

GEMS OF PURPOSE

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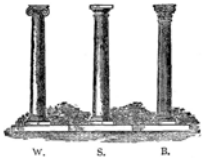
A MASONIC NEWSLETTER

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The Basic Triangle

Dr. A. M. Bradley, MPS



Ethics is an ideal. Right action is man's earnest endeavor to attain the ideal. Morality is that standard below which he cannot go without incurring some form of liability. The study of right action - Dharma in Hindu, and the foundation upon which it rests, is our theme. Three separate schools of thought, all of them hoary with age, offer their theories for our guidance.

Wisdom

The theory promulgated by ecclesiastical dogmatists postulates Divine revelation, that great gift to man, through which he may acquire wisdom and develop right action. The ancient "Wisdom" religion, and such great masters as Krishna, Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus, who so greatly benefited mankind from what they drew from its tenets, all bear witness to the fundamentality of this theory; and no individual experiencing true inspiration, whether or not he envisions its course, can question it as a factor in his guidance.

To these basic tenets the critics of this theory offer little opposition save its failure of a full solution. It is in the interpretation of these teachings and in the voices of the prophets and priesthood that they take issue. The laws of Moses, containing much that is applicable in all ages, were written for the purpose of welding together a group of nomadic tribes, and cannot be expected to cover the evolutionary phases of civilization. The thunderings of Elijah can only apply to a specific time, place, and special group.

The Genesis version of creation, the Chaldean Book of Numbers, the visions of Daniel, the Apocalypse - much of it paraphrased from the older Book of Enoch: all these and more, veiled in myth and allegory to conceal their true esoteric meaning from all but initiates of the mystic schools, have long been a lost word and a stumbling-block of conjecture.

The pronouncements of the priesthood of all ages have carried much weight among their peoples. Stretching a point to always accredit them with the highest motives, the personal equation arises and is too frequently bolstered by an un-warranted "Thus saith the Lord." Add to this the various individual theophanies that have generated a multitude of sects, and branches of the principal religions, and it is not at all difficult to observe a fair ground for criticism of revelation as a complete guide to right action. Yet, we believe it to be a Divine gift to man, through which he is enabled to develop wisdom.

Strength

The Utility theory envisions "The greatest good for the greatest number," which in practice operates as happiness for the most of us: the minority absorbing the drab side for all of us. Its tendency is to stimulate selfishness. We are inclined to the happiness side, and there lurks the temptation to accomplish the end, regardless of the means. It was to develop this theory into a bulwark of usefulness that the immortal Blackstone established the legal code under which we now operate. We of the Fraternity cherish the suggestive teachings of Masonry as priceless pearls that equip us to play an important part in the development of civilization. In its archives we read: "This great structure is supported by three grand pillars called Wisdom (revelation), Strength (utility), and Beauty (intuition)." Surely this should be sufficient suggestion to the Craft.

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The Basic Triangle

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The ever increasing avalanche of laws, and the machinery necessary to interpret and put them into operation, evidence an ideal not yet in fruition. But its usefulness as a guide to right action must not be under-estimated, for it provides the strength and support that binds humanity into a body politic.

Beauty

The theory that intuition, less aptly termed conscience, is man's surest guide to right action, fails to consider such factors as education, race, environment, and temperament, that provide the background upon which it operates. Without modification it entails too great a responsibility on the individual: in combination it becomes a tool of the Craft whereby we are enabled to display the beauty of right action.

Masonry

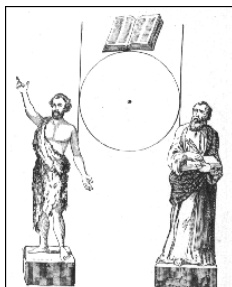
The priceless pearls of Masonry are not found floating on the surface. We must dive, way down, deep, to find them!

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This Is My Duty

To use what gifts I have as best I may;
 To help some weaker brother where I can;
 To be as blameless at the close of day
 As when the duties of the day began;
 To do without complaint what must be done;
 To grant my rival all that may be just;
 To win through kindness all that may be won;
 To fight with knightly valor when I must.

- S. E. Kiser



BEING A MAN!

By Sidney E. Harris, MPS

The Greek had an ideal and it was the man perfect in body, mind, and soul. He was a friend, not a recluse; did not sit on a pedestal and talk down to the people. Luke 7:s4: "The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" He had a perfect mental poise and was unafraid. Luke 8 records that Jesus slept in a boat and it was about to sink. The disciples woke Him; they were in great terror. Jesus rebuked the waves and there was great calm, and He said unto them: "Where is your faith?" And they, being afraid, said one to another: "What manner of man is this, for He commandeth the wind and waves and they obey Him."

A Samaritan village refused to receive Him; the disciples, like some of our politicians of today wanted to have destruction rain upon them. But Jesus said (Luke 9:55): "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them."

The fundamentalists of His day, the Scribes and Pharisees, sought to destroy Him. So He entered into the home of Zachaeus, the taxgatherer, and said

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Scriptures for a Studying Mason

John 2:6-11

- Joh 2:6** And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.
- Joh 2:7** Jesus saith unto them, **Fill the waterpots with water.** And they filled them up to the brim.
- Joh 2:8** And he saith unto them, **Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast.** And they bare *it*.
- Joh 2:9** When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,
- Joh 2:10** And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.
- Joh 2:11** This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

Being a Man!

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said (Luke 19): "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

When the rulers brought Jesus to cynical Pilate, he said: "I find no fault in Him."

Being a man does not mean being a bully. It does not mean being objectionable by indulging in habits that make other people uncomfortable. One time Horace Greely met a drunken congressman who said he was a self-made man. Greely replied: "That relieves God of a great deal of responsibility."

We read that God created man in His own image and likeness. This refers to God's intellectual and moral nature, and also to His conception of what man should be. Sin came as the result of man's free choice. We cannot say moral choice, for as yet he had no experience of sin.

Theodore Parker, seeking to express the idea that every individual has his limitations, says "No man is as great as mankind." The movies picture a great man as one whose life is filled with glamor; but this is most certainly untrue to life. Goethe says: "One cannot always be a hero; but one can always be a man."

Being a man is something that is supremely difficult. A true man has the strength, the vigor, the self-reliance of the male; the gentleness, the true refinement, and the sympathy and compassion of the female. Bailey says: "Let each one of us think himself an act of God, his mind a thought, his life a breath of God."

A true man is manly and self-reliant without bluster; temperate in all things without being offensive; calm without being cold and indifferent. He is courteous and cultured; endowed with a proper appreciation of the niceties and refinements of conduct, and yet always able to accommodate himself to the limitations of others. He is one who, nevertheless, never loses sight of the inner meaning of personal purity, integrity, truth, justice, and brotherly love. He lives his life as in the sight of God and always has a deep and abiding consciousness of eternity.

Kipling, in his poem "If," gives a very fine definition of the true man. One thing that needs to be constantly emphasized, and that is the true man's unconquerable spirit. "If you cannot meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same."

Being a man means having a body that is the embodiment of health; that is clean and vigorous. I am not forgetting that there are people who are handicapped; but even those can make the best of what they have.

Being a man means standing up and facing the world fearless and unafraid; it means doing our duty under all circumstances, regardless of consequences. It means accepting fully all the implications of the word "Brotherhood."

About Us

Dr. David E. Stafford is a member of:

Conlegium Ritus Austeri #779, Charter Member & Tiler
 Bethpage Lodge #521, Past Master
 Trammel Lodge #436
 Nashville Bodies of the Scottish Rite, KCCH
 Scottish Rite Research Society, Life Member
 Cumberland Chapter #1 RAM
 Nashville Council #1 CM
 Nashville Commandery #1 KT
 Tennessee Lodge Research, Fellow
 Grand College of Rites
 The Masonic Society, Charter Member



Gems of Purpose is the electronic newsletter published by David E. Stafford. Its primary mission is to assist in the spreading of Masonic light brothers wherever this publication might land. It is edited and compiled by Brother David E. Stafford, Past Master. Brother Stafford began publishing *Gems of Purpose* in 2006 as a service to the Lodge and has continued to do so. The views and opinions contained in *Gems of Purpose* do not necessarily reflect those of any lodge, the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, or Freemasonry. If you have questions or comments, please direct those to Brother Stafford via e-mail at TNTraveler779@gmail.com. ∞

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