

The Bee Hive

Sometimes the search for the real meaning of Freemasonry is a frustrating and difficult path to travel. To me, Speculative Masonry means a kind of metaphysical science of things we cannot see or touch. I have on previous occasions shared with you that Freemasonry is about morality. Freemasonry applies moral virtues to the physical tools used by our ancient brethren. The several Masonic lectures reinforce the expression of those life values. It follows, therefore that the lectures are methods by which we can learn and come to a deeper understanding of the morality of craft Masonry.

The virtue and value of the Bee Hive is a favorite of mine. Of course you know it represents industry, but to me it also encompasses the real purpose behind one of Masonry's three basic tenets - [RELIEF](#). I want to share some of my thoughts about the virtue of Relief, 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 know you've 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, studying to learn, or even playing. I'll wager that you'll never ever see a bee resting. He is there to fulfill his destiny by preparing the hive, either for a new queen or in preparation for the coming of winter. If the beekeeper doesn't regularly "work" his hive and the hive becomes full with food, then the bees swarm to another place to begin making a new hive. They must keep on being productive ...it's in their nature.

We mortals also have a destiny in this transitory life of ours. Just like the busy bee, we should constantly build our lives in preparation for our new life in the hereafter. That's why we stood in the northeast corner of the lodge and were there 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 have long understood that mankind has the highest intelligence on earth. Therefore, we have been placed in a position of 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; design and construct great buildings, develop and fabricate complex machines that make our work easier, and finally discover and produce medicines that help make our lives disease resistant or immune, and thus have the opportunity to live longer.

"....When we take a survey of nature, we view man in his infancy, more helpless and indigent than the brute creation...." As we came into this world, we were all dependent upon some charity and the benevolence of others in order to survive. We were not always strong and healthy in body and intelligent in mind. These had to be developed and nurtured as we became older. Of course we, as God's creatures, possess the five senses of human nature; hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, and tasting....but we have the additional powers of investigation and

reasoning. When man comes of age, he understands that we have an obligation to help our fellow man and other life forms that co-exist with us. Other creatures don't have that luxury. Their survival is dependent on the instincts of nature and the will of mankind.

"....It might have pleased the great 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 upon others. We can establish a set of rules with which to govern our lives so that each one can live in a society free of anarchy. Yet, our Creator also caused us to be dependent upon each other so that we can work and play in harmony with others. Therefore, we can take full advantage of the opportunities to fulfill our duty of reciprocal love, friendship, charity, and the relief of one another.

".....Thus was man formed for social and active life, the noblest part of the work of God...." God not only developed the human being to be able to increase his life span, design and construct marvelous creations, but He also wanted us to have fun. Perhaps that oversimplifies the concept, but there are means by which we can truly enjoy ourselves while traveling this rugged road of life. We have developed many sources to occupy our minds and bodies. My dad once told me that he had witnessed more scientific discoveries and life changing advancements in his lifetime than man probably witnessed since the beginning of time. He witnessed the real coming age of the automobile, great medical advancements, the development of television, air travel and the landing of man on the moon. I'm sorry he didn't live to see the advancement of computers, the Internet, I-pods, and instant communications....he would have been amazed! But, he also noted that with all of our great advancements in technology, mankind still cannot control its anger...and there will be wars and rumors of wars. To continue:

"...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, early in our youth, to apply our knowledge as we reach manhood, so that in the coming of old age, we may give to others the wisdom we have accumulated. In the world of bees, the drone has but one useful function - to procreate its species. When winter comes the drone is driven from the hive to perish - its destiny has been 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 experience he has gained 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 yes, but also charitable. It paves the way for all other virtues that are moral and worthy. This 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 Masons degree, I urge you to listen intently and ponder in your heart the moral lessons that the bee hive has to offer.

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