

Open meeting Architecture

Welcome to this open meeting, where we are going to shed some light on what freemasonry is – or can be, and perhaps what it is not. Freemasonry, which has emerged during the course of perhaps a millenium, will not easily be described during one short hour, and neither will it be done during one entire year. But there are some things we can say to lift the veils of the mysteries that enclouds what has been described as "The Royal Art", that which some kings did not hesitate to join.

Freemasonry builds upon the craft of the medieval trade and guilds that dealt with stone masonry. You will of course find, if you do some little research, a rhetorical combat between the english and the scottish freemasonry, about the origins of freemasonry. And even if freemasonry was early present in both those countries, it is not 100 percent certain that freemasonry, or something like it, hadn't an earlier presens on the continent. But lets not go too deep into that.

Freemasonry has been described

- as a system of morality, veiled in allegories and presented through symbols
- the keys to the mysteries of old, to enable us to see in a new light

to experience what" conscious" means: by participating in the ceremonies, which activate certain new paths, new ways of couplings in our minds, to "think" in new ways.

Freemasonry has no dogma, in Le Droit Humain you are entitled to freedom of conscience, which means that you are free to believe whatever you like, and also how you like. I would like to add, as long as that belief builds on something positive for humanity.

Freemasonry has, on the other hand, a great amount of teachings. These teachings have a very varied range of knowledge and wisdom which are spread through freemasonrys various degrees. These teachings also differ in practical and theoretical knowledge, or wisdom. But a great majority of them work through what we call allegories, which simply may be described as" a metaphor

in which a character, place or event is used to deliver a broader message about real-world issues and occurrences.” A literary device, with other words.

The allegories will then be presented as symbols, to reveal their inner meanings to those who are matured intellectually, and spiritually. This is where the difficult work usually begin. To give you an example, we are used to the symbolism of the stone temple. Freemasons are building a stone temple to the benefit of the development of humanity. I am a raw cut stone, and I am also my own stonemason, whose task it is to cut this stone, or processing this stone into a fine and smooth stone. The smooth, fine stone will then fit in the wall of the temple of humanity, and everyone is benefitting from this, hopefully.

It serves no real purpose to trying to dissect this allegorical design. You would find some logical obstructions should you try doing that. It is allegorical and it is presented in symbols, as the raw and smooth stones, and also the tools to process these stones with, and its diverse meanings.

The whole point of all this is, it works as it is designed, and it has worked for several hundred years, and it still does. Symbols are not constrained to the time it was designed in, they are timeless, and is a language of its own, and they may mean something special to each and everyone of us, but we can still agree on them in the end. Discussions on their meanings tend to be somewhat abstract, just because they have differences in meaning between each of us.

But freemasonry is also initiatory in its outlines. To become a freemason, you must be initiated, which means you must go through a special initiatory ceremony, in which you solemnly give a pledge to commit yourself to, in our case, the perfection of humanity and to the great architect of the universe, the latter which is a symbol of the divine nature of what we perceive is, and obviously call, the Creation. Still, you are free to believe what you like, or not at all, and you keep your freedom of conscience. Freemasonry as a commitment can not be stressed. What you gain from it, is in direct proportion to the work you put into it. We will not feed you with secrets from centuries and millenias of the past. The thing is, that freemasonry will not give up its secrets lightly, it will only share them with those worthy of them, those who are willing to work for them, those who work to the glory of the great architect of the universe, and to the perfection of humanity.

Above the entrance to the temples of old, was the known sentence «Know yourself». To be able to know yourself is somewhat more complicated than we first think. We have to consider all the known dimensions of the universe, and then some; And we also have to take into the equation, that we do not know all dimensions of the human himself. The journey to begin this knowledge, we have to start with what is obvious to us, that is what we can see and understand, and expand our results from that point, and contemplation is the starting point of this adventure. And together with said contemplation comes the study of our birth, life and death, and the old and new mysteries related to this. And we add to this the participation in the ceremonies which have the effect to help us achieving this – the rituals of freemasonry, that help us by making new tracks and couplings in our brains and minds, helping us think in new terms and renew our thinking and philosophical outlook on ourselves, and our place in this creation.

Thinking, and the way we are thinking, is very important in freemasonry, simply because our thoughts are a part of our conscience, and our perception of this. The American-British writer Lynn McTaggart writes in one of her books, about our thoughts as a band that is surrounding and circulating our planet, and that we are all connected to this band, and we are all connected together via this band, which is our thoughts. And you can also find this concept in the mysteries of old and new, in both the West and the East, in established religions and in new-age. So let us just assume that this is so, which means that to know myself, I just have to try developing this idea and realizing it in my knowledge.

All this means that the creation, or the universe if you so choose, is a mental creation. It may very well be that that's what the yogis of olde meant when they said that everything was an illusion. To come to terms with this mental creation, with this mental, dark seas, which we now have to navigate, we are going to need some extra lights, as beacons, to be able to triangulate this ocean. These beacon lights, I suggest to you, could be the religious and philosophical scriptures of the ancients, and it could also be the science of the moderns. And we also need some symbolic tools and instruments that freemasonry supply us with. If we through this triangulations find suggestions and solutions as to how to traverse these mental waters, we can then rid ourselves from the burden of

believing in fantasies and myths, finally finding the truth, and then draw our own cosmological map, and we are then a lot closer to knowing ourselves.

Truth is a difficult concept. It builds on moral and philosophy and a variety of differing ideas, and can be hold to be both relative and absolute. Truth can be different for you and me, and at the same time also be true for both of us.

A yogi of the East said, that truth is what gives permanent happiness, and explained that in an absolute sense, anything that contradicts true happiness is untruth; and that which gives permanent happiness is truth. And he emphasized the permanent as something very different than a temporary thrill. He also was very careful to point out the importance of the golden rules of all great religions, that simply says, that you must not harm anything living, the respect for every kind of life, since that too is a part of the Divine Creation, regardless of whether you believe in a Supreme Being, symbolized by the word God, or something else.

There seams to be three ways to arriving at the truth. The first is perception via your physical senses and thorough investigation, and following inference. Our senses are also only tuned for the physical spectras of visibility, audibility and such, so to see the infrared spectra, for example, we need to broaden our visibility, to tune our sight to different kinds of light, if that is possible. We are not physical body only, we seam to be equipped with more senses than our physical ones, so there must be other ways.

We can not expand our rationalizing because our mind will fall victim of our senses. We can, though, develop our intuition, or developing our hunches, so to speak. And the way to do that is by contemplation, sometimes called deep meditation. In our freemasonic tradition and local customs you will find it in our lodges as a short time of concentration upon the work that is going to happen that particular day, or night. There may also sometimes be a short introduction in contemplation during our study meetings.

Intuition is developed through meditation, with the help of freemasonrys ceremonies. And this enhanced intuition will help you reach your own truth – in time. It is not done over night, it usually takes many years.

You will find that it will make your whole life more complete in every sense, and keep you more focused. It is not that you should try to convince others. Everyone must try to reach the point of truth, his or her own truth, for himself, and through this be more able to help our fellow citizens. We can not help everybody, and we

can not help those who do not want to be helped, and we should not fall in the trap of believing that our own truth is valid for everyone else. All of us must find his or her own truth. Freemasonry and meditation is a good starting point for this.

We can look at anything we are doing, any activity, and we can change the way we look at it so that doing it can really matter and really have meaning. For example, I could decide that doing the laundry really does not matter. It is just something that has to be done. But what if I realized that doing the laundry takes pressure off of other people in the house and that frees them up to experience more things that they enjoy? Then doing the laundry does matter, it does have deep meaning. Or for example, I may have a terrible job that I dislike. I may convince myself that my job does not matter and that there is no meaning in what I am doing. But what if I realized that my work make someone free from their work, and that might just be the thing that saves their relationship or whatever, and that, then, suddenly makes your job really matter.

We cannot always change the fact that something we are putting our energy into does not really matter and might not have a deep meaning. But we can change the meaning we assign to the things we are putting our energy into and as a result, we can make the things that seem to not matter, really matter. This is one of the deep meanings behind the old Buddhist sayings “before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water and after enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.” This saying conveys that enlightenment does not change what you are doing in your life. It does not make you any less human. And this is very important in freemasonry, as well as in all spiritual education and disciplin. What does change, is that the way you see those activities, and the meaning you assign to doing them, changes the quality of doing them completely. Before, chopping wood and carrying water was a chore that had to be done... Something you had to mindlessly get out of the way before doing something that actually mattered to you. After, chopping wood and carrying water has great meaning.

The person who is able to open themselves completely to the world and follow their own personal aim and strive to the things that really matter, is the person who is the bravest. It simply take a lot of courage to try to change ones

personality. Most people are afraid to do this. They are too afraid of the risks and so they call the person who is open to the world and who follows their spirit, a fool who is wasting his time. But the fool is in fact the person who cuts themselves off from the world and who follows an external aim. They cannot see that they are slowly killing themselves in an atmosphere of their own constriction of their spiritual growth.

If you are brave enough to follow your own personal aim with the promise to make sure that anything you are doing really matters and also the promise of finding a way to look at the things you are doing in terms of why they really do matter, your life will be very rich with meaning and your life will matter so much, it will make it impossible to be disappointed with your life. And in the end, you will be able to say with absolute conviction, that you have really and truly lived.

Freemasonry will help you with this. But it will not happen over night. It will likely take you the rest of your life – maybe longer.

* * *

Stockholm, 2 sept 2018

JB