

Oscar wilde - the iconic personality from the late victorian society

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If we talk about the iconic personalities from the late victorian society then one name surely hits my mind – Oscar Wilde. He was known for his intellect, wisdom and humor which he passed on to the world through his plays and publications. To make a long story short, he was an Anglo-Irish author, playwright, commentator and a celebrity of the England in the late 19th century. Born to literate and cerebral Irish parents on 16th October, 1854 in Dublin, Wilde's future was definitely bright. He was grown up as a bookish child who started attaining attention from the public with his writings in a very young age. At the age of 17, Wilde was rewarded with the Royal School Scholarship to attend the Trinity College in Dublin. At the age of 18, he won the highest honor award by receiving the college's Foundation Scholarship. At the age of 20, he was represented as the Trinity's best student in Greek. Continuing his academic success, at the age of 24, his poem " Ravenna" won the Newdigate Prize for the best English verse at Oxford. The point, where he got focussed on writings and poetry.

Wilde is not just known for his famous works like the " The Picture of Dorian Guy" and " The Importance of Being Earnest", but he was also known for his contributions to freemasonry. Not to question the fact that freemasonry was an influence from his father, Sir William Wilde who was also a devoted mason saw an intimate connection with the Irish peasantry as a privileged access to a hidden form of knowledge. Interested to know Wilde's masonic life? Let's discuss in detail below.

Wilde introduced freemasonry in his life in the early twenties while he was pursuing graduation under Oxford University. He was an enthusiastic mason

who spent his great portion of wealth on masonic gowns. Being a mason was a quite controversial for him as he was unfortunately let down by the masonry society. But anyways, Wilde took the masonry seriously and was an active participant in lodge affairs. In February 1875, Wilde initiated to fraternity in the Apollo University Lodge of Magdalen College, Oxford where he addressed his thoughts on life by stating “ To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.” In April 1875, Wilde proudly passed to the Second degree at Apollo University Lodge.

In May 1875, He was raised to the Sublime degree of the Master Mason at Apollo University Lodge (now number 357). This fact was even commemorated on the Masonic First Day Cover. In November 1875, impressed with freemasonry, Wilde also joined the Churchill Lodge. In 1876, Wilde received his 18th degree of freemasonry in the Oxford University Also, In 1876, Wilde became the Inner Guard and in 1877 became the Junior Deacon at the Churchill Lodge. This event was reported in the Oxford Chronicle in May 1877.

In March 1878, Wilde successfully received the Mark Master degree at the University. Wilde was an active and hardworking dramatist in between the period of 1892 and 1895. His plays took the attention of the crowd because of the dialogues which were short, crisp and clever. In 1892, he produced the “ Lady Windermere’s Fan”, “ A Woman of No Importance” in 1893, and “ An Ideal Husband” and “ The Importance of Being Earnest” in 1895. In early 1895, Wilde took a legal action against the Marquess of Queensberry as he objected his closeness with his son Lord Alfred Douglas. After a month, his

suit got declined and followed the countercharges which sentenced him for two years in a prison.

The life in prison brought a big transformation in terms of art. His first moving letter “ De Profundis” was published in 1905 which was a formal apology to a friend written in the prison. His theme addressed himself as a scapegoat and different from other men or the one who bears blames for others. After releasing from prison, he wrote a poem “ The Ballad of Reading Gaol (1898)” which addressed a man who murdered his mistress and was about to carry out a sentence of death but wilde took a blame on himself as a criminal. The poem stated – “ I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky, And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by. I walked, with other souls in pain, Within another ring, And was wondering if the man had done

A great or little thing, When a voice behind me whispered low,“ That fellow’s got to swing.” He lived in Paris, France, thereafter being released from the prison. After composing rare and unique forms of writing through the 1880s, he developed into one of England’s loved and popular playwrights in the early 1890s. Today he is memorialized for his epigrams, exuberant personality, plays and the way he survived during imprisonment, followed by his early death. In 1900, Wilde had developed cerebral meningitis and died on 30 November at the age of 46. He was later buried at the Cimetière de Bagneux outside Paris. Wilde profoundly stayed faithful to the principles of culture, fundamentals that he spelled out through his lectures and walked one through his work.

During his life he worked out of the box as a journalist, Regarded for his classy attires, impressive and powerful communication, and stinging wit, he had developed among the most well-known personages of his time. And, as far as Wilde's Masonic career is concerned, It lasted for only four years which began and ended at the Magdalen college of Oxford. This is quite a short period but he took freemasonry like the plants take water. He was allured by the craft and the masonic degrees. He also participated in many of them during his masonic journey. In 1877, he even wrote a letter to his fellow Mason friend " William Ward" mostly known as " Bouncer" stating " I have got rather keen on Masonry lately, I believe in it awfully – In fact would be awfully sorry to have to give it up in case I secede from the Protestant Heresy. Hunter Blair had to give it up for a reason." Did you know? Wilde's very first play Vera or the Nililists, A Drama in a Prologue and Four Acts has masonic implications. Basically, written in 1880 and first produced in 1883 at New York.

At the end, I believe Oscar Wilde has suffered a lot of criticism in his short life but he still remained highly devoted to his work and fraternity. I hope you find this article useful and if you want to know more about his accomplishments. Drop your questions in the comment section below. I'd love to help!