many years. The legend of the degree is singularly instructive and is well founded on statements of Holy Writ, relating to the period in the building of King Solomon's Temple, atop Mount Moriah in the Holy City, of Jerusalem. In the United States, the degree ritual takes place immediately following the death of Grand Master Hiram Abiff, although in many countries, the ritual takes place immediately prior to Hiram's death – in keeping with the degree's lesson plan of completing the Fellowcraft degree [2°]), it teaches the valuable lessons, including: 1) how to receive wages as a fellow of the craft; 2) education is the

reward of labour; 3) a man is remembered by the mark he makes in his life; 4) labor is, itself noble; and 5) time served does not create superiority. Like the Fellowcraft degree, the Mark Master degree is less concerned with the past and future and more with the here and now of our present life. It places emphasis on not judging people or situations on outward appearances but to seek hidden truths. The ritual contains a dramatic message that fraud can never succeed. The story is inspired by the parable in Matthew 20:1-19 and Psalm 118:22.”

## What's In A Mark?

So what could be mystical or symbolic about this? Well, if we start to think more speculatively, we can say that KST is the human body, mind, and soul brought to harmony with spirit. This harmony is achieved by symbolically completing our Temple, thus reaching deific life of perfected man. The careful construction of our spiritual temple, brick by brick, is like a building code of ethics.

In the ritual, we are asked to create a symbol that will serve as our mark. This symbol is recorded and symbolically becomes your stamp for all your future masonic work. So, much thought and contemplation should go into the designing of your mark, but why? Your thoughts and words are energy. Remember how the world was created? God spoke things into being. Quantum Physics proves this by proving that the universe is made up of energy, and different energies have different frequencies. Thought is a vibration. Therefore, every thought we have is an expression of energy in the universe. And we are bound to the energy we emit in the created world around us. To support this notion, Matthew 5: 27-28 reads:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Simply put, your thoughts, which you invest prior to carrying out the action, are where all the real work takes place!

So you can conclude, that your mark should not be placed haphazardly and one should take the time to put real thought into it. Remember you are energizing that mark and it represents the nature of your inner work. Of who you are and who you aspire to become. The mark as the signature to our work, can now

mystically refer to our character and virtue, the signature of our ethical ideology. This is significant, because our code of ethics is based upon our perception of truth. And our perception of truth is based upon our understanding of Deity.

### **Wages Fit A Craftsman**

**“Masonic labor is purely a labor of love. He who seeks to draw Masonic wages in gold and silver will be disappointed. The wages of a Mason are earned and paid in their dealings with one another; sympathy that begets sympathy, kindness begets kindness, helpfulness begets helpfulness, and these are the wages of a Mason.”**

### **Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)**

We all know what wages are. Every day we wake up and go to our respective jobs, and work approximately 40 hours or more per week with an expectation of being compensated for our efforts by our employers. This was no different in the time of KS and the building of his temple. 80,000 Fellowcrafts were employed to carry out the manual labor for the temple, and were compensated on the 6<sup>th</sup> day so that the Sabbath day could be observed. So exactly what about the concept of working hard and earning wages can reveal very mystical connotations?

A wage is:

**1 a: a payment usually of money for labor or services usually according to contract and on an hourly, daily, or piecework basis**

**2: recompense, reward —usually used in plural but singular or plural in construction <the wages of sin is death — Romans 6:23 (Revised Standard Version)>.**

**Compare the above definition of compensation for labor to the Hindu definition of Karma. Something is identical here:**

**1: the force generated by a person's actions held in Hinduism and Buddhism to perpetuate transmigration and in its ethical consequences to determine the nature of the person's next existence**

**2: vibration**

Take special notice to the use of the word vibration. Vibration is simply how particles move from one point to another, alluding to the “aliveness” of force. That force thereby determines the results of our actions. Supporting the notion described in the Biblical quote that you are receiving what you equally have given out to the world. Masonically, our work is symbolic to inner growth and development. So too is the wages for such labor equally allegorical.

When looking Wages philosophically, it can be likened to consequences for our thoughts and actions. When you adhere to the obligations and charges of the craft by being a man of character, virtue, and charity, one earns their wages from the GAOTU in the form of grace and elevation of spirit. In the same spirit, if one chooses instead to lead a volatile life, finds no empathy for his fellow man, leading a unproductive life with no regard for his Creator, he will in turn reap what he sows.

As stated in Romans 2:6-8;

“He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury”.

Brother Isaac Newton’s Second Law states: “For every action there is an equal yet opposite reaction”. Thus, making us as Masons, masters of our own destiny.

## The Key Stone

The legend of the Mark Master Mason Degree is as follows:

"A young Craftsman found in the quarries of Tyre a stone of peculiar form and beauty, which was *marked* with a double circle, containing certain mysterious characters that greatly excited his curiosity. He had the ambition to produce this stone to the inspecting Mark Master as a work of his own. But as it was neither a single nor a double cube, nor of any other prescribed form, it was rejected, notwithstanding the beauty of its execution, and cast forth among the rubbish. The young man then frankly told the Master that the work was not his own, but that he was induced to bring it up on account of its perfect workmanship, which he thought could not be equaled. Some time afterward, when one of the arches in the foundations of the Temple was nearly completed, the keystone was missing. It had

been wrought in the quarries by H. A. B. (*Hiram Abiff*) himself, *and was marked with his mark*. Search was made for it in vain, when the adventure of the young Fellow Craft was recollected, and among the rubbish the identical stone was found, which completed the work."--*Historical Landmarks*, vol. ii. p. 126.

The keystone is the central component to this degree, as it plays the final part to completing the temple and is the centerpiece of the arch. Symbolically, it has a multitude of interpretations. It's comprised of curved and straight lines. The curved lines reflect the circle, which we perceive as the eternal. The straight lines reflect the square, which represent the material plane. Together, they allude to the harmony of our higher and lower selves. The relationship is to our creativity, spiritual prowess, and our third eye.

The arch itself symbolizes the canopy of the celestial heavens, with the keystone being the centerpiece. The keystone was at first disregarded and thrown in the rubble, only to realize at the finishing of the temple, it held a true importance. They then dug through the rubble to retrieve the stone and at long last complete the building of the temple. Rubble is symbolic of the material self. The temple itself is the spiritual self. The keystone then can be understood as your integrity. The affairs, struggles, and temptations of the common world prior to the craft are a challenge to our higher consciousness and a divergent to our purest intention, causing us to miss the best part of who we are. Once we realize the true value of the keystone of our inner being stamped with the mark of the Grand master within, we desperately search through the rubble of the carnal nature to find the hidden work of art and place it in its proper place of splendor. Thus reaching that state of perfection within, and existing to express that perfection without.

## Conclusion

The Mark Master degree is one of the most important and allegorical works within the American York Rite. And while there are infinitely more jewels ingeniously hidden within the ritual, the Degree emphasizes that the work we must undertake is both inner and outer with equal importance to your growth and development. The degree teaches that each individual inexorably receives his just due; that no one in the end can profit by taking that which he has not earned and that he cannot hope to be rewarded for work not properly done. Thus, it emphasizes always conduct yourself with integrity, and how that integrity will affect the quality of your work. Finally, as the keystone was a hidden treasure, hidden deep within you is the potential for Divinity. And that divinity is only as valuable as your willingness to share it with the world. So be

steadfast and diligent in your duty to God and man.

Special Thanks to WB's Timothy Hogan, Nicholas Isabella, and Oscar Alleyne for their conversation which helped to bring this thesis to life!

William Carter  
Springfield Gardens #1057  
Zerubbabel Chapter #147 RAM

### Sources

Axioms By Robert G Brown, Duke University 2007, Lulu Press  
King James Bible  
Mirriam-Webster Dictionary, 2014 Version  
Duncan's Masonic Ritual and Monitor, by Malcom C. Duncan, [1866]