

**NUANCE of RITUAL**  
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*(This program is to be presented and discussed only in a tiled lodge! Encourage your audience to ask questions and engage in discussion with you during your presentation.)*

Our ritual is full of slight variations from one line to the next or from one degree to the next. If we ignore these minor differences or mistakenly change a word, the intended meaning or lesson is either changed or misunderstood. Only a couple of examples will be presented here.

In the Entered Apprentice obligation the phrase, “always hele ever conceal and never reveal” is used. I was somewhat confused when I first heard this phrase because I was thinking that word was spelled “hail”. To me, hail means to call out to someone as a greeting. And if I were to draw attention, how was I to also conceal and never reveal. Confusing, right!

How many of you actually know the meaning of the word “hele”. The word is spelled with an accent mark ` over the second e in the word. This is an old English spelling and the word means, “to cover or conceal”. Now it makes more sense. And it also reinforces the teaching method used in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, by repeating words or lessons three times using three words that mean essentially the same thing. This method is used throughout our ritual.

Another very slight difference in wording is often misunderstood and misused at the door of the preparation room during the exchange between the Senior Deacon and Senior Steward. The Senior Deacon asks the Senior Steward, “Who comes there?” This very tacitly implies that the Senior Steward is not in the same place as the Senior Deacon, and that the Senior Steward has someone with him who is also outside or there.

Also think about the exchange between the Senior Deacon, Wardens, and Worshipful Master. The wording has changed to “Who comes here?” implying that they all are now in the same place, “here.” This is very symbolic in that we are talking about the candidate moving from outside the lodge room, there, to inside the lodge room, here.

In Freemasonry we use the term profane to describe someone who is not a Mason. In the example above, the candidate is moving from the outside world (profane) into the lodge room, the world of Freemasonry. He is unknowingly moving from darkness, the profane world or there, into light, the Masonic world or here. He is seeking knowledge so he is moving from there, the profane, the place of darkness or ignorance, to here, Freemasonry, the place of light or knowledge.

These examples of nuances in our ritual should help explain why it is so very important to deliver the words as written. By understanding the meaning of the words in our ritual, we can better live the lessons that are given to us.