

## NOT SO FORBIDDEN FACTS IN FREEMASONRY BRO. P.M. KATHIRESAN OF THE GRAND LODGE OF INDIA

Of course there are secrets in Freemasonry which you and I are under obligation never to reveal. It will be your duty tactfully to avoid treading on the forbidden path; but, at the same time, there are things which you can tell a non-Mason without any fear of revealing anything that you should not reveal and which will give a non-Mason sufficient information.

I shall now give you a broad outline of those things. So long as you keep within the bounds of this outline, you will have a clear conscience. Of the points which I am giving below, there are some which you must tell one who is a prospective candidate and there are others which you may tell any non-Mason during the course of a conversation.

1. Freemasonry consists of a body of men banded together
  - (a) for the purpose of mutual intellectual, social, and moral improvement,
  - (b) to endeavour to cultivate and exhibit Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth, not only to one another but to the world at large, and
  - (c) to preserve the secrets, customs, and ceremonials handed down to them from time immemorial.
2. It is a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.
3. The fundamental principles of Freemasonry are Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.
4. Freemasonry is based on the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. It, therefore, requires of every member a firm belief in the existence of a Supreme Being.
5. Freemasonry recognizes no distinction of religion, but none should attempt to enter who have no religious belief, as faith in a Supreme Being must be expressed before anyone can be initiated and prayers to God form a frequent part of the ritual.
6. It is the only institution where the Scriptures - we call them Volumes of Sacred Law - of the great faiths are kept open side by side while the meeting is in session. In fact, under the Indian Constitution, it is obligatory for a Lodge to keep open the Bhagawad Gita, the Bible, the Koran, the Zend-Avesta, and the Granth. It is,

therefore, absolutely necessary that a candidate for the mysteries and privileges of Freemasonry must have liberal views about and equal respect for the other religions.

7. Freemasonry teaches us to remember our common origin; it is also distinctly enjoins us to respect all social distinctions; so that, while some must rule, others must cheerfully accept their inferior position.

8. Freemasonry has some secrets, but is not a secret society in any sense of the term.

9. Freemasonry distinctly teaches that a man's first duty is to himself, his wife, his family, and his connections, and no one should join the Order who cannot well afford to pay the initiation fees and subscriptions to his Lodge as well as to the Masonic Charities and this without detriment in any way to his comfort or to that of those who have claim on his support.

10. Freemasonry offers no pecuniary advantages whatsoever, nor does there exist any obligation nor implied understanding binding one man to deal with another, nor to support him in any way in the ordinary business relations of life.

11. Freemasonry has certain charities, but is not in any sense a benefit society, nor is it based upon calculations which could render this possible.

The charities are solely for those who, having been in good circumstances, have been overtaken by misfortune and adversity.

12. Freemasonry is a charitable society - the word charity being used in a much wider context than the mere giving of alms. It includes charity of thought which overlooks the faults and defects of man.

13. Freemasonry, therefore, demands that everyone before offering himself as a candidate should be well assured in his mind about the following basic principles:

- (a) that he does possess a firm belief in a Supreme Being;
- (b) that he sincerely desires intellectual and moral improvement of himself and his fellow creatures;
- (c) that he is willing to devote his time, his means, and his efforts in the promotion of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth;
- (d) that he seeks no commercial or pecuniary advantages;

(e) that he is able to afford the necessary expenditure without injury to himself or his connections.

14. Freemasonry is not a political society. A Freemason is a peaceable subject of the civil powers wherever he resides or works. He is never to be concerned with plots and conspiracies against the peace and welfare of the nation. A Freemason's attitude towards politics and religion should be one of tolerance and positive avoidance of introducing in the Lodge any such controversial matters. Thus Freemasonry urges its members to be good citizens at the same time leaving them free to choose their own political leanings.