

THE OLD PAST MASTER MASONRY AS A MATURATION PROCESS

"That's what Masonry is all about." How often do we hear a Brother say that. Yet it can mean completely different things to each one of us. It may mean working on a lady's home in the Christmas in April project -- or checking up on our elderly members and widows to see if we can help them in any way -- or making sure the kids get a present at the Lodge Christmas Party -- or a shared social event -- or helping a stranger, just because they need help and we are able to do it. That is because as Masons, although living and working in company with our Brothers in the Vineyard of Masonry, we are each making a personal journey of discovery. Clearly, from my point of view, Masonry is a reaching out, friend-to-friend, and brother-to-brother process of becoming involved, in a positive way in each other's lives.

We say "Masonry takes a good man and makes him better." While simplistic, this is certainly true — for those who live the way Masonry encourages you to. By the exercise of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, coupled with Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice, we learn to rise above our own passions and regard the whole human race as one family, to help one another when in need, and to render unto every man his just due without distinction. This we can only achieve by the practice of tolerance and understanding.

For those who become involved in the active management of the Lodge, it affords a wonderful opportunity for growth and maturation. I have been involved as an officer and coach for a number of years, and it is hard to tell you the warm feelings of pride I feel in watching the "boys" turn into "men" as they progress through the line, or take part in our community activities. Masonry provides an opportunity for personal growth, and a natural outlet for those charitable feelings that we all have to aid one another without being taken advantage of. Because of our long history and the ritual that has been handed down for 10 these many years, the Lodge for some is a place of refuge from the busy world with all its demands and pressures. You can sit in Lodge, submerge yourself in the ritual with its beautiful teachings, and the cares of the world are shut out for a time [especially if the ritual is well done]. It is a place to meet with others of like mind to discuss and learn about the teachings of the ages, in the timeless quest for definitions of perfect morality and a system of ethics. A system that is symbolized in Masonry by the working tools selected by the Fraternity, together with the veiled teachings contained in the many degrees of Blue Lodge, Scottish & York Rites [to mention a few], to illustrate that moral and ethical system Masonry seeks to perpetuate, as well as the individual, spiritual development which is the core of the esoteric teachings.

Masonry offers a lifetime of study, learning, growth and the opportunity to do good work for ourselves and others, in hopes of "fitting our own minds, as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It offers a place to break bread with friends and family, and strangers who are about to become new friends. It offers a place for wives, daughters and sons to participate in our activities. It offers so much, to so many different kinds of people, that I pity those who are not, or cannot become Masons!

FRATERNALLY AND FONDLY,
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