

LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

FREEMASONRY TEACHES BY SYMBOLS!

Why? Why does she veil in allegory and conceal in an object or picture a meaning quite different from its name?

Why should Freemasonry express Immortality with Acacia, Brotherly Love with a Trowel, the World by a Lodge and Right Living by a Mason's

That Freemasonry conceals in symbols in order to arouse curiosity to know their meaning is often considered the only explanation. But there are many more lofty ideas of why this great system of truth, philosophy and ethics is hidden in symbols.

It is hardly a matter of argument that man has a triple nature; he has a body and senses which bring him into contact with and translate the meanings of the physical world of earth, air, fire and water which is about him. He has a brain and a mind by which he reasons and understands about the matters physical with which he is surrounded. And he has a Something Beyond; call it Soul, Heart, Spirit or imagination, as you will; it is something which is allied to, rather than a part of reason, and connected with the physical side of life only through its sensory contacts.

This soul, or spirit, comprehends a language which the brain does not understand. The keenest minds have striven without success to make this mystic language plain to reason. When you hear music which brings tears to your eyes and grief or joy to your heart, you respond to a language your brain does not understand and cannot explain. It is not with your brain that you love your mother, your child or your wife; it is with the Something Beyond; and the language with which that love is spoken is not the language of the tongue.

A symbol is a word in that language. Translate that symbol into words which appeal only to the mind, and the spirit of the meaning is lost. Words appeal to the mind; meanings not expressed in words appeal to the spirit.

All that there is in Freemasonry, which can be set down in words on a page, leaves out completely the Spirit of the Order, If we depend upon words or ideas alone, the Fraternity would not make a universal appeal to all men, since no man has it given to him to appeal to minds of all other men. But Freemasonry expresses truths which are universal; it expresses them in a universal language, universally understood by all men without words. That language is the language of the symbol, and the symbol is universally understood because it is the means of communication between spirit, souls and hearts.

When we say of Masonry that it is universal we mean the word literally; it is of the universe, not merely of the world. If it were possible for an inhabitant of Mars to make and use a telescope which would enable him to plainly see a square mile of the surface of the earth, and if we knew it

and desired to, we could draw upon that square mile a symbol to communicate with that inhabitant of Mars, we would choose, undoubtedly, one with as many meanings as possible; one which had a material, mental and spiritual meaning. Such a symbol might be the triangle, the square or the circle. Our supposed Martian might respond with a complimentary symbol; if we showed him a triangle he might reply with the 47th Problem. If we showed him a circle he might send down 3.141659 - the number by which a diameter is multiplied to become the circumference. We could find a language in symbols with which to begin a communication, even with all the universe!

Naturally then, Freemasonry employs symbols for heart to speak to heart. Imagination is the heart's collection of senses. So we must appeal to the imagination when speaking a truth which is neither mental nor physical, and the symbol is the means by which one imaginations speaks to another. Nothing else will do; no words can be as effective (unless they are themselves symbols); no teachings expressed in language can be as easily learned by the heart as those which come via the symbol through the imagination.

Take from Masonry its symbols and you have just the husk; the kernel is gone. He who hears but the words of Freemasonry misses their meaning entirely. Most symbols have many interpretations. These do not contradict but amplify each other. Thus, the square is a symbol of perfection, rectitude of conduct, honor, honesty and good work. There are all different and yet allied. The square is not a symbol of wrong, evil, meanness or disease! Ten different men may read ten different meanings into a square, and yet each meaning fits with and belongs to the other meanings.

Ten men have ten different kinds of hearts. Not all have the same power of imagination. They do not all have the same ability to comprehend. So each gets from a symbol what he can. He uses his imagination. He translates to his soul as much of the truth as he is able to make a part of him. This the ten cannot do with truths expressed in words. "Twice two is equal to four" is a truth which must be accepted all at once, as a complete exposition, or not at all. He who can not understand the "twice" or the "equal" or the "four" has no conception of what is being said. But ten men can read ten progressive, different, correct and beautiful meanings into a trowel, and each can be right as far as he goes. The man who sees it merely as an instrument which helps to bind has a part of its meaning. He who finds it a link with operative Masons has another part. The man who sees it as a symbol of man's relationship to Deity, because with it he (spiritually) does the Master's Work, has another meaning. All these meanings are right; when all men know all the meanings the need for Freemasonry will have passed away.

We use symbols because only by them can we speak the language of the spirit, each to each, and because they form an elastic language, which each man reads for himself according to his ability. Symbols form the only language which is thus elastic, and the only one by which spirit can be touched. To suggest that Freemasonry use any other would be as revolutionary as to remove her Altars, meet in a Public Square or elect by majority vote. Freemasonry without symbols would not be Freemasonry; it would be but a dogmatic and not very erudite philosophy, of which the world is full of as it is, and none of which ever satisfies the heart.