

99° of Freemasonry

Turning the Solomon Key

Bro. Henning A. Klövekorn
www.klovekorn.com

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99° of Freemasonry
by Henning A. Klövekorn

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The description and interpretation of historical events and theological ideas in this publication arise from careful investigation and research. References have been provided where possible. The author expresses regret for any error in presentation, historical description or interpretation including offence which might be taken, and invites any information which may be used as historical evidence which is contrary to the contents of the book to be forwarded to him for review, analysis and possible revision in future editions of the publication. The nature of history, and the myriad pathways of interpretations and revelations mean, however, that it is not always possible for all to agree on the same version of events or history, as differing pieces of evidence often exist to support claims on either side. - H.A.K.

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Henning A. Klövekorn B.A, G.C, M.A, CPMSIA

*Freemasonry is the pursuit of personal liberation
from the state of ignorance.*

To those who seek but have not found.

For my sunrise and sunset, my loving wife, friend and
companion: Josie

As inspiration to my inspiration: Saffron Erika.

With love to my loving family: Henning, Irena, Patrick, Lisa,
Laura, Finn, Sonja, Alois, Werner, Gertrud, Heather, Tom, Josh,
Peter, Jonnathon, Walter, Ingo, Roman, Wolfram, Max, Otto.

In friendship to friends: Minal, Tim, James, Frank, George, Rob,
Mike, Phil.

In dedication to Odin.

Lux lucet in tenebris, sed tenebrae non eam comprehenderunt

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Preface

The world's largest, most influential and enduring fraternal society is that of the Freemasons. Spanning many centuries, their initiatory rites, traditions and principles have made a significant impact both on the individuals who have frequented its temples and to society at large.

This book aims to provide a historical and analytical account of this secretive and influential fraternity, without presenting radical or fabricated conspiracy theories, with which the market has been flooded over past years. In the shadow of the inspirational Da Vinci Code, and its sequel, this publication is fitting for the time, as it answers many questions raised by such works.

Masonic organisations have existed in varying forms since the earliest periods of human civilisation. The Masonic Orders of Egypt, the Roman Colleges of Builders, the Military Knights Templar, to the philanthropic Masonic lodges of today; the effects of Masonic philosophy have altered and stimulated the progress of society, wherever its principles could reach. Freemasonry also affected many ancillary movements, both rivals and related orders such as the Order of Illuminati, the Orange Institution, the Druids and the Thule Society.

This work serves to introduce the reader to the history, organisation, rites and symbolism of Freemasonry. Many will find themselves pondering on the true essence of Masonry and why, in effect, they themselves should consider joining the fraternity or supporting its principles.

Freemasonry is a champion of universal humanity. It teaches and inculcates common human values such as courage, compassion, honesty, honour, humility, integrity, sacrifice and loyalty. It is the enemy of spiritual tyranny, theological slavery and intolerance. It is the great shining light of truth, in the vast sea of ignorance.

Ultimately, Freemasonry is an order of peace, morality, philosophy and enlightenment. It has no religious dogma, no absolutism, offers no particular salvation or redemption, but unites people of all races, creeds, religions and cultures for the common good. It is not a competitor of religion. It is not a political party. It is not a religion itself, nor does it project its will and dogma onto others, but ensures that entry into its portals is neither coerced nor petitioned, but by

free will.

It appeals in its membership the inculcation of moral leadership, not via the threat of physical or spiritual punishment, but on the basis of human good and intrinsic values. There are no idols, only heroes, no superstitions, but principles based on common morality and universal science. The craft is a fraternity of builders, builders of a greater humanity, in the temple of universal brotherhood, with tolerance as the ultimate common thread and the great virtues as its driving force.

Bro. Henning Andreas Klövekorn

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1 Introduction

The body of Freemasons consists of a range of mystical schools of enlightenment and orders of knighthood, of which three major 'rites', the York Rite, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite and the Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis and Misraim make up the organisation today.

Like most organisations of this size, age and complexity, there are varying schools of thought and persuasions, which in Masonry are termed 'obediences'. Generally, these can be divided into two: the traditional movement of England, and the progressive movement of Europe - principally France.

The English movement has been the largest movement over the last few centuries, appearing in all continents of the world, largely as a result of colonial expansion. Although it is the most rapidly declining Masonic jurisdiction in the world today, it has upheld the benchmark of Masonic principles and fostered many innovative leaders and provided great charity.

The progressive movements, alternatively, although more restricted in numbers and reach, have flourished in recent times, particularly with the development and recognition of women's Masonic orders which marked the progression of the order from a purely fraternal organisation to a worldwide and universal 'craft'. The 'Grand Orients' alignment to the Charter of Human Rights and other global humanitarian visions have marked a new epoch in the development of Freemasonry, from a rigid and exclusive men's association to a global network of humanists.

Freemasonry does not have a centralised global leadership. Each lodge and grand lodge, is a sovereign body. Today there are approximately 45,000 lodges worldwide with a membership of approximately four million. Although Freemasonry, as its name suggests, provides entry into the speculative science of Masonry, it should be understood that, in reality, it is only the front door to a vast and extensive network of mystical schools, chivalric orders and intellectual societies.

Freemasonry is an initiatory order. Its principles are conveyed through initiation, theatrical experience and oratory. Masons are not appointed or ordained, but evolve through the process of instruction, initiation and self-discovery. It is therefore one of the last surviving

mystery schools of the world which convey information via ritual and symbolism.

Masonry aims to construct an interior and exterior temple. The interior temple is that of the individual, who, through self-discovery, finds inner meaning, growth and truth. The exterior temple is that of a common humanity.

The most important element of Freemasonry is that the search for truth and enlightenment is considered as an individual quest and development. No person, group, clergy or dogma will restrict the Masons ability to grow, conceptualise, argue, propose, seek and strive for individual enlightenment and truth. For this reason, Freemasonry has always brought together people of differing faiths, and has tolerated, indeed welcomed diversity.

Prominent Masonic scholar Illustrious Brother Manly P. Hall, 33°, provided the following analysis of Freemasonry: "Most of the religions of the world are like processions; one leads, and the many follow. In the footsteps of the demigods, man follows in his search for truth and illumination. The Christian follows the gentle Nazarene up the winding slopes of Calvary. The Buddhist follows his great emancipator through his wanderings in the wilderness. The Mohammedan makes his pilgrimage across the desert sands to the black tent at Mecca. Truth leads, and ignorance follows in his train. Spirit blazes the trail, and matter follows behind. In the world today ideals live but a moment in their purity, before the gathering hosts of darkness snuff out the gleaming spark. The Mystery School, however, remains unmoved. It does not bring its light to man; man must bring his light to it. Ideals, coming into the world, become idols within a few short hours, but man, entering the gates of the sanctuary, changes the idol back to an ideal ... a Mason is a builder of the temple of character."¹

2 Fraternal Orders

Fraternal orders are foreign to most people. The rites, rituals and dealings of these societies remain concealed and undetected by the common peoples of the world. Yet every night, somewhere around the globe, thousands of adherents gather in fraternal communities, be it in a modest wooden shed at a rural outpost in the Australian outback or an ornate mahogany and marble private lodge room in

Europe. People of a variety of backgrounds, skills, ethnic origins and political persuasions gather to ponder on the philosophical pursuits of humanity and seek fellowship and enlightenment.

Not all fraternal orders are the same. What distinguishes them in word and deed is of interest, not the differences in colour, name or dress. Yet from the thousands of orders both past and present, the attentive historian will attest that most have their roots in Freemasonry, the oldest and certainly the longest lasting fraternal order in our world.

The Masonic model has provided the inspiration and backbone to most such organisations, past and present. Distant cousins of Freemasonry, such as the Order of Skull and Bones and the Bavarian Illuminati, were all structured and based on the Masonic initiatory school.

Ancient Masonic fraternal societies were initiatory and philosophical communities. Adherents were instructed in philosophy, also known as mysteries, via an elevating system of ritualistic degree work. This ensured an organised method of delivering important teachings and principles and enabled the fraternities to test the knowledge and devotion of members before they progressed in the order. The highest degrees, ending in the greatest and most important revelations, were reserved only to the prepared and devoted few.

In line with the tradition of the ancient mysteries, Freemasonry, as a mystery school, imparts a knowledge of the natural laws. As such, a greater focus is placed on philosophy and morality than on religion and theology.

3 Friendly Societies

In the 17th century, mainly in England, working class labourers from a range of occupations formed unions in the form of friendly societies. The principal function of friendly societies was to provide mutual benefits to members. These societies were a form of social security, as each member's contribution provided members of the societies and their families with services such as medical aid, injury compensation, funeral services and a benevolent fund for widows. These were important services in states without an organised public social support system. Friendly societies imitated fraternal societies, mainly Freemasonry, in order to provide structure and order to their

associations. Several fraternal societies such as the United Ancient Order of Druids, developed initiatory and philosophical ritual systems closely resembling fraternal orders such as the Freemasons.

The secular character of Friendly Societies has been one of its underlying strengths and is specifically well described in the initiation ceremony of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, one of the world's premier friendly societies:

*"With the divisions and classifications of human society our Order holds no fellowship. While it inculcates a veneration for religion, and subordination to civil government and its laws, it studiously avoids all affinity with systems of faith or sects, whether religious or political."*²

4 The Freemasons – Doctrines, Tenets, Overview

The Masonic fraternity is primarily concerned with teaching its adherents a moral code through ceremony, called the 'ritual'. The ritual, demonstrated by theatrical involvement within lodges, is extensive and ordered into varying degrees or grades. The degrees explain the principles and symbols of the Masonic craft. Its teachings in the lower degrees are based on the tools and legends of stonemasons. The stories and symbolism of each degree are highly allegorical. In the higher degrees of Freemasonry, moral allegories and historical legends from chivalric orders, Nordic and Eastern civilisations are considered. Through its teachings, Freemasonry conveys a variety of moral and spiritual standpoints, called tenets:

Universal tenets of Freemasonry

- Freemasons believe in the freedom of religion. All Masons are by principle allowed the freedom to worship God how they please and this is considered as a private matter. Freemasonry therefore, is a point of union for many who otherwise might have stayed at a perpetual distance due to religious differences. A belief in a higher being is a requirement of membership in most Masonic lodges, but the name of God is given a universal title of 'Grand Architect of the Universe'.
- Freemasonry is a school of freedom, a science of exploration, an art, which champions the respect for universal dignity and

tolerance. It is not a religion, it is not a political organisation, it does not offer salvation, and it does not enforce a particular set of religious dogma.

- Freemasonry is a union of all, regardless of race, religion, colour, creed or political persuasion.
- Freemasons at no point place their duties and responsibilities in relation to Freemasonry above or before the responsibilities they have towards their family, state, or the law – unless the law is tyrannical and oppressive.
- Freemasonry teaches that human conflicts and differences can be overcome by education, compromise and diplomacy, and violence and aggression are primitive forms of conflict resolution and should be strenuously avoided.
- Freemasonry teaches that people's worth is not based on their devotion to a set of dogmas, but is based on their character and actions.
- Freemasonry fosters universal understanding and the acceptance of differences between people on the understanding that in diversity is strength.
- The art or principles of Freemasonry, taught through ritual, encompass common human values such as compassion, tolerance, honesty, courage, honour, righteousness, rationalism, integrity, sacrifice and loyalty.

Progressive forms of Freemasonry, such as the lodges under the Grand Orient of France and the Sovereign Grand Orient of Germany have evolved into Masonic lodges which actively perpetuate these tenets as well as progressive tenets of Freemasonry, known as the ideals of Laïcité:

Progressive Freemasonry:

- Believes that Freemasonry is a union of all men and/or women, regardless of race, religion, colour, creed or political persuasion. Progressive lodges either allow entry of the female sex, be it in mixed or single sex lodges, or, at a minimum, accept and recognise women Freemasons initiated by recognised women's Masonic lodges.
- Fosters the absolute freedom of conscience, which neither expects nor demands a belief in God. Progressive Freemasonry does not discriminate on the basis of belief in God. Believers, atheists,

deists, naturalist and agnostics are accepted as equals in the temple of humanity.

- Fosters secularism of social institutions and government.
- Fosters the principles of liberty, transparency and equality.
- Believes in the separation of church and state, this being the only method by which true equality and opportunity of citizenship is achieved.
- Fosters the pursuit of justice and truth.
- Fosters the desire for intellectual and moral development, via the arts and sciences.
- Fosters the right, indeed the duty, to question cultural and theological ideals in the pursuit of truth.
- Encourages independent critical thinking.

Some or all of these liberal tenets have been seen by some Masonic and non-Masonic organisations as harbouring political motives, such as the pursuit of secularism and the separation of church and state. The Freemasons of the Grand Orient have throughout history engaged in political activity in line with these principles, which has from time to time severed ties with mainstream forms of Freemasonry which have for centuries striven to remain politically neutral. The move to allow the entry of atheists into Freemasonry by the Grand Orient of France in 1877 meant that the progressive forms of Freemasonry, principally under the Grand Orient of France, diverged from the traditional forms of Masonry, principally under the Grand Lodge of England. This split continues to the present.

4.1 Religion

Freemasonry, regardless of obedience, should not interfere with the belief of a member, nor does it exclude membership on the basis of theological persuasion. The first English Constitutions of 1723 (Dr. Andersons) stated:

“A mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral law ... Let a man’s religion, or mode of worship, be what it may, he is not excluded from the order, provided he believe in the glorious Architect of heaven and earth, and practise the sacred duties of morality ... Masonry is the centre of union between good men and true, and the happy means of conciliating friendship amongst those who must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.”³

This principal idea of Freemasonry engages all people to unite in the spirit of understanding and tolerance, by engaging in good works with all humankind and developing members who lead by example. Grand Commander of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite (Southern Jurisdiction of the United States), Illustrious Brother Albert Pike (1859–1891) in his famous book on the rite *Morals and Dogma* wrote:

“No man truly obeys the Masonic law who merely tolerates those whose religious opinions are opposed to his own. Every man’s opinions are his own private property, and the rights of all men to maintain each his own are perfectly equal. Merely to tolerate, to bear with an opposing opinion, is to assume it to be heretical; and assert the right to persecute, if we would; and claim our toleration of it as a merit. The Mason’s creed goes further than that. No man, it holds, has any right in any way to interfere with the religious belief of another. It holds that each man is absolutely sovereign as to his own belief, ..if there were any right of persecution at all, it would in all cases be a mutual right; because one party has the same right as the other to sit as judge in his own case; and God is the only magistrate that can rightfully decide between them. To that great Judge, Masonry refers the matter; and opening wide its portals, it invites to enter there and live in peace and harmony, the Protestant, the Catholic, the Jew, the Moslem; every man who will lead a truly virtuous and moral life ...”⁴

Whilst Albert Pike here reflects on the universality of Masonry, even in a conservative rite of Freemasonry, the progressive forms of Freemasonry reach one step further, passing no judgement on any person’s beliefs. The believer or the atheist is equally accepted into the portals of Masonry to implement the ‘great work’ of self-discovery and propagation of humanitarian values.

The English Constitution, still utilised today, was then and is now a great indication of the progressive nature of the order at a time of prejudices and bigotries. Furthermore, it highlights the great intent of Masonry, not only as a medium of personal growth, but as a medium of enabling people of differing faiths to meet, share and experience friendship which otherwise might not have been possible, the Christian and Muslim, the Buddhist and the Jew, all equal as lodge members.

“A Mason is a peaceable subject to the civil powers ... He is cheerfully to conform to every lawful authority; to uphold, on every

occasion, the interest of the community..”⁵

One of the strengths of Freemasonry is that its lodges and grand lodges (or grand orients) remain to a large degree independent and free. Whilst there exist good, cordial and sometimes supportive relationships between grand lodges, the independence of each from another ensures a vital measure of perspective and protects the craft at large from being consumed by one particular orthodoxy.

“Freemasonry is truly a worldwide brotherhood in the proper sense of that phrase. To call Freemasonry worldwide or international is not, as the conspiracy theorists would have us believe, to imply an international organization with a central controlling body. Each Grand Lodge, or Grand Orient, is a fiercely independent, sovereign, self governing body owing allegiance to no other ... The strength of Freemasonry has been the simplicity and commonality of its principles and tenets via the widely disparate national and cultural characteristics of those who have embraced Freemasonry.”⁶

Freemasonry teaches that all people are given, without distinction of class, origin or denomination, the right to be themselves, to have the freedom of choice, to be responsible and accountable for their own actions and masters of their destiny. It inculcates respect for others, considers strength in diversity and works for the improvement of humanity.

4.2 Membership:

For centuries, gaining entry into Freemasonry has required the candidate to initiate the first move. Unlike many organisations where membership drives and recruitment programs solicit membership to anyone anywhere, Freemasonry requires those who have interest in the craft to knock on the door themselves. This has a range of advantages, the primary of which is that candidates come of their own free will and thereby come with a truthful desire and passion to learn and contribute, rather than being coerced into a false allegiance. Membership is usually restricted to those of 21 years of age or older; however, sons of Freemasons, known as ‘lewises’, are allowed entry at the age of 18. For those who knock on Masonry's great doors, membership

and initiation can take time to eventuate. This is a secondary safeguard against those who are too eager to learn the secrets and traditions of the lodge so closely guarded for centuries.

The nature of membership petition varies from continent to continent, and in Europe especially the time taken from initial interview by a committee of enquiry to a person's first degree can take many months, even years. It is also customary for the candidate to be proposed by a member of the lodge, and as with many other important decisions, a secret ballot is held. The secret ballot is conducted via the use of white and black marble balls, one of which is deposited into a ballot box by each member of a lodge. When a black ball is found contained in the box, the candidate is 'blackballed' and thereby not accepted by the lodge. A box of white marbles is considered as accepting the candidate for membership.

4.3 Proceedings within a lodge

Masonic lodges have specific rules and regulations which govern conduct, administration and proceedings of a lodge. During lodge gatherings, meetings are usually opened in the first degree of Freemasonry, which ensures that all levels of membership, from apprentices to master Masons, join in opening the lodge and partaking in the business of the lodge, such as the hearing of treasury reports and other items of business. On certain nights, lodges may close in the first degree, and open in a higher degree, such as the third degree or master Mason degree, in which case all members below the rank of a master Mason are required to leave the lodge temple. During these periods, members of lower degrees are given instructions by senior members on the history and allegory of Masonry, usually pertaining to their rank within the order.

The end of the lodge meeting signals the beginning of the 'festive board' or 'lodge banquet'. This is a dinner held shortly after the ceremonial aspect of the lodge meeting. As a Masonic meeting is considered as 'work', the banquet is considered as 'refreshment' and specific lodge members, called stewards, are engaged to organise and coordinate the banquet. Lodge banquets differ between lodges, jurisdictions and countries. Some lodges opt for a traditional dinner in formal attire, whilst others may operate at a more casual level. Toasts and drinks are enjoyed, travelling Masons are remembered, guests and visitors are invited to speak. The banquet is also utilised to raise

money for charitable works.

The Masonic banquet is also known to be a festive event, with songs and other social activities. It is customary for Masonic guests to be given the meals and drinks free; hence Masons enjoy the hospitality of lodges wherever they may visit throughout the world.

4.4 Regalia of Freemasons

Freemasons have from the earliest days of the order distinguished rank via the use of differing forms of regalia. Unique in each degree, aprons, collars, sashes, gloves, gauntlets, chains, swords and differing forms of headgear are worn.

The majority of Masons throughout the world have, as their primary lodge attire, a leather apron. Made from plain lambskin, emblematical of purity, the apron is said to have been worn by operative stonemasons to protect themselves from sharp flying debris of the stones being prepared in the quarry or being worked on in lodges. Masonic aprons are primarily used to identify rank within the order, starting with a plain white apron in the first degree; the aprons are further embellished throughout the accomplishment of higher degrees or positions in the lodge. The apron of the second degree in contemporary Freemasonry includes two rosettes; three rosettes are utilised on the apron of the master Mason. These were first used by German Masonic lodges in the mid 1740s and were not officially prescribed in England till 1815. Contemporary aprons also include a set of metallic tassels, a relatively late inclusion on the Masonic apron. The metallic tassels represent the waste strings used by early operative masons to secure aprons to the body; the strings were wrapped around the body and secured at the front and the tassels hung over the front portion of the apron. Squares or levels, usually metallic, are found only on the apron of a past master of the lodge.

White gloves are worn by all Masons as a symbol of purity of action, a requirement of the order. In German lodges a second pair of white gloves are presented to initiates for their partners to symbolise respect for their primary companion.

Medals and jewels are also an important signifier in Freemasonry. In English Masonry only three medals are permitted to be worn on the left chest. Hence for those with a large collection of merits and degrees, only the most valued are chosen. It is not permitted to wear