

## **Exploring the Select Master Degree of the Cryptic Council**

**By Sir Sam Earl Sedghi - Illustrious Grand Historian of the Grand Council of Cryptic Masons State of Illinois.**

### **Introduction**

In the realm of Freemasonry, the Cryptic Council offers a unique and profound path of knowledge, enlightenment, and brotherhood. The Select Master Degree, one of the pivotal degrees conferred within this system, holds significant importance in the journey of Masonic education and personal development. This article delves into the Select Master Degree, its historical context, elements of the degree, and its relevance in modern Masonry.

### **Historical Context**

The Cryptic Council, often referred to as the Council of Royal and Select Masters, emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as an extension of the degrees of Freemasonry. The Select Master Degree, specifically, is believed to have been developed from earlier rituals and teachings, incorporating elements from ancient operative masonry. It reflects a deep connection to the moral and philosophical lessons central to Masonic tradition.

As a degree, the Select Master Degree is intricately tied to the narrative surrounding the construction of King Solomon's Temple, focusing on themes of fidelity, secrecy, and the pursuit of knowledge. It illustrates the importance of the preservation of sacred truths and the moral obligations that accompany such knowledge.

### **Elements of the Select Master Degree**

#### **Symbolism**

Symbolism is a cornerstone of Masonic education, and the Select Master Degree is replete with it.

#### **Ritual and Ceremony**

The Select Master Degree is characterized by its elaborate and ceremonial ritual, which serves to impart lessons through performance and participation. The ritual places candidates in scenarios that challenge their understanding of loyalty, sacrifice, and moral integrity. Through this process, members learn vital lessons about the depths of friendship and the sanctity of vows taken.

## **Teachings and Moral Lessons**

At its core, the Select Master Degree conveys critical teachings regarding the nature of leadership, the value of trust, and the importance of integrity within the brotherhood. It emphasizes that members are called not only to seek knowledge for their own benefit but also to protect and preserve the information shared within the council.

## **Relevance in Modern Masonry**

In today's world, where the principles of loyalty and ethics can sometimes feel overshadowed by modern challenges, the Select Master Degree remains highly relevant. It encourages members to reflect on their values and responsibilities, providing a solid foundation for personal growth and community service.

The emphasis on brotherhood and unity echoes the need for collaboration and support in a diverse society. As members engage in discussions surrounding the teachings of the Select Master Degree, they foster understanding and camaraderie that transcends societal divisions.

## **Conclusion**

The Select Master Degree of the Cryptic Council encapsulates essential Masonic principles of knowledge, loyalty, and ethical living. Its rich history, profound symbolism, and relevant teachings make it a vital component of the Masonic journey. As members embrace the lessons presented in this degree, they not only contribute to their own personal development but also to the fabric of their communities, embodying the true spirit of Freemasonry in the modern era.

Each member of the Cryptic Council is invited to delve deeply into the Select Master Degree, embracing its teachings to navigate the complexities of life with integrity, wisdom, and a commitment to brotherhood.