

CHAPTER WALKABOUT CEREMONY

The Chapter is set up as for the Opening Ceremony. In particular, as well as the usual Station, the Banners (including the Royal Arch Banner), the Altar and Great Lights, care should be taken to ensure the Royal Arch Captain is in possession of a Signet Ring, that the Charter is prominently displayed, and that a copy of the Constitutions and Bylaws are close at hand. Finally, on the Trestleboard table there should be a candlestick bearing a white candle, and a red taper on the Secretary's desk.

The newly exalted Companions should be seated in the North East. Once the Chapter has been opened, any business should be undertaken so that the Chapter Walkabout Ceremony is the last item on the Agenda before the Closing. It is important that the explanations to the newly exalted Companions should not be obscured by business.

It is suggested that the King runs the evening, but if the Chapter so wishes the High Priest – or the Scribe – can take the King's part instead. The reason for this is to allow the King to have an active role in the year before he is High Priest; he should have the time to organize and rehearse the Walkabout Ceremony, leaving the High Priest to focus on running the Chapter and conferring the Degrees. The King (High Priest or Scribe) may stand at a pedestal on the dais in the East and read his part: it is highly recommended that all the other parts are done from memory.

King Companion Principal Sojourner (*PS rises and salutes*), cause the newly exalted Companions to stand before me.

PS King

PS goes to the North East (with stick) and asks the newly exalted Companions to rise and follow him. He leads them before the King, facing East in a line, and remains standing at the right end of the line.

Companion King, the newly exalted Companions are assembled before you.

My Companions, I welcome you into this Chapter of Royal Arch Masons. The purpose of this evening is to provide an explanation of key points of our ceremonies, the roles of the Officers and the furniture in our Chapter. You have progressed through the four degrees under the purview of the Grand Chapter of the State of New York, which culminated in your being exalted to the rank of Companion of the Holy Royal Arch; and this evening you have (for the first time) witnessed the

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Opening of the Chapter. I am sure that both the ceremony of your exaltation and the peculiarity of this evening's Opening have raised questions in your minds. It is our intention to answer some of those questions this evening.

The York Rite of Masonry is a progressive system of degrees in which the candidate for its mysteries has more and more light revealed with each successive grade. While the first three degrees, called Blue Lodge Masonry, bind us in a universal bond with our Brethren across the globe, we are privileged to be a part of an ancient English system which comprised a series of degrees, of which the first three form only part. Indeed, the purpose of these further grades, as you now know, were to complete the story begun in the first three degrees, and discover and

bring to light the true word which was lost in the third degree. This journey took you through the discovery of the Keystone, and the ceremonies to mark the completion of King Solomon's Temple. You also underwent the ceremony of Passing the Chair in the Virtual Past Master's degree, to remind you that during its early history the privilege of receiving the degree of the Holy Royal Arch was only open to those who had been Masters of a Blue Lodge. Finally, you found yourself moving forward in history, past the golden years of Jerusalem and the Temple, when the Israelites obeyed God's just laws, past their prevarication and the awful punishment of seeing their Holy City reduced to rubble and being scattered abroad or led into captivity in Babylon, to that time when, under a more benign ruler, the Israelites were permitted to return to their homeland to rebuild their city and temple.

Symbolically, too, you moved from a Lodge where you were taught the importance of the horizontal, the perpendicular and the square, to a Chapter where the triangle and the arc are introduced. These are symbolized both by the Ark of the Covenant and the arc of the circle which forms the keystone. God's presence at our ceremonies is now represented by the Shekinah which replaces the letter 'G'. That which was implicit in the Blue Masonry are now made explicit in Red Masonry, and that which was veiled, represented by the Lost Work, is unveiled and restored to us.

The Ark and the Arch share a common linguistic root, and both remind us of Noah's ship upon the waters and the Ark of the Covenant borne across the expanse of the Sinai desert. The arch also reminds us of God's promise after the flood, and in many traditions the rainbow and ark, and the arch of Enoch are some of the earliest themes in Masonry. The Veils we see in the Chapter also reflect one of the earliest themes in what is called Capitular Masonry which simply means Masonry in a Chapter. They remind us that long before the Temple was built, a series of colored veils intervened between the people and the Ark within the confines of the tabernacle, which was used to house the Ark of the Covenant during its journey across the desert.

We will now proceed to review those symbols, and the duties which comprise our unique heritage.

As is customary, Companions, before entering upon this, or any other important undertaking, we will invoke the aid of Deity. (*Gavels three times ****)

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CHAPTER WALKABOUT CEREMONY Give your attention to the Chaplain.

Chap (*OPENING PRAYER*) Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires, known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may truly love Thee and worthily magnify Thy Great and Sacred Name. Amen.

All So Mote It Be. **King** * (*Companions, except the newly exalted Companions and the Principal Sojourner, are*

seated). Companion Captain of the Host. **CH** Companion King.

King Light the Shekinah. **CH** Companion Principal Sojourner. **PS**

Companion Captain of the Host. **CH** Light the Shekinah.

PS goes to Secretary's Desk, finds and lights red taper there. Proceeds south, around the Altar, to the East where he lights the white taper. He puts out the red taper and places it beside

the white taper. He then returns to his seat, passing West of the Altar. He should walk slowly and make right angles whenever changing direction. He returns to his position to the right of the newly-exalted Companions.

PS Companion Captain of the Host. **CH** Companion Principal Sojourner. **PS**

The Shekinah is present. **CH** Companion King.

King Companion Captain of the Host. **CH** The flame, representing the presence of the Living God, is lit. **King** Companion Principal Sojourner. **PS** Companion King.

King Conduct our new companions to the outer part of the Tabernacle, that they may pass by the Veils to receive instruction.

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The PS tells the new Companions to right face, and follow him as he conducts them, with his stick, down the North side of the room behind the Veils. When he reaches the West he leads them to the center of the Western end of the room, and then proceed up the center towards the First Veil. He halts before the First Veil, then turns to the new Companions and says:

PS While the workmen who had returned from captivity in Babylon under the suffrage of King Cyrus rebuilt the ruined Temple, they held a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other, to partake in the work of rebuilding the walls but also being every ready to defend themselves against marauders and those who did not wish to see the Holy City and Temple rebuilt. Jeshua, Zerubbabel and Haggai, the members of the Grand Masonic Council, caused a tabernacle to be erected next to the building site, and held their meetings there. To safeguard themselves from being taken unawares by attacks or by eavesdroppers they posted guards at each of the four Veils which successively gave entrance to each court. The Veils were colored Blue, Purple, Red and White respectively, and as you will recall at your exaltation, in order to pass each one you were required to give a password, and in most cases a sign which accompanied it, in order to gain admission to the next Veil. Let us now approach the Master of the First Veil for instruction.

The PS now leads the new Companions to the M1V who rises, takes his banner in his right hand, and says:

M1V The distinctive color of Blue is an emblem of universal friendship and benevolence and instructs us that, in the mind of a Mason, those virtues should be as expansive as the blue arch of heaven itself. My pass is I Am That I Am, and refers to the name given by the Almighty to Moses when He spoke to him from within the burning bush.

The M1V returns his banner, while the PS leads the new Companions to the 2V who rises, takes his banner in hand, and says:

M2V The color Purple admonishes us to cultivate and improve that spirit of union and harmony between the brethren of the symbolic degrees and the Companions of the sublime degree which should ever distinguish the members of a society founded upon the principles of everlasting truth and universal philanthropy. My words are Shem, Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and my sign is an imitation of that given by the Lord unto Moses when He commanded him to cast his rod upon the ground, whereupon it became a serpent, and devoured the rods of the Pharaoh's magi.

The M2V returns his banner, while the PS leads the new Companions to the M3V who rises,

takes his banner in hand, and says:

M3V The color Scarlet admonishes us to be fervent in the exercise of our devotion to God and zealous in our endeavors to promote the happiness of man. My words are Moses, Aholiab and Bezaleel, the three who were, respectively, responsible for governing

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King

The Principal Sojourner performs a dual role within the Chapter. Similar to the Senior Deacon in Blue Lodge, as representative of the High Priest he performs the duties at the Altar, leads devotions, and also conducts the Candidates along the path to enlightenment.

The Captain of the Host fulfills a function similar to that of the Senior Warden in Blue Lodge. When the Chapter is in session he sits in the throne at the West, and communicates the commands of the High Priest to the Companions, ensures those seeking to enter the Sanctuary have been duly processed and obligated, and is responsible for the security of the Chapter.

The Scribe represents Haggai and I, as King, represent Zerubbabel. The High Priest represents Jeshua, and it is the duty of the Scribe and King to assist the High Priest in his duties and to preside in his absence.

(Indicates the Altar) The equilateral or perfect triangle was adopted by the ancients as a symbol of the Deity – as embracing in Himself the three stages of time – the Past, the Present and the Future.

The number three has always been held in high esteem by the Fraternity. Indeed, at our Opening and at our Closing, we perform that very ceremony which in the Third Degree King Solomon and Hiram King of Tyre were unable to complete

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the Israelites during their wanderings in the desert, the construction of the Ark of the Covenant, and of the Tabernacle in which it resided. My sign is an imitation of that given by the Lord unto Moses when he commanded him to place his hand in his bosom, and drew it out leprous. He then placed his hand once more into his bosom and when he withdrew it had turned again as his other flesh. I also give you this ring or signet, with which you will be able to gain admission to the Grand Council.

The M3V returns his banner, while the PS leads the new Companions to the RAC who rises, takes his banner in hand, and says:

RAC The color White signifies that purity of heart and rectitude of conduct which are so essential to live a good and true life. Present me the ring (*Done*). This eternal circle of gold is that of Zerubbabel, and represents Truth. My words are Jeshua, Zerubbabel, and Haggai, and are the names of the Grand Council, being the High Priest, King and Scribe. My sign is an imitation of that given by the Lord unto Moses when he commanded him to pour water on dry land, which appeared to turn to blood when Moses did as the Lord had commanded before Pharaoh. You now pass on into the Sanctuary, where in the ceremony of exaltation were to be found the triangular altar, together with the seven-branched candlestick and the altar of incense furnished by King Cyrus. However, in a regular meeting the candlestick, altar of incense and Ark of the Covenant are not present (*the RAC returns his banner*).

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because of the death of Hiram Abif. We join together in a living triangle by foot and hands, in order to utter the True Word of Master Mason. Now you understand why the number three has always been of such great importance to all Royal Arch Masons.

The Altar is used as a base on which is placed the Great Light in Masonry. Upon it rest the Great Lights in Masonry, as in the preceding Degrees.

(Indicates the Warrant, which should be prominently displayed) Your attention is also directed to the Warrant issued by the Grand Chapter of the State of New York, Royal Arch Masons, which gives us the authority to meet and to confer degrees.

The HP rises, and the K indicates the breastplate he wears.

King This Breastplate is an imitation of that worn by the High Priest of Israel. The twelve stones allude to the twelve tribes of Israel. It is to teach you that you are always to bear in mind your responsibility to the laws and ordinances of the Institution and that the honor and interests of your Chapter and its members should be always in your heart.

Behind the Grand Council hangs the Royal Arch Banner, which bears a great cross of green edged with gold, and within each quarter we see the standards of the four principal tribes of Israel: the lion of Judah, the man of Reuben, the ox of Ephraim and the eagle of Dan. These potent symbols contain many interpretations, which will become clearer to you as you progress in your studies. The shield is supported by two Cherubim, and we also read the motto 'Holiness to the Lord', which we read in Exodus were the words placed upon a plate of gold affixed to the miter of Aaron, the first High Priest of Israel.

(Indicates the candle) The Shekinah first appeared as Moses consecrated the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. The Shekinah, a visible cloud of light, hovering over the Mercy Seat, was ever present over the Ark as it was seated in the Temple of Solomon. With the destruction of that edifice, the Shekinah has not since appeared. The single light in the East, the White Candle, symbolizes the Divine Presence giving light and power to our Royal Craft and is essential to its existence. As the disappearance of the Shekinah Light from the Ark of the Covenant signified the withdrawal of the Divine Presence, so in like manner the disappearance of Divine Power from this or any other Chapter, would presage the same sad, disastrous ending. The Charge is Clear. It is for us to see that, like Israel, we do not become vain-glorious by reason of our material accomplishments and wander after false gods, losing the Great Light, the Lesser Lights and the Shekinah.

The Holy Royal Arch lifts the veil and brings each votary face to face with eternal Truth. The Great I AM. Everyone that enters the Sanctuary of the Tabernacle finds much beyond the limits of Craft Masonry without which their Masonic Life would be incomplete. May the Light of Almighty God shine forever upon us in

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Chap

CHAPTER WALKABOUT CEREMONY the noble and glorious work in which we are engaged.

And now, my newly-exalted Companions, I hope that our explanations had helped you to understand the symbols and the roles within the Chapter, and that your future visits to our meetings will be full of teaching and enjoyment. I cannot stress strongly enough the importance to preserving this unique piece of Masonic ritual history, which has been described as the

“heart, root, backbone and marrow of Freemasonry.” Study its complex symbols, take part in its meetings, take office in the Chapter, and your endeavors will be rewarded beyond measure. And now my Companions, give your attention to the Chaplain. *** (*All rise*).

Let us pray. Gracious God, we thank Thee for this education, and beseech Thee to guide and direct this Chapter and its members day by day so that they may be a faithful example of the meaning and significance of both faith and fraternity in the world. Amen.

(*Seats Chapter.*) * *This concludes the Chapter Walkabout Ceremony.*

All King * Companion Principal Sojourner, escort our newly-exalted Companions to their seats

So mote it be. (*done*).