

Brethren,

In my first presentation we began the discussion of the WHY for our Brethren to have as their “elevator speech” if someone asks them about the Craft, for our new Candidates to better appreciate and fully embrace the Craft as members. We examined how society is still catching up to our ideals of LIBERTY, EQUALITY and FRATERNITY. How we must be on guard for charlatans who attempt to make a mockery of our good intents, and who like the COWANS of old seek to profit at others expense and leave carnage in their wake through their self-serving incompetence. We next pictured ourselves in Lodge with this Brother Rudyard Kipling, feeling the warmth inherent in his poetic words, the equity and the power of their message: of brotherhood, loyalty, unity between races and classes. This led to a discussion of FRATERNITY and its interrelationship with Benevolence, an act of kindness or an inclination to be kind, the quality of someone who volunteers or offers support to others. How Masons though the benefits of what we now call networking, gained and promoted the benefits of education, governance and justice. Groups of like-minded men, of varying classes, politics and religious beliefs hoping for a better tomorrow met in secret, found common ground and a mutual respect for one another. Justice and opportunity were born. Most recently we discussed Fortitude, the practice of patient pursuit when meeting obstacles. That allows us to overcome our fears and remain resilient even in the face of adversity. To do what is right, even when others criticize us perhaps in the majority, say that our actions or beliefs are “outdated”.

This leads us into a discussion of Temperance. Temperance is individual restraint by practicing humility and modesty instead of arrogance, from extravagant show of luxury, and restraint from rage (through calmness and self-control). The structure of a Masonic Lodge is meant to promote temperance through its harmony and tranquility. When a Brother passes into the tyled recesses, he leaves behind life’s sometimes stressful or frantic turmoil for time, regains balance and perspective through his Work with the Brethren, creates harmony, happiness and cooperation towards shared purpose. You take your time to do your best Work, and you reflect on the higher purposes of the Craft. You leave behind the ‘NOISE’ of the World to hear the inner voice of the Supreme Being guiding you toward the right outcome. When you leave the Lodge you carry those right outcomes with you, and thereby contribute to the happiness of others. Masonry adorns the inward man, there is no need for outward trappings of luxury, nor to covet it, if we are focussing on the inward qualities of our peers and developing the same within ourselves. By the practice of Temperance, we naturally enhance our tolerance of others. If there are deficiencies in others, we forgive them, and look inward to correct similar deficiencies within ourselves. We become better people, and by our example we inspire others to better towards others, as well as themselves, thereby creating a more tolerant and considerate community. Thus, a Mason comprehends the phrase “taking good men and making them better”. To function at this level of higher learning, requires a good man who is neither opinionated nor controversial, in order to possess the necessary foundation, followed by the practised skills of calm reflection to unlock the best potential a man can be. The Secrets of Masonry are not simple “one-size-fits-all” answers to read to transform into one’s improvement. Masonry provides the Tools with which a man can unlock those answers within himself through personal reflection, not possible if he remains distracted, obsesses with flaws or short-comings, or mistakenly punishes or berates others. Finally, Masons recognize they take a journey, not simple destination. To truly achieve Masonry’s benefits takes a lifetime, requires collective work with others, leveraging the right mix of talents, experiences, abilities and skills in order to come to a successful conclusion.