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Patriotism

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Patriotism is a word from the Greek language "patriotismos" which derives from the word "patris" which means Country, Home.

In the city of Athens, about 2500 years ago, an integrated person and model citizen who, according to Pythia's Oracle was "among wise men, the wisest" proclaimed the following:

"Among parents and ancestors the most honorable and most sacred is Patris. Patris stands higher among all gods and all humans". Socrates, believed he has to compel the irascible and the desire and that an inner voice deterred and prohibited him from any non-right action. What he believed is that Patriotism serves major purposes as its aim is the ethnic unity in the form of devotion to valuable ethical ideals such as justice, equality and ethnic pride.

Patriotism is the privilege and duty of all of us bound from a faith and devotion which is among the self-determined aims and manifestations of our country and home, our "Patris". Patriotism does not have to be confused with (integrative) Nationalism as the feelings of nationalists revoke the values which sustain the unity of a nation and substitute the essential oecumenical values of justice and International Law.

When Diogenis the Cynic (5th century, B.C.) was asked, "From where are you? " He replied "cosmopolitis" citizen of the world. What Diogenis ment by cosmopolitis is that he refused to be defined on the basis of his local descent and participation in a certain social group of the classical Greeks but on the contrary, he defined himself as being associated with universal ambitions and matters. He believed that every one has to reside in essence in two communities- the local, where we have been born and or reside and the community of human "enterprising" and ambitions which is big and common. This does not mean what the later-on Stoics proposed as a world-wide country, abandoning thus the local and national form of political organization. What they meant was that we have to belong in an ethical community formed by human beings.

Therefore the idea of the "oecumenical citizen" is the forefather and the source of Kant's idea about nation of purposes in his book "Foundations of the Metaphysics of Ethics". Everyone has always to behave in such a way as to face with the same respect the dignity of the logic and the ethical choice of each human being. In this way we can put a stop to the trend of Nationalism by making an appeal in the oecumenical ethical values, logic and justice.

We, Canadians, we are citizens not of a colony, but of a country in which either we have been born or immigrated and reside. We are bound by faith, devotion and unity regardless of race, language, creed or opinion. We are bound by oath which summarizes the responsibilities of every citizen, of one who was born in Canada as well as of a New Canadian. This oath is the following:

"I swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth the Second, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the Laws of Canada and fulfil my duties as a Canadian citizen."

With this oath you obtain the Canadian Nationality. By doing so, this does not mean that you betray the country of your origin. Religion, race, language cannot be considered as sure evidence of National Identity. The only infallible factor is the volition of a member to determine his future and the decision to which national family he desires to belong.

When we wished to become Masons we had to prove, among other things that we were free persons. In Jean-Paul Sartre words: "Freedom can be acquired only when human takes a stand on every event of History."

When we were invested with the Master Mason's apron we were told that..." In the Character of a MM you are authorized to correct the errors and irregularities of your UNINFORMED brethren and to guard them against a breach of fidelity. To preserve the reputation of FM unsullied must be your constant care.... Your virtue, honour and reputation are concerned is, supporting with dignity the character you now bear. Let no motive therefore make you swer from your duty, violate your VOWS, or betray your trust..."

When we were entrusted with the Office of the Chaplain we were told that..."As Chaplain you represent Spiritual Light. The doctrines of morality and virtue will form the appropriate lessons you are expected to communicate to the brethren of your Lodge and I trust you will discharge the duties of your Office with steadfastness and perseverance in well doing."

Many Degrees of the appendant Orders of FM include our obligation, under oath and determination to protect and safeguard the dignity, the reputation, the entirety, the glory and the honour of our country Canada and consequently, its national Symbols.

Symbol, is an emblem, a symbolic icon, a representation and therefore a figure or object regarded by general cons ent as a thing through which specific meanings, ensigns or facts are alluded. It derives from the verb "symvallo" which means "agree"

Our Natinal flag, our National anthem O Canada, the Crown are symbols of honour and pride for all Canadians and REPRESENT our country and the Constitutional Head of State, Her Majesty the Queen of Canada, God bless Her and identify people belonging to one group. Therefore they should be treated with respect and displayed and or performed only in a man befitting the National Emblems. They should not be subjected to indignity, used for entertainment which includes mockery or displayed and or performed in a position inferior to any other symbol of a foreign country.

The National flag of Canada, within the Canadian territory, land, air and seas always take precedence over all other national flags. The only exception is the personal Canadian Standards of members of our Royal Family and of Her Majesty's representatives in Canada.

National flags of foreign countries flown in Canada should always be flown together with our National flag and observe the rules of Flag Etiquette in Canada. Foreign Embassies in their compounds are exempted.

The National anthem of a foreign country should always be performed together with O Canada, one after the other and either at the beginning of a ceremony, in which case O Canada comes first or at the end of the ceremony in which case O Canada is last.

At the end of 1996 I returned with my wife to Canada to stay permanently and have been affiliated to a Lodge in Victoria. During my stay (have visited many Lodges in B.C. I remarked that few occasions, due to lack of complete knowledge, our National Symbols were treated in a manner not conforming to our protocol and etiquette. My view is that, this produces a false image in regard to the level of Patriotism and National Identity among the members of Free Masonry in B.C.

My belief is that in Free Masonry we have but true patriots and therefore this false image has to be effaced. It is necessary to administer proper guidance to whoever is holding a gavel in order to make sure that nothing irregular may happen during the performance of their duties. It is a National Order and Command.

Brethren, Patriotism is a matter which concerns not only Free Masons of a Lodge or the members of the Grand Lodge of B.C. It concerns all the Grand Lodges of Canada and not only Free Masons. It concerns 31,000,000 Canadians.

Worshipful Master, Brethren all.

Before we close the Lodge tonight let us all, on the level standing up with National Pride and with our hands along the side of our body, sing together loud and clear, our National Anthem, O CANADA.

With your permission, I will change a word and instead of " O Canada our home and native land" to use the word..."our home and sacred land" as Canada is not my native land but with what I was brought up, Canada is my SACRED land.

Thank you.