

Official Visit to Meridian Lodge No. 687

March 14, 2007

Lecture

Masonry and the Family

This evening, my Brethren, I will address the topic of Masonry and the family. We may be able to compare Masonry to a school where, with the greatest peace and harmony, a Mason can learn about True Science and practise True Virtue. This is one of the important lessons learned by every E. A. at the moment of his initiation. Now Brethren, what virtue could be greater than that which has been bestowed upon us to take care of, guard and protect those closest to our hearts; our own families?

Masonry is a wonderful fraternity of much importance to those of us who are part of it. It is precisely that for this reason it may become, without us noticing, a great rival to our families. We, as most human beings, have the tendency to become engrossed in activities from which we draw pleasure or satisfaction.

But nothing compares to the duties and responsibilities we have with our families. We must remember that our duty is not only to provide a roof over their heads, food and money for their keeping, but that we also need to provide them with affection, security, guidance, stability, and companionship.

A study of the old expression: "Quality is more important than quantity" has recently been done across Canada with respects to the amount of time parents dedicate to their children. This study discovered that, from the point of view of the children, they need as much quality as they do quantity. Neither one of them replaces the other.

Therefore we can only conclude that this phrase, "*Quality is more important than quantity*" has only been developed to calm down the feelings of guilt in our consciences.

In the initiation of a man into Free Masonry we learn that Masons are tolerant, unselfish, and humanitarian, even toward their enemies. This is an important requirement we need to fulfill in order to be considered true Masons, loyal practitioners of the promise to carry out the duties of a good son, a good father, a good husband, a good brother, a good friend and a good citizen.

How far do we have the capacity to be part of this great institution of ours without failing to the duties we first have towards our own families? That is a good question.

At the altar, and after he has repeated his obligation, the E.A. expresses his desire for "light". Definitely, the search for the light could become a full time job. That is why it is extremely important to pay the appropriate consideration to the needs of

our families. It does not matter how diligently a Brother of the Craft may look for this light, if he fails with his responsibilities to his wife or significant other, or to his parents, or to his brothers and sisters, or to his children; he will never find true light.

I don't believe Free Masonry is about a group of selfish and heartless men who only think in procuring themselves with their own benefit and well being at any cost. I don't believe we are a group of men who have no regard for the consequences our actions have on others. But on the contrary, Free Masonry teaches us that "it is better to give than to receive", that radical wisdom lies in placing a balance between the needs of others and our own needs, without underestimating either one of the two. Prove of this is what it is wisely asked of us in the ritual of the initiation. We are asked to solemnly promise to maintain the peace, the honour and the well being of our own families and of those of others.

I believe that this clarifies any doubt one may have about the true responsibilities of a Mason. We ought to dedicate ourselves to the physical and spiritual well being of our families first; as it is dictated in the tenets and principles of our Ancient Fraternity.

I will now speak to those who have a partner or a significant other in their lives. I am of the belief that the best way to comply with the obligations to our families is by having an ally, who will cover our backs in times of need. It is comforting to know this ally in the battlefield is with us constantly. These allies are our wives, or girlfriends or. They gives us the support we need to go forward into the path of wisdom and virtue. How fortunate are those who can count with the support of these allies.

As the old saying goes: "Behind every great man, stands a great woman". I would personally change the words a little so it reads: "... it is because of a great woman that the full potential of a great man can be developed".

I personally don't know what my reaction would be if my wife, Lesley would one day inform me that she is going to start attending certain meetings 2 or 3 times a month. Or in my case this year as District Deputy Grand Master, 2 or 3 times a week. That she won't be able to tell me anything about these meetings, nor what goes on during their proceedings. On top of that, that I was to take care of the children and look after the house, so that she could have more free hours to study certain books to which I won't be able to have any access. Perhaps I wouldn't be able to take it with such understanding, love and self-denial, as she has always done.

Therefore, I cannot do any less, my Brethren, than to respond to Lesley with the same full giving and unconditional cooperation as she has done for me throughout my Masonic years. This is one of the reasons I am each day most thankful to my darling wife and value all that she does for me. I admire her and everyday, I learn something about life from her. It is because of her generosity and strength. It is because she prepares the basic grounds and maintains balance in our home that I may be able to dedicate part of myself to Free Masonry.

Would it be that I was so lucky as to have married the best wife in the world? I don't think so. The matrimonial relationship is redefined each day on the basis of what we give and what we take. Each success or failure in a relationship depends 50% on each of the partners. "It takes two to tango" goes the old saying. Therefore, it is up to us to motivate and stimulate the good disposition of our family so that they may support us in our endeavours, or we may just do the complete opposite.

Being an apprentice of life I have taken it very seriously to polish the rough ashler. I look only at the things I am able to change and not at the changes others may need to make. Many years ago, I realized I did not have the power to change the behaviour of some students in my school; but I certainly had the power to change the effect their behaviour had on me. This ability to control how I felt about their actions allowed me to become more objective, more goal oriented and more proactive in my dealings with the students. In my private life, this has helped me as a father, as a friend, as a husband and as Mason. This belief has helped me become more tolerant and understanding in situations which before I did not handled well. Probably because I always thought the world should adapt to me and not I to the world.

But how dare I talk to you, dear Brethren, about the importance of the family, when I well know the importance that we Free Mason assign to our family nucleus? We all know that Family comes first as it aught to be.

It is not by chance that we have chosen the figure of Brotherhood as the cement between us. We don't call each other cousins, or brothers in law, or friends; we call each other Brethren.

The fact is that the second secret conferred to the E.A. at his initiation is that " it is our fraternal love, the most sacred of our bonds, which makes Free Masonry one of the most noble and respectable institutions that ever existed".

As you can see, my Brethren, we have chosen this fraternity because of its great importance. For us, it is an undisputable tie, intimate, intense and unique, which cannot be dissolved even in times when some have tried.

We chose to belong to this Universal Brotherhood. But we can not choose our families. We are assigned to them by the G.A.O.T.U. He decides in which families we are born and who our parents, brothers, and sisters are going to be. We belong to Masonry by choice. But we belong to our families by birth.

Finally Brethren, we know that the family is essential... We know that it is our dearest possession in our lives. And I will do anything within my power to comply with my obligations to my family; hoping that never, and truly never, life circumstances would ever put me in a situation where I need to decide between Free Masonry or my Family.