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## **What is the Purpose of the Masonic Fraternity Now and In the Future?**

“But the excellence of knowledge *is that* wisdom gives life to those who have it” said King Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes.

Today, this verse would seem to be an afterthought with so many superior fields of study producing such stunning discoveries and inventions, each requiring significant years of dedicated effort in order to acquire mastery. Even the benefits of the resulting knowledge are a foregone conclusion. Yet to the Freemason, these words signify something of even greater value. King Solomon had it right: life *is* given in abundance to those who would pursue the excellence and joy that knowledge confers, leading to the result of wisdom, there in the highest mental plane, in the hierarchies of the mind.

Many great universities produce outstanding scholars, scientists, teachers, doctors, engineers, lawyers and others entering necessary professions, and exist for the dissemination of knowledge in myriad subjects. They are often seen in purpose as the sole means to supply the skilled manpower needed to advance the progression of civilization. Additionally, large and well-established institutions require the best and most inspiring efforts of talented individuals. And in each case, focusing on the mission they have undertaken to serve their populations, they need individuals who are prepared to work for the greatest of things, in the advancement of humanity.

But how do these institutions and even smaller entities ensure their people are able to carry-out important and difficult tasks, and not merely for the sake of compensation? After schooling has been completed, training, by all measures, is at the very basis of an organization’s success, along with experienced and accomplished performance. But we can argue, intrinsic personal attributes such as honesty and integrity, as well as the duty to a care entrusted, and significantly, a responsibility and trustworthiness comprising fidelity to a worthy obligation, are of greatest purpose and need. These qualities are equal if not superior in importance to any organization, community, family or institution, essentially contributing to the overall viability and health of the entity and beyond. But those intangible qualities are often hard to define in individuals, let alone the difficulty in teaching them to others.

Where then, can we be assured that the continuance of special individuals, possessing these and other intangible qualities so essential for the future, can be supplied to society and to the humanistic institutions necessary to support a nation, a society, a family? Fortunately, diverse entities are involved. But one of the many engaged to this end has long filled this need and is uniquely positioned to do so. This essay will show the following statements underlie and help to define the significant purposes Freemasonry

has to offer the world, through a man devoted to its principles. Of primary purpose, the Masonic Fraternity exists to bring a good man into the Order, called from all walks of life and faiths, and to provide for him an incomparable experience of allegorical initiation, encompassing the four-square geometry of moral, philosophical, intellectual and spiritual dimensions of mind, within a fraternal setting. It then challenges him to follow avenues of personal growth and improvement in those attributes of character necessary for advancement in life. From here, it sends him into those institutions, enterprises and organizations, large or small, so too within his family circle, with the hope he will display those qualities necessary, by example, for achieving positive outcomes, including those in charitable and community pursuits.

And not the least, Freemasonry ensures the light of the wisdom a man is encouraged to acquire, will reflect the power of truthfulness, as seen in the architecture of those Masonic values so dear to humanity, to which they will never fail him. Not a small vision of purpose; indeed, it is a grand one. In this vision, it reveals the highest of ideals, that when united with brotherly love, forms a resultant harmony pervading the lodge as does the morning sunlight beaming through an east window. This is Freemasonry's great cause, for all to see: a man possessing the beauties of upright action, dedicated to the service of humanity, and by responsible living, inculcated by way of ritual, he carries forward the work begun so long ago. The Craft's symbolism conceals and reveals a great depth of purpose, designed to raise a good man for true endeavor, and through him a hope for a better world.

Freemasonry's system of symbolism and ritual has stood the test of time; its purposes are manifold. It is a fact that many of its members have been men of historical consequence in many fields of endeavor, often facing tough circumstances. Or, there were those men around the world who facilitated the formations of democratic governance; and even men who participated in the Enlightenment's flowering and dissemination, seizing opportunity from an impetus of human spirit, and unleashing human potential that never looked back. From what depths did these men draw upon from their Masonic experience, a gift to them, and from that, a gift to the world?

Specifically, a supreme moment in history occurred: Freemasonry and the prized emergence of liberty, equality and constitutional rights, coincided in time and aided each other's spread throughout the world. The Masonic lodge also presented a harmonic triad of its own and successfully evolved the reconciliation and compatibility of religion, science and philosophy, projecting a perfect structure of unity, peace and plenty. These men drew from the promise and purpose of the Craft's great inspiration, apprehending its wisdom, strength and beauty.

Traveling over the long arc of time and carried along by illuminated men, the sublime treasures for both the heart and the mind, found a home in Masonic rituals and body of work. Freemasonry promises the diligent seeker a discovery and exposition of the greatest understandings, truths and realities he can stand, in conjunction with his studies in the liberal arts and sciences, quarried from mankind's heavy labor towards its manifesting completion.

Freemasonry, therefore, is a school of instruction, its purpose is a training place, within a comprehensive and interpretive medium, timeless yet relevant for today and the future. It is a special school unlike any other, positing a model for emulation: a model of cooperation, collaboration and upbuilding, uniting all good men of faith with purpose. The subject is a new tomorrow in the pursuit of progress for humanity itself; and it is founded on civility, harmony and unity. It will teach men something of the very old principles of transformation and actualization of the spirit, and how to call upon human potential, both personally and professionally. In sequences of reflection and effort, it teaches what it is needed to reach into oneself, to discover and cultivate the powers of reasoning and capacities for goodness; to develop depth of understanding through the four Masonic areas of thought, coupled with a deep faith. He, who comes here, can find the greatness of what he can do and where to apply it. And by invoking his mind, calling upon it to produce the creativity and imagination necessary to drive his efforts toward accomplishment, a Mason builds; and higher he will wind upward, step by step.

Freemasonry mirrors the cause and need of humanity by the nature of its principles gleaned from the art and architecture of building in stone. And it anticipates new possibilities, designs and potentialities for building better systems, better governance and better relations with all. By interpreting the Craft's symbols, we can observe they represent truthful, ladder-rungs of thought, belief and action. Casting away a hoodwink of ignorance, prejudice and inequality, society is enabled to see the wisdom of what Freemasonry proposes. In revelation from a faith in the Supreme Architect of the universe, humankind advances in successive realizations to the magnificence and wonder of life, and the gifts bestowed. The dangers of darkness lie in the rejection of faith. If a man embraces an unregulated free will, he becomes spiritually destitute, blind again to the power of acknowledgment that the Creator placed life and light in him. Freemasonry has guided men, in her purposes, to the *chair of wisdom*, formed by gratitude, humility and a sincere desire to commune with and serve God, of his own free will. The Craft shows how a discernment for truth, innocence and upright living, will fill cornucopias of abundance, pouring life into any man or woman; this is wisdom. And these things proclaim her purposes are plumb, level and square.