



FRANK REED HORTON MEMORIAL LODGE NO. 379, F. & A. M.

UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF THE PHILIPPINES

Lecture No. 11 **PURPOSE OF A LODGE**

January 05, 2010

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Paraphrased from "Masonic Matters"

"Does Freemasonry have a 'system of ethics' peculiarly its own? It does not because no society can have one, any more than one people, or religion, or language can have one. What truthfulness is everywhere else is what truthfulness is in Masonry; its honor differs from no other man's honor because honor cannot differ." Brother H.L. Haywood

A Master Mason has maintained that the purpose of a Lodge is to teach and learn. He has felt this way since he petitioned his Lodge for the degrees of Freemasonry, and reinforced when he appeared at the Lodge to take his First Degree.

How many among you remember when he appeared at his Lodge for that degree he was asked some questions by the Marshal and one of the questions was: *"Do you seriously declare upon your honor, before these gentlemen, that you are prompted to solicit the privileges of Masonry, by a favorable opinion conceived of the institution, a desire of knowledge, and a sincere wish of being serviceable to your fellow creatures?"* A desire of knowledge – did that stick in your mind? Did you expect to learn that what Masonry had to teach was a well-founded expectation?

How many among you remember that soon in the Worshipful Master's talk he mentioned something to the effect that Masonry consists of a course of moral instruction, taught by degrees only? There was that word *'taught'*—did you know then you were in for a great learning experience? Well in some Lodges some expectations were fulfilled, thanks to those Brothers who signed Petitioners' petitions, and took some Candidates under their wings, so to speak. Candidates were introduced to other knowledgeable Master Masons, and helped find in Masonry what they hoped to find. How did these Brothers know what Candidates hoped to get out of their Masonic journeys? They got to know the Candidates better as they coached and mentored them and learned what they were interested in, and then led them to find what they had hoped to find.

If Freemasonry is a course taught according to ancient usages, by types, emblems, allegories and allegorical figures, and if Freemasonry is first and foremost an educational institution, we need to have Master Masons who are willing and able to teach our Masons the lessons that Masonry has to pass on to them, so that their lives might be better for having become Masons. There are many things under the heading of "Knowledge" that can be passed on to a Brother and one of those things that seems to be either overlooked, or side stepped, is Self-Knowledge.

A Mason is said to be a good Brother *“who has studied and knows himself,”* and who has learned the first lesson of Freemasonry—to subdue his unworthy passions and try his best to eliminate all the vices, errors and imperfections from his life. There is a saying: *“Let there be Light!”* Well that is what a Masonic Lodge is supposed to do for the members of the Lodge, and since a Masonic Lodge is a certain number of Masons duly assembled it is the Lodge members who are to help other members turn on the light for themselves.

To Freemasons Light Means Knowledge and some of the knowledge we as Masons are to obtain is self-knowledge. Every Freemason should study himself, because *“he who does not know himself; his moral weaknesses, his desires, his powers of toleration, and his real, not his imaginary, spiritual strength, cannot live as the order requires that he ought to live; in the bonds of the closest fraternal love with the whole brotherhood.”* *“He who has thoroughly studied himself, and is susceptible to all good impressions, will be subject to much less evil than others.”* *“Self-knowledge is best learned, not by contemplation, but by action. Strive to do your duty and you will soon discover of what stuff you are made.”*

Brother George Oliver in his Dictionary of Symbolical Masonry has a section under the term “knowledge,” titled Know Thyself. In that section he says a Mason will despise no man because of his country or religion, and who will always be ready to convince the world that Truth, Brotherly Love, and Relief, are the grand principles on which he acts.

One of the things a Mason hears regularly when he is “lucky” enough to visit Masonic Lodges is that Masons want to learn about things Masonic. He has learned that Masons want to have a good program of Masonic Education in their Lodge Communications, and they want to have Lodges of Instruction, and practices on the rituals and ceremonies of Masonry. In fact, when Masons are asked what they need as a Lodge of Masons, or as individual Masons, you will invariably hear that there is a great need for Lodges to provide information on things that are strictly Masonic, the kind of information they can only receive in a Masonic Lodge, or from a Brother to a Brother.

If the Master of a Lodge would like to have a Lodge of Instruction for the Masons of his Lodge he should be able to have one, and the best one is a District Lodge of Instruction. Lodges of Instruction are ordered by the Grand Master, but it is the duty of the Custodian of the Work in charge of that area to do what he can to assist the Masters of Lodge and the District Officers to have schools and practices in the Lodges and districts. It is the job of the Lodge Education Officer to make sure there is a program of Masonic information on the symbolism and story behind the allegories of Masonry. Allegory means story, and there is, it seems to me, always more to the story than meets the eye.

Being new Masons so many years ago, it was thought every new Mason was experiencing what old Masons have experienced, and it was honestly believed that many were, but as the new Mason matured in Masonry it was found that not every Mason was getting out of Masonry what he had hoped to get.

As it says in a Masonic Manual: "*as it is from those, who are capable of giving instruction that we can properly expect to receive it.*" We must have Masons who are capable of giving instruction, and those of us who are - need to do what we can to be certain there are Masons in the future who are capable too.