



**Internet Lodge 9659**  
**United Grand Lodge of England**  
**Province of East Lancashire**  
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**Short Papers Competition 2007**

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**Paper 05/2007**

**Title** **On Tolerance and Intolerance**  
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One of the teachings of Freemasonry is tolerance. The teachings on prudence, justice and temperance, are directly related to tolerance, as is brotherly love. But the most definitive discussion on tolerance can be found in *Morals and Dogma* by W. Bro. Albert Pike:

***No man truly obeys the Masonic law who merely tolerates those whose religious opinions are opposed to his own. Every man's opinions are his own private property, and the rights of all men to maintain each his own are perfectly equal. Merely to tolerate, to bear with an opposing opinion, is to assume it to be heretical; and assert the right to persecute, if we would; and claim our toleration of it as a merit. The Mason's creed goes further than that. No man, it holds, has any right in any way to, interfere with the religious belief of another.***

Merriam-Webster defines To Tolerate as:

*2 a: to suffer to be or to be done without prohibition, hindrance, or contradiction b: to put up with.*

To suffer it to be done without prohibition... to *simply* tolerate something is to endure it in silence. If we go beyond simple toleration, where are we? Acceptance? Well, that certainly seems correct, so let's examine acceptance for a moment.

Merriam-Webster defines to Accept as:

*3 a : to endure without protest or reaction <accept poor living conditions> b : to regard as proper, normal, or inevitable <the idea is widely accepted> c : to*

To endure without protest or reaction... neither separately is correct Masonically. Between the two, a mixture of them might suffice. Two brothers may vehemently disagree on a subject, but if each brother accepts the other's **right** to their opinion and the brother's **right** to believe differently, then we have the Masonic ideal.

The difference between *mere toleration* and acceptance of another's right to his views is a simple matter of intent. If you go to a man and ask him his opinion on a subject, be it religion or politics or the shape of the clouds in the sky *with the intent of sharing with him your own view* then you are not being tolerant of his views.

Masonic teaching would have us accept each other's right to have differing opinions, and seek common ground. Instead, we often see retrenchment, and, frankly, resentment. The **Masonic** way would be to try to work together, to find that on which we can all agree instead of trying to win at all costs.

So, what is Masonic tolerance? It *should* be, in this mason's opinion, about brothers seeking how best to work and *best agree*. It should be about accepting our brothers for who they are and what their faith is, and how we can best learn to be better men before g-d and our fellow men.

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