

This Obligation, when looked at in relation to the secrets you subsequently received, appears to be quite out of proportion and 'over the top'. Why such a 'Great and Solemn Obligation' for Masonic secrets which appear trivial and insignificant?

- First and foremost, of course, it is to do exactly what it says: 'to prevent our secret arts and hidden mysteries' from improperly becoming known through our unworthiness.
- Secondly, and more importantly, therefore is to test your worthiness to be a Freemason. It is teaching you to be trustworthy.
- In the Charge after Initiation you were told that secrecy was one of those three excellences of character which, as a Freemason, your attention would be peculiarly and forcibly directed. That it consists of an inviolable adherence to the Obligation you have entered into - never improperly to disclose any of those Masonic secrets which have now been, or at any future period be, entrusted to your keeping, and cautiously to avoid all occasions which may inadvertently lead you so to do.
- You would not have been initiated into Freemasonry had your Brethren not believed that you had that excellence of character. It is now up to you to live up to that ideal and, however trivial or insignificant you believe those Masonic secrets to be, to demonstrate your trustworthiness and adhere to your Obligation!



Educational Fact Sheets for the Entered Apprentice

A series of Fact Sheets to provide guidance
for the Entered Apprentice

EA 04A The Obligation (Taylor's Working)

Making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge

The Obligation of a Mason

At your initiation into Freemasonry you were informed that Masonry is founded upon the purest principles of piety and virtue; that it possesses great and invaluable privileges and that, in order to secure those privileges to worthy men, and only to worthy men, vows of fidelity were required of you. Having been assured that in those vows there was nothing incompatible with your civil, moral or religious duties you then freely, and of your own accord entered into an obligation to keep inviolate the secrets and mysteries of the Order.

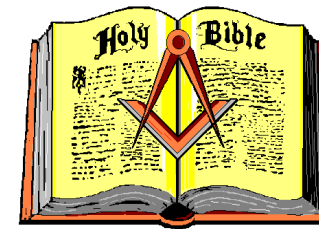
You stated your full names at length and repeated the great and solemn obligation of a Mason:

“In the presence of the Great Architect of the Universe, and of this worthy, worshipful and warranted Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, regularly assembled and properly dedicated, of my own free will and accord do hereby and hereon solemnly and sincerely swear that I will always hele, (heel) conceal, and never reveal, any part or parts, point or points of the secrets or mysteries of or belonging to, Free and Accepted Masons in Masonry, which may heretofore have been known by, shall now, or may at any future time be communicated to me, unless it be to a true and lawful Brother or Brethren, and not even unto him or them, until after due trial, strict examination, or sure information from some well known Brother that he or they are worthy of that confidence; or in the body of a just, perfect, and regular Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons.

I likewise solemnly promise that I will not write those secrets, indite, carve, mark, engrave, or otherwise them delineate, or cause or suffer it to be done by others, if in my power to prevent it, on anything, moveable or immoveable under the canopy of Heaven, whereby or whereon, any letter, character, or figure, or the least trace of any letter, character, or figure may become legible or intelligible to myself or to anyone in the world, lest our secret art and hidden mysteries may improperly become known through my unworthiness.

These several points I solemnly swear to observe, without evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation of any kind, in the certain knowledge that the violation of any of them will brand me as a wilfully perjured individual, void of moral worth, and totally unfit to be received into this worshipful Lodge, or any other warranted Lodge, or society of men who prize honour and virtue above the external advantages of rank and fortune. So help me God and keep me steadfast in this, the Great and Solemn Obligation of an Entered Apprentice Freemason.”

As what you have repeated may be considered only a serious promise, as a pledge of your fidelity, and to render it a Great and Solemn Obligation, you will seal it with your lips on this book, which is the Volume of the Sacred Law.



You were then entrusted with the secrets of an Entered Apprentice Freemason - a sign, a token and a word - the signs of recognition. Mischievous and malevolent people in the world outside Freemasonry contrive to make of this something very sinister. You now know that there is nothing sinister whatsoever. On the contrary there is only good to be found in the Great Institution of Freemasonry of which you have now become a member.

Already you can see the behaviour now required of you as a Mason does not relate to giving preference to your fellow Masons when it comes to promotion at work or concealing another Mason's crime. In fact, in a later Masonic Obligation you will take before you become a Master Mason, you will be asked to swear that you will specifically NOT conceal any crimes or misdemeanours of which you become aware. So, if that is not what a Freemason's Obligation relates to, then just what is it all about?