

Knight of the East and West - 17th Degree Essay
College of the Consistory
08/26/07
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32nd K.C.C.H.

Topic No. 5: Discuss the concept of spiritual power or force (I am choosing to do this from the perspective of the seven precepts of the 17th degree, and in light of current international events as they impact the Masonic fraternity and our country).

This topic is, without question, among the most salient in the milieu of current world political and fraternal interactions. Nothing can be more important to consider deeply, given the return of the Islamic fanatics to the world stage. Most Masons are prone to remember the valiant Knights Templar, and their grand attempts to quell such activity, yet once again, history is obviated, and the Christian world turns the other cheek to this inhumane and flagrant terrorist based group of fanatics. With these introductory musings I must now consider the spiritual powers or forces that are clearly dividing the world, and that are even more clearly dividing the Masonic fraternity internationally. I will enter this fractured realm from both the personal and public perspectives, and will consider the core nature of spiritual meaning as viewed by various segments of humanity universally. Clearly, I must consider this broad topic from the perspective of the seven precepts which are gleaned from the 17th degree, thus, I want to discuss the topic in terms of current world events and the 17th degree as we teach it.

At present I am in close contact with a former University of Florida student who is a U.S. Army Captain, having served in Iraq, and who commanded the unit responsible for training the Officer Corps of the Iraqi army for 16 months. Thus, I have a unique first hand perspective from an intelligent young Mason. This young man is now back in the U.S.A., and is commanding the combat marksmanship unit for the U.S. Special Forces at Ft. Bragg, N.C. Captain Bradley Williams has an in depth knowledge of the leaders of the Iraq officer corps, and in preparation for this paper I discussed the 17th degree constructs with him as he is a Scottish Rite Mason. His thoughts elucidate this topic clearly as he has discussed the spiritual basis as viewed by Muslim officers in Iraq, and Brother Brad "shoots from the hip" in his factual observations of these Muslim men.

In his opinion, all Muslim's he knows, with no exceptions, view spiritual power/force as a tool to be used for manipulation of the environment in which they exist. They do not attempt to work or meditate as we in the West perceive either term. Brad has told me that none of the Iraq officers with whom he worked had any interest in working, rather, they desired a welfare state where no one in society works. He asked them about their five mandatory prayer sessions each day and was told that they simply face east and kneel, dubbing their foreheads on the floor as they recite simple quatrain. Thus, none he met (he worked with 1000's) had any concept of working for a salary as an army officer, and none had any idea of meditation as a tenet of their spiritual development. Brad designed a study of their belief system and administered his questionnaire to more than 1000 such men. He is now analyzing the resulting data which includes their perception of the necessity of physical training as army officers and many other critical topics. I am really

looking forward to his publication of the results of this study as a means of attempting to understand them and their concept of spiritual power or force in the Islamic tradition. All of them thought of women as objects to be used and all non Muslims as devils and infidels to be crushed or killed.

I next asked him about their hopes and beliefs from the perspective of the 17th degree. He reported that they hope for a life of leisure with all services provided without cost. Their belief system included the belief that any behavior (terror, suicide bombing, massive random kills of innocent children, women, the elderly, and any civilian population, lying, cheating, stealing, and all other imaginable crimes) is rewarded in heaven, as long as Islamic control over others is the final result of such atrocities. He met no Muslim in Iraq who did not accept this belief as the by product of Islamic spiritual power as achieved by exercise of such illegitimate force and fear. Thus it can be accurately inferred that Islam as practiced in Iraq by military officers is a means to the end of political control and power over all others world wide by the use of illegitimate and criminal force, which is in their opinion spiritual force.

Brad was a member of a Masonic Lodge made up of members of the U.S. Military in Iraq. He discussed the fraternity with the Muslim officers corps with whom he interacted daily and none of them had ever heard of the Masonic fraternity. When he explained its basic concepts to them they universally rejected the fraternity as anti Muslim. Further, several of them suggested that they had heard that the Templars were devils who had tried to eradicate all Muslims many years ago. With no exceptions, all of them told Brad that they believed that ultimately the (manipulative) power of Islam will dominate the world, including all of the devils in the West. They laughed at the Christian concepts of love, compassion, equality, etc., as weakness which Muslims can easily defeat with dishonesty, terror, and death if the west will not bow to Islam. Muslim officers in Iraq thus state that they want to destroy Masonry and replace its egalitarian weakness with forced Islamic Shia law or death. Anyone who will not accept this must die from their perspective. Masonic truth, or for that matter, any truth, is foreign to these individuals who will gladly commit any crime if it will, in their view, aid them in their ascension to Allah, who, from their perspective, approves, encourages, and teaches that all Muslims should force spiritual acquiescence to Islam on the world. In other words, spiritual power is not found in prayer but in terror, force, and death for those who resist them, and who do not accept their extreme beliefs and law.

In terms of assistance to the poor, their beliefs include the servitude of the poor to the more affluent. In this regard, all women are considered in the poor category as are all children. All non Muslims are beneath poor and are to be enslaved and/or killed as devils. In terms of the concept of love or truth as defined in Masonic literature, it is unknown to them. They believe in human usury, and love has no status or meaning to them and their unique and perverted (from the Western perspective) system of value or personal worth. They have no understanding or recognition of the love thy neighbor or the love thy enemy concepts. They simply hate all non Muslims, no ifs, ands, or buts, about it. Finally, they do not have contempt for death, they fear it, and want others to die for their ends. They openly state that they can convince others to do the suicide missions for them, thus preserving themselves for more earthly pleasure while coercing others to serve them by killing innocents and losing their own lives doing so..

Having briefly discussed the seven basic tenets of the 17th degree in terms of Brother Brad's knowledge of the Iraq Army officer perspective, I arrive at the belief that spiritual power for them is juxtaposed with that of the largely Christian West. Their system has been designed to play off of and manipulate our known softer beliefs so that they can use our beliefs against us to ultimately conquer and destroy us. Thus their spiritual power is in reality a manipulative system designed to destroy all others and render only Muslims rulers of the world. In light of this reality, the Masonic view of spiritual power as espoused by the Knights Templar appears to be the behavior of choice. To discuss issues, to talk and/or interact verbally with such people is absolutely ludicrous. With China, Russia and other countries attacking us in the international realm economically (and potentially militarily), and with the international Muslim terrorists doing all that they can to destroy us, it is clear that the Masonic view of spiritual power comes into play if we are to survive. Our spiritual power emanates from our values, and theirs from a fanatical force unrelated to the spiritual as we understand it Masonically.

Where do we then search from this point in time with a consideration of spiritual power or force? Spiritual power for the West is prayer/love/truth based, and for the Muslim it is spiritual force in the literal sense (terror/hate/criminal behavior, lying, etc). By this I mean that the Muslim goal is to force by murder, terror, and many lies and crimes, their archaic system on the entire world. No choice or human consideration whatever is included in the Muslim concept of the spiritual power or force concept. For Muslims it is all spiritual force with a political control agenda foremost in their behavioral choice. No lie is too great, no crime too dastardly, as long as their interest is served. Interestingly, the Muslim spiritual force doctrine includes the fear principal. All Muslims fear to cease their membership in it as others of their Muslim group will then kill them; thus, once a member, always a member. Christians, on the other hand can come and go as they choose without fear of reprisal or death. Thus the Christian belief is clearly far closer to the Masonic ideal than is the Muslim espousal, which is in fact, the total opposite of any Masonic construct or belief.

Thus the quandary, how can Muslims and Christians swear the obligation to Masonic principles on the same altar when their beliefs regarding spirituality are in absolute differing philosophical camps? Even the 17th degree contents do not enlighten us as to the answer to this perplexing question. To this fundamental question I have no answer, and I solicit enlightening comments from other Masons. I have seen a Muslim man take his obligation on the Koran in my home Lodge, yet I cannot answer this fundamental question. Thus I end my consideration of this question without an answer. Perhaps we will ultimately resort to spiritual force, and if that happens the predicted result is indeterminate, unless we have a great leader whose will cannot be broken, and a united world of all other religious groups against the clearly united Islamic terror. There are no moderates at that point, only Islamists and the remainder of the world. No other spiritual group shares the Islamic fanaticism, and ultimately they must be completely annihilated or they will continue their spiritual force course throughout remaining history. The Templars appear to have been correct after all, and yes, Masonic truth and love stands in stark contrast to Muslim lies and fear. Can Muslim Masons reconcile this obvious dichotomy, can we?