

The Scottish Rite Craft Degrees  
Albert Pike

The Scottish Rite Craft Degrees  
From Morals and Dogma

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## Foreword

Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma* holds a unique place in Masonic literature. At one time, the hefty book was given to all who obtained the AASR degrees of the Supreme Council, Southern Jurisdiction, USA. While the book was widely owned by Scottish Rite Masons, it was almost equally unread. It was sometimes claimed that the massive size of the work coupled with the intimidating style of writing made it a better bookshelf decoration than an actual Scottish Rite study guide. Others claimed that while the chapters had a foundation in the AASR degrees, the work often widely strayed from the actual teachings of the degrees making the work less valuable to those who wished to study the actual degree rituals. While the opinions of *Morals and Dogma* may vary, it is possible that the real point of the book was missed or ignored.

The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is built upon the foundation of the craft lodge. Its early degrees continue the morality play of the legend of Hiram, but then the Scottish Rite degrees take us far away from these lessons. We are introduced to philosophical and knightly orders and given new lessons in honor and morality. The basic "improve yourself by means of growth" is the same in the Scottish Rite advanced degrees as in the craft lodge, but we are taken into new areas and given new opportunities and paths for growth. When we look at this relationship between the advanced degrees and the craft lodge, we can see that a parallel can be drawn between the advanced degrees and the craft lodge as well as *Morals and Dogma* and the Scottish Rite. Just as the advanced degrees take us to levels not attempted by the craft lodge, *Morals and Dogma* offers us a taste of esotericism not obtainable in the Scottish Rite, yet firmly rooting itself within the degree structure of the Scottish Rite.

If we view *Morals and Dogma* as a handbook for the AASR, then we quickly realize that we can obtain clearer and more relevant handbooks. If, however, we consider *Morals and Dogma* to be an independent esoteric work built upon, but not limited to the teachings of the AASR, then we can begin to understand why such AASR esoteric leaders as Thomas H. Caswell, Henry R. Evans, Leroy M. Taylor and the young Many P. Hall, were

so impressed with the work. *Morals and Dogma* can rightly be looked upon as a Masonic screwdriver that has for too long been mistakenly taken for a Masonic hammer. It is only by making the proper use of this work will we realize the greatest benefits from it.

I am very pleased to offer this work, the craft degrees of the AASR, from Albert Pike's classic *Morals and Dogma*. It is hoped that by a study of the following pages, the student of Masonry will find much in which to grow and advance in his Art.

Michael R. Poll  
Cornerstone Book Publishers

## The Scottish Rite Craft Degrees

# I° - Apprentice

## THE TWELVE-INCH RULE AND THE COMMON GAVEL.

FORCE, unregulated or ill-regulated, is not only wasted in the void, like that of gunpowder burned in the open air, and steam unconfined by science; but, striking in the dark, and its blows meeting only the air, they recoil and bruise itself. It is destruction and ruin. It is the volcano, the earthquake, the cyclone; -not growth and progress. It is Polyphemus blinded, striking at random, and falling headlong among the sharp rocks by the impetus of his own blows.

The blind Force of the people is a Force that must be economized, and also managed, as the blind Force of steam, lifting the ponderous iron arms and turning the large wheels, is made to bore and rifle the cannon and to weave the most delicate lace. It must be regulated by Intellect. Intellect is to the people and the people's Force, what the slender needle of the compass is to the ship--its soul, always counseling the huge mass of wood and iron, and always pointing to the north. To attack the citadels built up on all sides against the human race by superstitions, despotisms, and prejudices, the Force must have a brain and a law. Then its deeds of daring produce permanent results, and there is real progress. Then there are sublime conquests. Thought is a force, and philosophy should be an energy, finding its aim and its effects in the amelioration of mankind. The two great motors are Truth and Love. When all these Forces are combined, and guided by the Intellect, and regulated by the RULE of Right, and Justice, and of combined and systematic movement and effort, the great revolution prepared for by the ages will begin to march. The POWER of the Deity Himself is in equilibrium with His WISDOM. Hence the only results are HARMONY.

It is because Force is ill regulated, that revolutions prove failures. Therefore it is that so often insurrections, coming from those high mountains that domineer over the moral horizon, Justice, Wisdom, Reason, Right, built of the purest snow of the ideal after a long fall from rock to rock, after having reflected the sky in their transparency, and been swollen by a hundred affluents, in the majestic path of triumph, suddenly lose themselves in quagmires, like a California river in the sands.

The onward march of the human race requires that the heights around it should blaze with noble and enduring lessons of courage. Deeds of daring dazzle history, and form one class of the guiding lights of man. They are the stars and coruscations from that great sea of electricity, the Force inherent in the people. To strive, to brave all risks, to perish, to persevere, to be true to one's self, to grapple body to body with destiny, to surprise defeat by the little terror it inspires, now to confront unrighteous power, now to defy intoxicated triumph--these are the examples that the nations need and the light that electrifies them.

There are immense Forces in the great caverns of evil beneath society; in the hideous degradation, squalor, wretchedness and destitution, vices and crimes that reek and simmer in the darkness in that populace below the people, of great cities. There disinterestedness vanishes, every one howls, searches, gropes, and gnaws for himself. Ideas are ignored, and of progress there is no thought. This populace has two mothers, both of them stepmothers--Ignorance and Misery. Want is their only guide--for the appetite alone they crave satisfaction. Yet even these may be employed. The lowly sand we trample upon, cast into the furnace, melted, purified by fire, may become resplendent crystal. They have the brute force of the HAMMER, but their blows help on the great cause, when struck within the lines traced by the RULE held by wisdom and discretion.

Yet it is this very Force of the people, this Titanic power of the giants, that builds the fortifications of tyrants, and is embodied in their armies. Hence the possibility of such tyrannies as those of which it has been said, that "Rome smells worse under Vitellius than under Sulla. Under Claudius and under Domitian there is a deformity of baseness corresponding to the ugliness-of the tyranny. The foulness of the slaves is a direct result of the atrocious baseness of the despot. A miasma exhales from these crouching consciences that reflect the master; the public authorities are unclean, hearts are collapsed, consciences shrunken, souls puny. This is so under Caracalla, it is so under Commodus, it is so under Heliogabalus, while from the Roman senate, under Caesar, there comes only the rank odour peculiar to the eagle's eyrie."

It is the force of the people that sustains all these despotisms, the basest as well as the best. That force acts through armies; and these oftener enslave than liberate. Despotism there applies the RULE. Force is the MACE of steel at the saddle-bow of the knight or of the bishop in armour. Passive obedience by force supports thrones and oligarchies,

Spanish kings, and Venetian senates. Might, in an army wielded by tyranny, is the enormous sum total of utter weakness; and so Humanity wages war against Humanity, in despite of Humanity. So a people willingly submits to despotism, and its workmen submit to be despised, and its soldiers to be whipped; therefore it is that battles lost by a nation are often progress attained. Less glory is more liberty. When the drum is silent, reason sometimes speaks.

Tyrants use the force of the people to chain and subjugate--that is, enyoke the people. Then they plough with them as men do with oxen yoked. Thus the spirit of liberty and innovation is reduced by bayonets, and principles are struck dumb by canon shot; while the monks mingle with the troopers, and the Church militant and jubilant, Catholic or Puritan, sings *Te Deums* for victories over rebellion.

The military power, not subordinate to the civil power, again the HAMMER or MACE of FORCE, independent of the RULE, is an armed tyranny, born full-grown, as Athene sprung from the brain of Zeus. It spawns a dynasty, and begins with Caesar to rot into Vitellius and Commodus. At the present day it inclines to begin where formerly dynasties ended.

Constantly the people put forth immense strength, only to end in immense weakness. The force of the people is exhausted in indefinitely prolonging things long since dead; in governing mankind by embalming old dead tyrannies of Faith; restoring dilapidated dogmas; regilding faded, worm-eaten shrines; whitening and rouging ancient and barren superstitions; saving society by multiplying parasites; perpetuating superannuated institutions; enforcing the worship of symbols as the actual means of salvation; and tying the dead corpse of the Past, mouth to mouth, with the living Present. Therefore it is that it is one of the fatalities of Humanity to be condemned to eternal struggles with phantoms, with superstitions, bigotries, hypocrisies, prejudices, the formulas of error, and the pleas of tyranny. Despotisms, seen in the past, become respectable, as the mountain, bristling with volcanic rock, rugged and horrid, seen through the haze of distance is blue and smooth and beautiful. The sight of a single dungeon of tyranny is worth more, to dispel illusions, and create a holy hatred of despotism, and to direct FORCE aright, than the most eloquent volumes. The French should have preserved the Bastille as a perpetual lesson; Italy should not destroy the dungeons of the Inquisition. The Force of the people maintained the Power that built its gloomy cells, and placed the living in their granite sepulchres.

The FORCE of the people cannot, by its unrestrained and fitful action, maintain and continue in action and existence a free Government once created. That Force must be limited, restrained, conveyed by distribution into different channels, and by roundabout courses, to outlets, whence it is to issue as the law, action, and decision of the State; as the wise old Egyptian kings conveyed in different canals, by sub-division, the swelling waters of the Nile, and compelled them to fertilize and not devastate the land. There must be the *jus et norma*, the law and Rule, or Gauge, of constitution and law, within which the public force must act. Make a breach in either, and the great steam-hammer, with its swift and ponderous blows, crushes all the machinery to atoms, and, at last, wrenching itself away, lies inert and dead amid the ruin it has wrought.

The FORCE of the people, or the popular will, in action and exerted, symbolized by the GAVEL, regulated and guided by and acting within the limits of LAW and ORDER, symbolized by the TWENTY-FOUR-INCH RULE, has for its fruit LIBERTY, EQUALITY, and FRATERNITY,--liberty regulated by law; equality of rights in the eye of the law; brotherhood with its duties and obligations as well as its benefits.

You will hear shortly of the Rough ASHLAR and the Perfect ASHLAR, as part of the jewels of the Lodge. The rough Ashlar is said to be "a stone, as taken from the quarry, in its rude and natural state." The perfect Ashlar is said to be "a stone made ready by the hands of the workmen, to be adjusted by the working-tools of the Fellow-Craft." We shall not repeat the explanations of these symbols given by the York Rite. You may read them in its printed monitors. They are declared to allude to the self-improvement of the individual craftsman,--a continuation of the same superficial interpretation.

The rough Ashlar is the PEOPLE, as a mass, rude and unorganized. The perfect Ashlar, or cubical stone, symbol of perfection, is the STATE, the rulers deriving their powers from the consent of the governed; the constitution and laws speaking the will of the people; the government harmonious, symmetrical, efficient, --its powers properly distributed and duly adjusted in equilibrium.

If we delineate a cube on a plane surface thus:

We have visible three faces, and nine external lines, drawn between seven points. The complete cube has three more faces, making six; three

more lines, making twelve; and one more point, making eight. As the number 12 includes the sacred numbers, 3, 5, 7, and 3 times 3, or 9, and is produced by adding the sacred number 3 to 9; while its own two figures, 1, 2, the unit or monad, and duad, added together, make the same sacred number 3; it was called the perfect number; and the cube became the symbol of perfection.

Produced by FORCE, acting by RULE; hammered in accordance with lines measured by the Gauge, out of the rough Ashlar, it is an appropriate symbol of the Force of the people, expressed as the constitution and law of the State; and of the State itself the three visible faces represent the three departments,—the Executive, which executes the laws; the Legislative, which makes the laws; the Judiciary, which interprets the laws, applies and enforces them, between man and man, between the State and the citizens. The three invisible faces, are Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, the threefold soul of the State—its vitality, spirit, and intellect.

Though Masonry neither usurps the place of, nor apes religion, prayer is an essential part of our ceremonies. It is the aspiration of the soul toward the Absolute and Infinite Intelligence, which is the One Supreme Deity, most feebly and misunderstandingly characterized as an "ARCHITECT." Certain faculties of man are directed toward the Unknown—thought, meditation, prayer. The unknown is an ocean, of which conscience is the compass. Thought, meditation, prayer, are the great mysterious pointings of the needle. It is a spiritual magnetism that thus connects the human soul with the Deity. These majestic irradiations of the soul pierce through the shadow toward the light.

It is but a shallow scoff to say that prayer is absurd, because it is not possible for us, by means of it, to persuade God to change His plans. He produces foreknown and foreintended effects, by the instrumentality of the forces of nature, all of which are His forces. Our own are part of these. Our free agency and our will are forces. We do not absurdly cease to make efforts to attain wealth or happiness, prolong life, and continue health, because we cannot by any effort change what is predestined. If the effort also is predestined, it is not the less our effort, made of our free will. So, likewise, we pray. Will is a force. Thought is a force. Prayer is a force. Why should it not be of the law of God, that prayer, like Faith and Love, should have its effects? Man is not to be comprehended as a starting-point, or progress as a goal, without those two great forces, Faith and Love. Prayer is sublime. Orisons that beg and clamour are pitiful. To deny the efficacy of prayer, is to deny that of Faith, Love, and Effort. Yet

the effects produced, when our hand, moved by our will, launches a pebble into the ocean, never cease; and every uttered word is registered for eternity upon the invisible air.

Every Lodge is a Temple, and as a whole, and in its details symbolic. The Universe itself supplied man with the model for the first temples reared to the Divinity. The arrangement of the Temple of Solomon, the symbolic ornaments which formed its chief decorations, and the dress of the High-Priest, all had reference to the order of the Universe, as then understood. The Temple contained many emblems of the seasons--the sun, the moon, the planets, the constellations Ursa Major and Minor, the zodiac, the elements, and the other parts of the world. It is the Master of this Lodge, of the Universe, Hermes, of whom Khurum is the representative, that is one of the lights of the Lodge.

For further instruction as to the symbolism of the heavenly bodies, and of the sacred numbers, and of the temple and its details, you must wait patiently until you advance in Masonry, in the mean time exercising your intellect in studying them for yourself. To study and seek to interpret correctly the symbols of the Universe, is the work of the sage and philosopher. It is to decipher the writing of God, and penetrate into His thoughts.

This is what is asked and answered in our catechism, in regard to the Lodge.

A "Lodge" is defined to be "an assemblage of Freemasons, duly congregated, having the sacred writings, square, and compass, and a charter, or warrant of constitution, authorizing them to work." The room or place in which they meet, representing some part of King Solomon's Temple, is also called the Lodge; and it is that we are now considering.

It is said to be supported by three great columns, WISDOM, FORCE or STRENGTH, and BEAUTY, represented by the Master, the Senior Warden, and the Junior Warden; and these are said to be the columns that support the Lodge, "because Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty, are the perfections of everything, and nothing can endure without them." "Because," the York Rite says, "it is necessary that there should be Wisdom to conceive, Strength to support, and Beauty to adorn, all great and important undertakings." "Know ye not," says the Apostle Paul, "that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any

man desecrate the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

The Wisdom and Power of the Deity are in equilibrium. The laws of nature and the moral laws are not the mere despotic mandates of His Omnipotent will; for, then they might be changed by Him, and order become disorder, and good and right become evil and wrong; honesty and loyalty, vices; and fraud, ingratitude, and vice, virtues. Omnipotent power, infinite, and existing alone, would necessarily not be constrained to consistency. Its decrees and laws could not be immutable. The laws of God are not obligatory on us because they are the enactments of His POWER, or the expression of His WILL; but because they express His infinite WISDOM. They are not right because they are His laws, but His laws because they are right. From the equilibrium of infinite wisdom and infinite force, results perfect harmony, in physics and in the moral universe. Wisdom, Power, and Harmony constitute one Masonic triad. They have other and profounder meanings, that may at some time be unveiled to you.

As to the ordinary and commonplace explanation, it may be added, that the wisdom of the Architect is displayed in combining, as only a skillful Architect can do, and as God has done everywhere,--for example, in the tree, the human frame, the egg, the cells of the honeycomb--strength, with grace, beauty, symmetry, proportion, lightness, ornamentation. That, too, is the perfection of the orator and poet--to combine force, strength, energy, with grace of style, musical cadences, the beauty of figures, the play and irradiation of imagination and fancy; and so, in a State, the warlike and industrial force of the people, and their Titanic strength, must be combined with the beauty of the arts, the sciences, and the intellect, if the State would scale the heights of excellence, and the people be really free. Harmony in this, as in all the Divine, the material, and the human, is the result of equilibrium, of the sympathy and opposite action of contraries; a single Wisdom above them holding the beam of the scales. To reconcile the moral law, human responsibility, free-will, with the absolute power of God; and the existence of evil with His absolute wisdom, and goodness, and mercy,-- these are the great enigmas of the Sphinx.

You entered the Lodge between two columns. They represent the two which stood in the porch of the Temple, on each side of the great eastern gateway. These pillars, of bronze, four fingers breadth in thickness, were, according to the most authentic account--that in the First and

that in the Second Book of Kings, confirmed in Jeremiah-- eighteen cubits high, with a capital five cubits high. The shaft of each was four cubits in diameter. A cubit is one foot and 7/10. That is, the shaft of each was a little over thirty feet eight inches in height, the capital of each a little over eight feet six inches in height, and the diameter of the shaft six feet ten inches. The capitals were enriched by pomegranates of bronze, covered by bronze net-work, and ornamented with wreaths of bronze; and appear to have imitated the shape of the seed-vessel of the lotus or Egyptian lily, a sacred symbol to the Hindus and Egyptians. The pillar or column on the right, or in the south, was named, as the Hebrew word is rendered in our translation of the Bible, JACHIN: and that on the left BOAZ. Our translators say that the first word means, "He shall establish;" and the second, "In it is strength."

These columns were imitations, by Khurum, the Tyrian artist, of the great columns consecrated to the Winds and Fire, at the entrance to the famous Temple of Malkarth, in the city of Tyre. It is customary, in Lodges of the York Rite, to see a celestial globe on one, and a terrestrial globe on the other; but these are not warranted, if the object be to imitate the original two columns of the Temple. The symbolic meaning of these columns we shall leave for the present unexplained, only adding that Entered Apprentices keep their working-tools in the column JACHIN; and giving you the etymology and literal meaning of the two names.

The word JACHIN, in Hebrew, probably pronounced *Ya-kayan*, and meant, as a verbal noun, He that strengthens; and thence, firm, stable, upright.

The word Boaz is *Baaz* which means Strong, Strength, Power, Might, Refuge, Source of Strength, a Fort. The prefix means "with" or "in," and gives the word the force of the Latin *gerund, roborando*--Strengthening

The former word also means he will establish, or plant in an erect position--from the verb *Kun*, he stood erect. It probably meant Active and Vivifying Energy and Force; and Boaz, Stability, Permanence, in the passive sense.

The Dimensions of the Lodge, our Brethren of the York Rite say, "are unlimited, and its covering no less than the canopy of Heaven." "To this object," they say, "the mason's mind is continually directed, and thither he hopes at last to arrive by the aid of the theological ladder which Jacob in his vision saw ascending from earth to Heaven; the three

principal rounds of which are denominated Faith, Hope, and Charity; and which admonish us to have Faith in God, Hope in Immortality, and Charity to all mankind." Accordingly a ladder, sometimes with nine rounds, is seen on the chart, resting at the bottom on the earth, its top in the clouds, the stars shining above it; and this is deemed to represent that mystic ladder, which Jacob saw in his dream, set up on the earth, and the top of it reaching to Heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it. The addition of the three principal rounds to the symbolism, is wholly modern and incongruous.

The ancients counted seven planets, thus arranged: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. There were seven heavens and seven spheres of these planets; on all the monuments of Mithras are seven altars or pyres, consecrated to the seven planets, as were the seven lamps of the golden candelabrum in the Temple. That these represented the planets, we are assured by Clemens of Alexandria, in his *Stromata*, and by Philo Judaeus.

To return to its source in the Infinite, the human soul, the ancients held, had to ascend, as it had descended, through the seven spheres. The Ladder by which it reascends, has, according to Marsilius Ficinus, in his *Commentary on the Ennead of Plotinus*, seven degrees or steps; and in the *Mysteries of Mithras*, carried to Rome under the Emperors, the ladder, with its seven rounds, was a symbol referring to this ascent through the spheres of the seven planets. Jacob saw the Spirits of God ascending and descending on it; and above it the Deity Himself. The Mithraic Mysteries were celebrated in caves, where gates were marked at the four equinoctial and solstitial points of the Zodiac; and the seven planetary spheres were represented, which souls needs must traverse in descending from the heaven of the fixed stars to the elements that envelop the earth; and seven gates were marked, one for each planet, through which they pass, in descending or returning.

We learn this from Celsus, in Origen, who says that the symbolic image of this passage among the stars, used in the Mithraic Mysteries, was a ladder reaching from earth to Heaven, divided into seven steps or stages, to each of which was a gate, and at the summit an eighth one, that of the fixed stars. The symbol was the same as that of the seven stages of Borsippa, the Pyramid of vitrified brick, near Babylon, built of seven stages, and each of a different colour. In the Mithraic ceremonies, the candidate went through seven stages of initiation, passing through many

fearful trials--and of these the high ladder with seven rounds or steps was the symbol.

You see the Lodge, its details and ornaments, by its Lights. You have already heard what these Lights, the greater and lesser, are said to be, and how they are spoken of by our Brethren of the York Rite.

The Holy Bible, Square, and Compasses, are not only styled the Great Lights in Masonry, but they are also technically called the Furniture of the Lodge; and, as you have seen, it is held that there is no Lodge without them. This has sometimes been made a pretext for excluding Jews from our Lodges, because they cannot regard the New Testament as a holy book. The Bible is an indispensable part of the furniture of a Christian Lodge, only because it is the sacred book of the Christian religion. The Hebrew Pentateuch in a Hebrew Lodge, and the Koran in a Mohammedan one, belong on the Altar; and one of these, and the Square and Compass, properly understood, are the Great Lights by which a Mason must walk and work.

The obligation of the candidate is always to be taken on the sacred book or books of his religion, that he may deem it more solemn and binding; and therefore it was that you were asked of what religion you were. We have no other concern with your religious creed.

The Square is a right angle, formed by two right lines. It is adapted only to a plane surface, and belongs only to geometry, earth-measurement, that trigonometry which deals only with planes, and with the earth, which the ancients supposed to be a plane. The Compass describes circles, and deals with spherical trigonometry, the science of the spheres and-heavens. The former, therefore, is an emblem of what concerns the earth and the body; the latter of what concerns the heavens and the soul. Yet the Compass is also used in plane trigonometry, as in erecting perpendiculars; and, therefore, you are reminded that, although in this Degree both points of the Compass are under the Square, and you are now dealing only with the moral and political meaning of the symbols, and not with their philosophical and spiritual meanings, still the divine ever mingles with the human; with the earthly the spiritual intermixes; and there is something spiritual in the commonest duties of life. The nations are not bodies politic alone, but also souls-politic; and woe to that people which, seeking the material only, forgets that it has a soul. Then we have a race, petrified in dogma, which presupposes the absence of a soul and the presence only of memory and instinct, or de-