

**District Grand Lodge of East Africa
Half Yearly Meeting held on 31st August 1963.**

8. At the request of the R.W. the District Grand Master, the following address was delivered by W. Bro. Dr. F.C. Sood, M.B., B.S., P.D.G.W.:-

Worshipful Brethren & Brethren,

Sometime ago when the R.W. The District Grand Master asked me to address this August assembly there flashed across my mental horizon a common daily occurrence observed in connection with the partridge in India. This beautiful bird, whether in captivity as a domestic pet, or in its natural habitat, gleefully titters something in the morning which the devout Hindu and the Muslim, in spite of their widely differing beliefs and ideologies, interpret as proclaiming and eulogising the majesty and grandeur of almighty God and as calling the sleeping and forgetful humanity to wake up for prayer and meditation. So to my mind does Freemasonry, which is quite rightly called the universal science, proclaim to the world the cardinal principles common to all religions both great and small. It is on account of these, which Freemasonry especially explains, elucidates and more sharply defines, that the Order has an appeal to men of all races, of all sects and of all climes, without in any way interfering or countering the religious, moral or civil duties and beliefs of any and thereby helps to bring together, with a degree of intimacy not noticeable in any other society, people who must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance and welds them in bonds of true brotherly love; for a true Freemason can think no evil of anyone far less his fraternal brother.

Two personal experiences in this respect will, I hope, suffice to show that this is really so. During the last War, when the South African Air Force was based in Kisumu, I was one morning contacted by the Officer Commanding this Squadron, who was a Mason, and I can never forget the memorable talk we had that day without the least stiffness of an ordinary acquaintance and that too on the very first contact. Ever since we have continued to be great friends despite our differing nationalities and religions. The same applies to his next-in-command, whose friendship I still fondly cherish. The second is that of a brother who was Initiated and passed in Alaska and was Raised by us in Kisumu.

These two examples will show how wide is the circle of Freemasonry, which encompasses the four quarters of the Globe and how universal is the appeal it has for mankind in general. To call our Order the panacea for all human misery is, therefore, no exaggeration: for if the whole world accepted and above all practised the great principles preached by our Order, for ever would be banished those hard and selfish feelings which distract and divide mankind and fill the world with unrest.

As a Hindu professing the Vedic religion, I wish to tell you this evening how Freemasonry fits nicely and admirably into the Hindu belief and practice of religion, which enjoins four stages of Degrees of man's life.

Soon after the birth, the eldest in the family or the priest writes with a thin gold rod and honey, the word OM, the Sanskrit name of God, on the child's tongue and whispers the same into its ears, to impart the first impressions on the new-born child that it should love God with that purity of heart and sweetness of purpose as are inherent in gold and honey. His childhood and your should, as he grows, be devoted to the acquisition of literary, scientific and spiritual knowledge to enable him to steer the barque of life over the rough seas of passion. The second stage is that of a householder, when he marries and discharges his duties towards his family and the society in general, still guiding his progress by the principles of moral truth and virtue and acquiring plenty by lawful and righteous means to sustain himself and his family. Having done this he should now enter the third stage by leaving his worldly possessions to his family, who by this time should be able to stand on their own and thus begin to retract himself from all attachment to enable him to serve disinterestedly all human and animal life and thereby prepare himself for the fourth stage, by Contemplation, for the closing hour of his existence. This is the stage of Renunciation or Desirelessness. These four stages are enjoined equally on both sexes.

An explanation is, I think, here necessary of these two words which can wrongly be interpreted either as fatalism or despair leading to personal indifference, passivity and even stagnation. They actually mean acting without attachment whilst renouncing interest in fruits of action and are thus the best road to success, for he who broods over results often loses nerve in the performance of his duty, becomes impatient, gives vent to anger and thereby begins to do unworthy things. He jumps from action to action, never remaining faithful to any. He who broods over results is like a man given to objects of senses, is ever distracted, says good-bye to all scruples; everything is right in his estimation and he, therefore, resorts to all means to gain his ends. For such a one it is tersely said in the Bhagvad Gita or the Song Divine:--

The man who dotes on things of sense,
For them he soon attachment forms,
From this attachment springs desire,
And anger from desire is born.

From anger comes delusion next,
And loss of memory in its turn,
From memory's loss, the reason is lost
and then is lost the man himself.

Renunciation, if one is capable of, creates the inner peace and poise so necessary to achieve real and lasting results unattained by ugly means. For such an exceptional practitioner of self-denial a special prize is always in store. His highest recompense is to become so firmly united with God, that he attains the Bliss Supreme. This lesson afforded to us Freemasons by the Cs. Which teaches us to limit our desires in all stations in life so that we may live respected and die regretted.

To conclude, brethren! The whole teaching of Hinduism and Freemasonry and indeed of all religions is summed up by an old Persian couplet, translated by Sir William Jones in the 18th century as follows:--

On parent knees, a naked new-born child,
Weeping thou sat st while all around thee smiled,
So live, that sinking to thy life s last sleep,
Calm thou may st smile, whilst all around thee weep.

And finally R.W. District Grand Master! I sincerely thank you for so kindly making it possible for me to address this Communication and you brethren, for giving me such a patient hearing.

====
1999-07-01