

Leaving Passion

by: IRM

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TO THE GLORY OF THE GREAT  
ARCHITECT OF THE UNIVERSE  
WORSHIPFUL MASTER AND BROTHERS ALL,

I would like to discuss the topic of our passions and keeping them within due bounds. I will attempt to do this in three distinct parts; a part to explain the roots and true meaning of the word passion, a part to discuss what keeping my passions within due bounds meant to me before its re-introduction in free masonry, and what it has come to reflect to me in masonry. I believe the meaning of the word passion should start should because over time the power of a word and its intentions is lost to us. We lose what we are actually saying as connotative meanings override the true expression of a word or phrase over the years. As the author I think it is imperative that I explain what passion has meant to me in the past because it gives my bias and history with this word. I chose to discuss keeping our passions within due bounds because I believe this phrase is of pivotal importance to order within lodge and in our lives without the lodge as free masons. If we free masons were not able to keep our passions within due bounds our meetings would have no more importance than a group of cavemen huddled around a fire for warmth, perplexed and ignorant of the world outside its light. Free masons have purpose to be greater intellectually and spiritually; to do so we must constrain what makes us most human, our passions, and leave behind some of that worldliness to achieve our wondrous goals.

When the word passion is looked up in a dictionary the root of the word is widely considered to be suffering. This is believed to be derived from the Latin root *passio* meaning to suffer or endure. It was originally used to describe the suffering that Christ had to endure. Other possible roots are from Sanskrit *pijati* meaning reviles or scorns, Greek *pema* meaning suffering as well as misery and woe, and Proto-Indio-European *pe(i)* meaning to hurt. To truly understand a word and its impact you must consider all these things and definitions. All these are traditional denotative meanings of the word. Today's more regularly used meaning of emotional, or sexually / emotionally invested in

came around 1580ad. This meaning is just a rudimentary summary of the word possibly from observance that when one is suffering they are emotional and then taking this observation out of context and assuming passion to mean ~~as~~ extremely emotional. Even the passion flower which we now associate with sensuality was originally named as such for its representation of the crown of thorns that Christ wore as well as other parts representing symbols in The Passion of The Christ.

Before I took my obligation as a mason I took this word for its more current & commonly used meaning of exuberant emotion. Not understanding the word in its fullest meaning left me in the dark, hoodwinked without the light of true understanding. I was a sensitive child and had a lot of empathy for the world around me. As such I had come to the conclusion that if unchecked my passions, my emotions would harm myself and disrupt the world around me. With this notion I endeavored to remove emotion of all forms from my expression and experience to achieve a more enlightened state and gain balance. My conclusion was only partially right because my understanding of myself and passion was flawed. My results were ineffective and did more to disrupt my spiritual state than to help it. I now attribute this to my lack of understanding of self and passion. Emotion is an important part of the human experience. It is like a fifth sense telling us about the world around us. Emotions also allow us to project back into the world what we are experiencing and interact at a higher level. Without emotion itself we are no better than a lizard, snake or insect in evolutionary standings. Eventually I concluded that my hypothesis was flawed and abandon my efforts. I was not given the tools to fix the flaws in my experiment until my initiation and masonic education.

Through masonry I came to learn the essence of what keeping our passions within due bounds really is. In all honesty it was not until I sat down to write this paper I learned the origin and true meaning of the word but freemasonry had already taught me the nature of what it means to keep ones passions within due bounds. I do not believe that our past brethren meant passions to mean our emotions as a whole but it is wise to keep them in due bounds as well as our sufferings. Consider the PIR root pe(i)

mentioned earlier, when a person over expresses themselves (suffering or other emotion) it can hurt the balance and people around them. Passion is a tool to understand our world but if left unchecked it becomes an unpredictable weapon against ones self and surroundings.

At the crux of the statement is not just passion but the word's preamble 'due bounds.' Due bounds is the part that I was missing without masonry. Due bounds is the sphere around our actions. On the inside of the sphere is what is acceptable behavior and on the outside what is not. It does not mean that we should stifle, suppress or not express our sufferings through life's journey. What I believe is meant to be said is that we should gain mastery and understanding of them. We should not let our passions interfere with the journey. More than that we should not let our passions interfere with an other's journey as far as we can help ourselves. Sharing our passions and trials is an important part of life, friendship and brotherhood but it is prudent that we not let that be the domineering force on our way through life. A man will always have trials at hand but as masons we must move past those to achieve a more noble and glorious path. In lodge keeping passions within a boundary helps create the delicate harmony and balance we seek to achieve and puts all of us on the level. Outside of the lodge our passions are kept within bounds to try in effect to right a world that is constantly out of plumb. We are the masters of our passions and not the latter. We must always be vigilant to keep our Passions within due bounds to be better men.