

The Great Light in Masonry

Good evening brothers,

Well here we are on this wonderful Dec evening with yet again another opportunity to come together as masons and continue to build on our journey together.

So tonight I want to touch on a subject that is important to all masons everywhere but sometimes confusing. The topic of faith.

We as Masons know that in our family of friends and brothers there are men of all faiths united in the common and sworn oath of a belief in a Supreme Architect of all the universe. (As WB George mentioned last month it is a point of pride for him and for M5)

And our main point of focus on faith is the Holy Book on the altar but it is important that we know what this single book actually represents. The Holy Bible, the inestimable gift of God to man, sits upon the Altar of every properly Tyled Masonic Lodge. (Since the early 1700s) Within it is the specific language in which our Ritual has been performed for hundreds of years, that is the language of the King James Bible. While all of the morals, virtues, values, responsibilities, and characteristics of our collective Faiths are contained within this codex (A fancy word for book), **it is not placed there to induce any Brother to question their own Faith or to support one over another as a means of supplanting of theirs.** It is a symbol. It is a physical representation of the recorded words of God to man when he instructed us in the proper moral and virtuous manner in which we should conduct our lives, serving as a passport to gain admission to the Celestial Lodge above.

If we think about this for a minute the book on our altar today as modern/speculative Masons is not even close to the book our ancient craftsmen would have taken their oaths on, it is not even written in the same language. This book or scroll would have been very different indeed.

After the English Civil War, when Jews were allowed back into society, they were warmly greeted by the Masons. While they took their Obligation on their own holy book, but understood that the Bible on the altar was supposed to be a symbol of THEIR holy book, to them.

So here is where we dive in as masons: at the moment of our obligations we should and must ensure that each good man entering into our sacred band of faithful craftsmen should be given the opportunity to swear his oath on that

sacred book that will by definition hold him to his word. We are not here to just let anyone in on their word alone but instead demand of you that you hold yourself to a higher authority.

Now after the moment of obligation and you are brought to light with your hand on your volume of sacred law, the one that holds you to the highest standard as a man is in your hand to remind you of your vow.

Once that moment is done The Masonic altar goes back to a single book, that when open is there to represent that holy book to you, why is it that way you ask well its simple we are not here to promote worship this is not a church we use one book that all masonic ritual is based on for the simple purpose of providing a guide to the virtues and morality to which a mason is bound and sworn to live and act by. You're not as a blue lodge mason taking an oath to worship the holy bible above all, you're swearing to follow the tenets of Freemasonry and to keep its secrets.

It would be impossible for us to even attempt to place every known volume of sacred law on the altar of freemasonry, just soak this in for a minute:

There are over 450 different English prints of the bible, 1 for the Jewish religion, 965 variants to the Quran, 4 different versions of Vedas, 3 different buddhist texts. All of these are right, all correct, all Holy to the man that believes in them. I think you can get the point here. It just is not possible to place them all and to try to pick and choose would be wrong, it is not for us as Masons to say that all holy texts are equal or that one is more or less.

The fact is that each man's personal faith is to that man the one true and correct path to his spiritual development. There would be no possible way that a man of one faith would place the holy book of another religion on the altar in that man's holy place. But thankfully we are not at church, but we are still men of faith and we as Masons use as an example Psalm 133, Amos7, and Ecclesiastes 12 the pages that are open during our Masonic rituals are passages that men of any faith can fundamentally agree with.

So now here comes the main point.

LODGE IS NOT A PLACE OF WORSHIP!!! However!!!

We as Masons are in my opinion the most excellent versions of men of faith that truly exist. In the not so distant past in areas where christianity was not just the main religion but the only allowed religion progressive and defiantly bold Masons used the Great Light in Masonry to unite all men of faith under a single representative book.

We take the practice of Faith to a level that most people will never understand we join together as men of varied and different Religions/ faiths we draw on ancient morals and values outlined in our rituals and symbols and allegories, to walk hand in hand together toward one destination the Celestial Lodge above where all good and true Masons hope to be admitted and received.

Within the lodge we are not to discuss religion or politics for these things are specific to each man. We are however sworn and obligated to discuss and teach and learn together to be the best possible version of a man and mason we can be, using the rituals and useful maxims laid out by our ancient craftsmen for the purpose of setting us apart from the world around us, not by making us greater than others, but by transforming us into beacons of light for those around us to follow and use to improve themselves. This is in my opinion is the true way in which a Mason can best serve their communities. We must learn to live Masonry, not just show up and be a lodge night mason.

Brothers the journey we are on as Masons is not short or easy one we have daily struggles in our own lives, and even in lodge sometimes that will make this difficult but that's ok. I see this as just the work of the craftsman striking with force on the chisel with the setting maul shaping that stone for the builders use, we need to break a sweat! Really work the stone till it is a PERFECT Ashlar and then place that one and help work on the next one because it will take many stones all placed together perfectly, with even and accurate stress, bound in faithful placement, by we craftsmen working without error because we never stop striving to be that perfect part of the celestial lodge above.

So work hard my brothers stay true to your faith and stay true to the tenets of the fraternity and let us together be the LIGHT.