

Lessons in Freemasonry

THE BEEHIVE

by

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Many Freemasons are constantly searching what is the meaning of Freemasonry. We have learned previously that Freemasonry, Masonry and Speculative Masonry, all synonymous terms, are forms of a metaphysical science of objects we cannot see and objects we cannot touch. I have also informed you that Freemasonry is morality. Freemasonry applies moral virtues to the tools of our ancient brethren. The lectures in our symbolic degrees express moral virtues of objects shown in those degrees. The lectures, therefore, are methods by which we can learn and understand the morality of Freemasonry.

There are many virtues expressed in the lectures of the Master Mason degree and the virtue of the Bee Hive is one of my favorites. Whenever I give a presentation to a group, not necessarily one of Masonic, I always close by reciting, in full, this virtue. To me it fully explains the purpose of one of our tenets - RELIEF. Tonight, I will dissect this virtue and explain what it means to me and what it could mean to you.

"The beehive is an emblem of industry and recommends the practice of that virtue to all created beings....." I am sure that we have all heard the phrase "busy as a bee." This virtue implies from the start that we should constantly be doing something with our lives, either working, relaxing or playing. You never will ever see a bee resting. He is to fulfill his destiny by preparing the hive, either for a new queen or preparation for the coming winter. If the beekeeper does not "work" his hive and the hive becomes full with food, then the bees swarm to another place to begin making a new hive. We mortals, then, also have a destiny in our own lives in this transitory life. Therefore, like the bee, we should constantly build our lives in preparation for the new life in the hereafter. Isn't that why we stood in the northeast corner of the lodge and admonished to commence building our present life for that spiritual one?

".....It teaches us that as we came into this world rational and intelligent beings....." We are taught that we mortals have the highest intelligence on earth. Therefore, we have placed ourselves to have control over all other beings. As scientists and engineers we can divide into infinitesimal pieces the molecules that make up the human structure. We can confirm our genetic makeup; to design and construct great buildings, to fabricate machines to make our work easier, and finally to develop

medicines to make our lives disease free and thus let us live longer.

"...When we take a survey of nature, we view man in his infancy, more helpless and indigent than the brute creation....." This reminds us that as we came into this world, we were dependent on others to survive. We were not always strong and healthy in body and intelligent in mind. These had to develop as we grew in age. Animate creatures are possessed with the powers of hearing, seeing, feeling and tasting. We humans have additional powers of investigating and reasoning. When we have come of age, we find that we have an obligation to help our fellow man and other life. Other beings do not have that luxury. Their survival is dependent on the instincts of nature and the will of man.

"...It might have pleased the greater Creator of heaven and earth to have made man independent of all other beings....." We of higher intelligence have been given the ability to do just about anything we set out to do, whether to be industrious like the bee or become dependent on others. We can establish a set of rules in which to govern our lives so that each can live in a society free of anarchy. Thus, our Creator has caused us to be dependent on each other so that we can work and play in harmony with each other. Therefore, we can therefore enjoy better opportunities of fulfilling the duties of reciprocal love and friendship.

"....Thus was man formed for social and active life, the noblest part of the work of God....." Our Creator not only developed the human being to make himself live longer, design and construct marvelous creations, but also wanted us to have fun. There are means by which we can enjoy ourselves while traveling the rugged road of life. We have developed many sources to occupy our minds and bodies. The human being of all other specie has developed more for himself in the last century than in all other centuries combined. My mother once told me that she has witnessed more in her lifetime than man has witnessed since the beginning of time. She said that she witnessed the coming age of the automobile, the advancement of medicine, the development of air travel and the landing of man on the moon. She also said that man cannot control his anger.

"...And he that will so demean himself as not to be endeavoring to add to the common stock of knowledge and understanding, may be deemed a drone in the hive of nature, a useless member of society....." We learn from others in our youth to apply our knowledge in manhood. So that in age, we should give to others the wisdom we have accumulated. The drone, in the bee world, has only one useful purpose - to procreate its specie. When winter comes, the drone is forced from the hive to perish - its destiny finally fulfilled. However, man doesn't have to be a drone in the hive of nature. He has many years to pass on to others the knowledge and experienced he has learned over time. With the additional powers of investigation and reason, man can create new ideas for projects for the future and is limited only by his energy and creativity.

The virtue of the beehive teaches us to be industrious and charitable. It paves the way of all other virtues that industry encapsulates and all that is moral and worthy. Its emblem sets the example of

responsibility, not only to ourselves, but to those around us. The next time you hear someone recite the lecture of the Master Mason degree, listen intently and ponder the moral lessons the beehive has to offer.
