

# Official Visit to Temple Lodge No. 324

October 10, 2006

## Lecture

### Charity, How far are you willing to go?(1)

*(Worshipful Sir, Right worship Sirs, Very Worshipful Sirs and Brethren,)* this evening I would like to bring your attention to a very familiar word among Masons. The word is “**charity**”. We are all-familiar with this word, if not by practice, also by reference, for it repeatedly appears through out our book of the ritual. It is mentioned 5 times (p. 71,72,81,85,178) in our book of the work. Not to mention the many other times when it is referred to as ‘relief’. It is the main message given to an E.A. in the lecture at the N.E. angle of the Lodge. The importance of charity is repeated in the J.W. lecture to the candidate in the first degree. It is also part of the secrets given while being raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. But one way or another, we all know it is one of the most important tenets on which our fraternity is founded.

Perhaps there are a number of you out there who believe the meaning of the word “charity” is strictly material. Give a few dollars to the needy and your duty is done. Lend a helping hand to a brother in need and you are a good brother. While these actions do speak of brotherhood, in reality we, at times, fail to understand the full extent of the word **charity**. The Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language defines the word “*charity*” as **the spiritual love for others, the virtue by which we love God above all other things, and our neighbour as ourselves, for the love of God we need tolerance in judging other people. We need generosity to the needy. Alms given to the poor.** Notice that the meaning of the word also includes a sense of spirituality. Brethren, “**charity**” is not only a practice, but is also a purpose, a way of life.

By Masonic teachings we learn that, as a creation of the G.A.O.T.U. you have been perfectly endowed with the ability to show forth His work with dignity and responsibility. Now, the word ‘responsibility’ is composed of two separate words: ‘response’ and ‘ability’. In other words; the ability we have been given to respond to our duty to show forth God work. It is also up to us to decide how far we will carry that duty, which by the way; it is also one of our Masonic duties. We decide to what extent we will manage to practice the precepts inculcated within our Order. That is one of the beauties of our beloved Craft.

Therefore, no matter how profound a good action we may think it is, if it is done without the good heart, the intension of benefiting others, instead of being of benefit, it can be of harm. We all need to have faith that if all our daily actions are motivated by **charity** to all

creatures in the full sense of the word. We ought to make sure they become an incredibly skilful means of collecting vast amounts of good blessing for all those involved. If we bring the essential practice of **charity**, the thought of benefiting others, into everything we do, it becomes the best source of happiness and success for ourselves and, more importantly, for all that surrounds us. Even if our lives are fully occupied by work and family obligations, if everything we do in the course of a twenty-four hour day – walking, sitting, sleeping, working, talking, eating, whatever- is done with the good heart, with an attitude of charity towards all human beings, all these daily activities are transformed into service for all human kind. Therefore, no matter how we lead our daily lives – whether it is in retreat, studying or putting long hours at work – if you never let the sense of **charity** leave our minds, if we constantly keep in mind the thought of benefiting others, everything we do becomes work for the welfare of others. Before, when what we did was motivated by ego and attachment, it was work simply for our own happiness. Therefore, everything we did was non-virtuous and created only negative energies that inflicted harm and suffering to others. But now, like iron transformed into gold, the chemistry of **charity** would transform our previously negative actions into the cause of not only happiness, peace and enlightenment for ourselves, but also happiness for humanity in general and for each and every one around us in particular. Our lives, themselves, would become like gold – pure, rich, meaningful and highly beneficial to all mankind. Our minds would become a wealth of merit and goodness, the cause for happiness. If we keep the intension to benefit others in mind, if there's **charity** and **compassion** for all human beings in our hearts, even if we are just going to work, every step, every moment in our cars, it would generate infinite excellence in our mental continuum. Because now, our main goal is the happiness of our fellow creatures, every step is very important, extremely precious. Every step we take now creates goodness in the universe. We may not be able to change the world, but we certainly can change our own individual actions in that world. The fact is that of all human practices, "**charity**" is of most importance. It reminds us that each of us has taken a personal oath of responsibility for the happiness and well being of every brother in our Craft and of humanity in general. So, how far are we willing to go with our trust in the teaching of Masonry? How able are you to respond to the call of duty to yourself and to others?

Brethren I leave you with this thought: **We need to understand that if the practice of charity, the good heart, is missing from any human being, then no matter what other practices that human being does, even the most profound ones, will not lead him towards enlightenment. We need to realize that through charity we will earn merit and wisdom, and that it will enable us to live in dignity and with honour.**

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Hamilton District "C" - 2006-2007