

The Three-minute Nugget...

Worshipful Sir, Wages, and the Regius Poem

The phrase “So mote it be” is used by freemasons as a response at the end of a prayer. It comes from an Old English phrase that simply means “so may it be,” and has been used in masonic documents since its earliest beginnings. Freemasons use it as an affirmation of a prayer as a response to amen, a word of similar meaning.

Which is correct, Worshipful Master, or Worshipful Sir? Worshipful Master is an official title, as is Grand Master. Being elected or appointed to a masonic office can convey a particular rank upon that individual. That rank can bring with it a title which is associated with that rank. The title signifies that individual’s office. The title, Worshipful Sir, applies to everyone who has ever been installed as a Worshipful Master, (and not achieved a higher office). So there can be several Worshipful Sirs in a lodge, but there is only *one* Worshipful Master. The Master of a lodge is therefore entitled to be and should be addressed by his proper title at all times, unless otherwise called for in our rituals and ceremonies. He is the Worshipful *Master*.

We hear the terms "corn, wine and oil" in our ritual, and see them used at cornerstone Layings, building dedications, and in one part of the Fellowcraft Degree. Each has a meaning. What do you think they may be? "What are the three symbolic 'food' items used at cornerstone layings?" Corn is the easy one; it is the corn of nourishment. Wine, by tradition, is served at celebrations; therefore it represents refreshment and marks important events. Oil, it is said, can be spread on troubled waters to calm them, and thus allow peace and joy to prevail. In dedications, it is believed that these symbols will bring plenty, a smooth path and happiness to those who make use of the Masonically dedicated structures.

What is the Regius Poem? How is it Masonically significant? We close each prayer with a quotation from this ancient document. This particular writing dates to about 1390 A.D. It is, in some research, called the Halliwell Document, because it was discovered by a man named Halliwell, and is the earliest dated material of Masonic record. It presently is housed in the British Museum in the form of a book. It is said to be about Masonry and deserves continued study. Although it is in Chaucerian English, and often requires skilled interpretation, it gives Masonry its earliest identification. It is written in verse, and therefore referred to as a poem. The poem ends with the statement “SO Mote it be” in reference to charity. The word "Mote" is translated as “may”.



...#68 in a series of ‘nuggets from the quarries of Freemasonry’ SM

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