

What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry is known as the world's oldest, universal and most prestigious fraternity in existence. Its purpose is to take good men and make them better. But the question is, how do we do that? How does belonging to this organization makes us better? Another question is, it makes us better than what? Many people outside of the fraternity often ask, what do the masons do? What do you do in the lodge? This can be a very difficult question to answer for many masons, because there are many brothers who have never asked these questions themselves.

My view of Freemasonry is that of an Initiatic Society, which requires that the candidate undergo a process of transformation, which begins with his first experience into the lodge. The purpose of this ceremony, similar to the ceremonies of many ancient mystery schools, is to exemplify a rebirth into a new phase in his life, a beginning of a new way of being and the first step into a lifetime process of education and self development. Such a development progresses, by learning to interpret the symbols and allegories presented to him, to expanding the knowledge of the liberal arts and sciences; which will help the individual advance from a material perception of the world, into a world of introspection. Learning to see from within through contemplation and reflection, which, in turn, will help the person understand better the allusions to secret truths. The next step is the understanding of the finality of the material being and the immortality of the spirit. All these necessary steps to this process will, if applied properly, guide the individual towards achieving that betterment we all are searching.

Freemasonry is an ideal, a journey of continuous search and work. Is a bastion of free and critical thinking. Some of the most eminent men in history have belonged to this

society. I often wonder, what is it that attracted such great men to this fraternity? What did they see in it, that made them want to join Freemasonry? Would they have achieved grandeur, if they would not have become masons, or did belonging to the fraternity and working to develop themselves, based on the teachings, symbols and allegories of Freemasonry, did indeed, contribute to develop them into the men that they became? I am of the opinion that it was a combination of both. I firmly believe that it takes a special kind of man to be a mason. Masonry is not for everyone. Not everyone will understand its teachings, nor want to devote the time and effort to do so. Masonry is a journey that we embark on, in search of that elusive "Secret" that has made this fraternity so famous. Exoterically speaking, that secret consists of our modes of recognition. Esoterically, it is the lifetime search for that something, that will take us closer to our creator. That something which we cannot explain to anyone else. That something that we experience individually and only we can understand it, that "Lost Word" that cannot be communicated, nor received from anybody else.

This journey that we travel, in search of bettering ourselves, is a continuous process of self development and improvement, which extends beyond the work we do inside our lodges. This, in turn will help us develop into better masons, husbands, fathers and members of the community. It is a process that will help us contribute positively to our beloved organization and to society in general. Freemasonry, to me, can be summarized in just one phrase, **It is a way o f life.**