

What is the True Nature of Masonry?



The answer cannot be other than a simple and decisive: The nature of Masonry is **prevalently** instrumental, that is, Masonry is a tool, a method of life-long instruction to a progressive liberation from ignorance and prejudices.

Masonry is not a "**Revelation**," and does not indicate or claim to represent any one truth, but encourage each individual who enters it, to tread on a **personal** path to reach that truth, which is, and can only be, his own.

Masonry, as a method, suggests that man is a prisoner of himself, locked in an inextricable labyrinth, fraught with obstacles that are from time to time prejudice, conformity, ignorance, fear, laziness, indolence, apathy, inactivity: all human attitudes, very widespread, which pave the road to the triumph of "false truths" and "banality," which are his very own enemies.

To get out of this maze, Masonry, a traditional initiatory order, gently proposes itself as a useful tool to which one's own hopes can be entrusted. It does not give recipes for salvation or redemption, it promises neither amazing results, nor definitive solutions. Instead it says, to anyone who comes close to it, that the path to follow passes through him, passes intimately through his conscience. It reminds him, that what keeps him a prisoner is the animal state in which he finds himself in, and that the labyrinth in which he is a prisoner is not around him, but within himself.

The Mason can redeem his own human dignity only by abandoning the state of which he is a prisoner, a state where instinct triumphs over reason, and by giving primacy to his conscience and to his own feelings; the Mason works to remove all obstacles that are within him, in order to break free from the bonds that imprison him.

Masonry tells to the Mason: **When you are finally free and upright** (a just and upright man), **then you will be happy**, happy of that happiness, the only one that is known, that results from having listened to, and obeyed, the conscience, in every moment of life.

This is an opinion shared by Denis Diderot, a French philosopher and prominent figure during the Enlightenment. Two centuries ago, he wrote:

"To be happy one must be free: happiness is not for those who have other masters other than one's own duty. But is one's own duty not — an imperious master? And if one has to serve, does it matter what master one serves? It matters a lot: duty is a master from which one cannot free himself without falling into unhappiness: only by chaining himself to one's own duty, can one shatter all other chains."

Universal Masonry has always striven to achieve a synthesis of the general and universal, eternal and immutable principles, which place man at the center of the great crossroad where the religious, philosophical, scientific, and cultural phenomena meet and intersect one another.

And therefore can be said that **the great revolutions of civilization of the eighteenth and nineteenth century — and not only the French Revolution — Have all a Masonic soul.**

Before the American Revolution, and then of the French, the rights of man (basic or fundamental) — those rights that Freemasonry advocates and supports since its origins and which are inherent in the human nature, rose to the dignity of principles, — and then materialized in the pronouncements of the UN, and are now unstopably fermenting even in countries still oppressed by fanaticism, ignorance and greed.

History, the great teacher of life, teaches that ignorance and fanaticism lead to pogroms, to massacres, to genocides. **Freemasonry has always been the guardian and protector of freedom**, because it teaches to have respect for oneself and for others, to reason without conditions, to seek the truth at all costs, not to stop in front of violence; and to love. This is why all Masons worthy of the name fiercely rebel against such indiscriminate criminalization, and demand justice and accurate, correct, true information.

The world has need of ideals, needs Freemasonry as a way of understanding the relationship between men in their indissoluble spiritual and physical structure, that requires selfless solidarity in the realization of a world more free, more healthy, more just, more tolerant.

Extracted in part from the Fellowcraft Study Manual of Luigi Trosi, The Grand Oriente d'Italia (2015) and presented to the brethren of Quinte St. Alban's Lodge No. 620 G.R.C. by Vincent Lombardo, January 9, 2016.