**Masonry – A Finishing School for Men**

**Masonic Principles // The Moral and Social Virtues //**

**Considered some of the Divine Attributes of Deity**

1. **Truthfulness**
2. **Endurance**
3. **Independence**
4. **Justice**
5. **Mercy**
6. **Equity**
7. **Silence**
8. **Attainment**
9. **Devotion**

**“May Brotherly Love Prevail, and Every Social and Moral Virtue Cement Us!”**

**An admonition of tolerance!**

**Among all the teachings Masonry imparts to its members, none is more important than championing the ideal of toleration in all things. In the book of lectures for the symbolic lodge, we read; “By the exercise of Brotherly Love we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family; the high and low, the rich and poor; who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support and protect each other. On this principle, Masonry unites men of every country, sect and opinion, and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.”**

**Taken from Robert G. Davis’ blog**

**The Path of the Esotericists Among Us**

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· READING TIME: 3 MINUTES

The German Hermeticist, Franz Bardon, observed; “there is a fundamental problem with truth. It depends on the insight of the individual.” Bardon was right. Each one of us sees truth from the standpoint of our particular environment, education, maturity, religious training, cultural lens, and family upbringing. Thus, to an extent, truth is always an illusion.

That’s just the way life is. One of the challenges of the seeker is that, knowing there are different paths to truth, he wants to explore all of them simultaneously. While he must ultimately survey the field of options available to him to understand the ancient traditions, he has to guard himself against making only an intellectual pursuit.

The world is full of academic esotericists.

One of the first things we must come to understand about enlightenment is that each of us is on his own walk. Our personal path is the path to greatest harmony within ourselves and with the world in which we experience. The shortcoming of almost every proscribed system of thought is that it fails to recognize the importance of the awakened consciousness; or the limitations of its own notions.

Religion and science are two classic opposites. At the outset, religion generally demands the unshakable belief in a spiritual fact that its own truth lies in its religious tradition. Thus, it always poses a dogma. Beyond that, it requires the faithful to lead a good and pure life under the certain prescriptions it defines for its followers. Science, on the other hand, is independent of such demands. It merely asks that one investigate things without prejudice to gain knowledge and understanding. But, in so doing, it tends to conclude that what is not known can become known; else it cannot exist. Science rarely accepts the metaphysical. Therefore, science is often atheistic in principle.

To me, this gap between science and religion mirrors the conflict between rational thinking and inspiration. Reason becomes a control of inspiration when inspiration seems to fly away into the vague unknown. Yet inspiration is the impulse for rational investigation.

The esotericist accepts the value of both these opposites. He seeks to unite both paths using an entirely different approach. He engages in the “spirit of the old Initiates.” He investigates the means of science as far as its facilities reach, but he is also not afraid of applying those traditions which are not (or not yet) in the grasp of orthodox points of view. To affect this kind of work, he often labors in small circles for the precious things which lead him to the genuine experience. The bottom line is that the work on one’s self cannot be taken over by anyone else; nor can it be invested in any one organization. The seeker can only be guided, but not carried, by his spiritual friends.

This is the first rule of all esoteric study.

And this is the covenant Initiates make with each other. It can’t be any other way because only what a man accomplishes by his own work becomes real to him. After all, we can only know certain aspects of absolute truth. There is life, there is free will; there is memory, intellect, and intuition. Beyond these obvious characteristics of truth, most everything else can be argued (and, indeed, have been debated throughout the history of recorded thought.)

This brings me to another important rule of esotericism. It is useless to argue with those who are not adepts of the higher leanings of truth. No sincere adept would impose his truth on someone who is not otherwise ready to contemplate it. There is a Biblical reference for this idea from the Master of the New law himself: “Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under your feet.”

There is also a Masonic parallel to this dilemma. We all know Masons who believe with all their heart there is nothing spiritual about the rituals of Masonry. There are those who claim there is nothing to learn beyond the ritual words. There are even more who are appalled when it is suggested that Kabalistic, Alchemical, or Hermetic associations might be made from a study of the Degrees of Masonry. Never mind that every aspirant is told before he receives the very first Degree that Masonry is a course of hieroglyphic instruction taught by allegories. Oh well. As obvious as this may seem to the esoteric minded among us, there is little to be gained by arguing with those who aren’t listening.

Thus, for the Initiate, it is wisest for him to do the Great Work quietly. He will likely never be in the popular current of societal thought anyway. And that’s okay. The true seeker has no reason to affect the natural balance of things by becoming disruptive.

It is enough for him to come to know the truth for himself.