

What is the Purpose of the Masonic Fraternity Now and in the Future?

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The fundamental principles of Ancient Freemasonry are: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. These principles are still valid today yet harder to apply than in ages past. My father used to muse, "Freemasonry is an organization which tries to attract the top ten percent of men from all walks of life to meet for the purpose of making the world a better place." This simplification still holds true although discerning an elite among men much harder while the world is much less resilient. The ancient wisdom is a valid starting point for modern fraternal reflections.

Tree House

Freemasonry is a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. The traditional symbols continue to apply but are now augmented by contemporary images. The tree house is an important metaphor for our ornate temples or humble lodges. It projects an innocence of a juvenile meeting place, easily dismissed, void of serious threat.

Our modern world is full of legends, many detrimental to the craft. The tree house enfeebles conspiracy theories to reduce the fear of masonry. When masonic exuberance exceeds social boundaries the treehouse is a safe ethereal

fortress into which the perpetrators can withdraw to reflect upon and mend their ways. Historically, freemasonry has made a difference for both the good and the bad. The tree house trivializes these contentious facts. Thus, the tree house serves as a humbling agent which discredits the lies and belittles the indiscretions of the order.

Brotherly Love

The masonic lodge is a unique environment of harmony. First impressions, when done correctly, usually impart a magical essence. Not in a Harry Potter sense but magical in an unworldly sense so that the lodge may become an environment of tranquil healing and sacred refuge. The contemporary mason will find his lodge as a place to gather strength and wisdom. The beauty, either ethereal or substantial, found in the masonic lodge, is a worthy charm to study.

At his initiation, a mason meets his friend and guide, the junior deacon. This person is a personification of the mutual support that a mason feels as he embraces the craft while the brethren support him. The aloof guidance and need to know presentation within the ritual elevates the instruction to an unworldly status.

Relief

Charity and masonry only know the boundary of prudence. Concordant bodies organize their charity with focuses on hospital support to bleeding edge research in autism. Their successes are a wonder of our contemporary culture. This helps the mason purify his heart.

Masons help one and other and label it as benevolence. These discreet actions help both the givers and receivers. An intimacy is built. This formal procedure is augmented by the masonic practices of the five points which are indirectly personified by the widow. So the brethren bound around charity ritualistically, socially and culturally.

Truth

In the past, masons aligned with scientists and advanced thinkers. The lodges held discussions which moved thinking from the classical arts and sciences of Pythagoras and Aristotle to the modern thoughts of Newton, Voltaire and Einstein. These discussions were held in harmony avoiding divisive arenas of religion and politics. Should ideas stray into divisive regimes, a quick retreat to the safe confines of harmony is often in order.

Within masonry, truth is also discussed when it is dictated or arbitrated. This is a daily occurrence in law courts when evidence is inconclusive and the

court declares their best verdict of the truth. Fortitude, prudence and justice are highly dependent on truth. Nothing undermines strength and power as deceit. If history is full of lies, how can prudence be practised? Is there true justice when the myths and facts are weighed equally?

Challenges for Future Focus

Our future should sharpen and magnify those principles that have given us more than three hundred years of constitutional success. Brotherly love is worthy of continual practice but emphasis should be placed on the unworldliness of that practice. The deacons should focus their efforts such that they are felt far more than they are heard. The magical elements of our rituals provide an excellent foundation for the refreshing ambience of the treehouse. The mosaic pavement appears many ways; drawn in chalk, rolled out as a throw rug, or permanently installed in a wall to wall configuration. As the mason's consciousness sharpens he realizes that brethren have financed, created and maintained that symbol of uncertainty for his edification. The old past master making an effort to attend lodge to only close the volume of sacred law speaks to the common belief in spiritual harmony and the reserve of positive energy found within a masonic lodge. So, what does leadership encourage? First, strive for the perfection of the ritual. Secondly, maximize participation. Preserve traditions, landmarks and

deviations but know why not just because. Cultivate wonder, magic, holiness and harmony. Don't recruit for increasing numbers but for special qualities to enhance our ritualistic practices.

Given that the lodge can project its brotherly love within the lodge, it is time to explore how that brotherly love can be projected within the context of the outside world. Traditionally, brotherly love outside the lodge is practiced by good deeds and closer working arrangements such as fix a broken window, get a haircut, legal business, best beef wellington, or best chutney. At the dawn of the information age, brotherly love should be exercised by the tongue of good report focused at the brotherly level. Cicero said, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of the virtues but the parent of all others." Two opportunities to express gratitude beyond the personal are at times of good and welfare at lodge and public forums available on the internet. With gratitude encircling the lodge, a positive social glow emanates. The prophet Mohammed says, "Gratitude for the abundance you have received is the best insurance that the abundance will continue." Of course this must be completed within the masonic principles of freedom, truth and privacy.

Masons are famous for their secrets, or is it their education or in fact is it their environment of mutual inquiry. The modern thought regarding truth embraces masonic practice. Authorities believe that many can't handle the truth therefore truth is kept a secret or political correctness requires that the articulation of truth is bent with restricted vocabulary. Education now comes with warnings and has outlawed many subjects and thinkers. As masons, we will suffer the disagreeable and debate the merits of truth in the light of our traditions and past practices hoping to avoid mistakes made by our former brethren. Freemasons must stand for free speech ever bearing in mind that we adhere to the laws and practices of the land. The masonic energy must temper the truths of the time and place to maximize the number of brethren, family and citizens engaged in its critical acceptance.

In summary, today's old cliché that 'masonry takes good men and makes them better,' needs reanimation. In the future, masonry will attract the right men to its tree house by keeping ritual practice at a high level, displaying gratitude broadly as a sign of brotherly love and maintain a passive inquiry into truth with all of its deceptions.

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