

EMERALD TABLET

Early 21st Century America and Freemasonry

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For one to begin to comprehend what the organization of Freemasonry has become in the early 21st century in the United States, and appreciate the challenges it now faces, one must consider the changes which have occurred in each over the past two centuries. How has American society changed in the past 200 years and how the institution of Freemasonry has changed? When one considers the term since time immemorial, 200 years is indeed a very short span of time. Yet, to some minds, so short of time is considered to be in the realms of primeval antiquity. Therefore a brief summary of the past 200 years becomes necessary.

Part 1 The Past 200 Years: A Masonic Luddite Manifesto

Two hundred years ago many were still alive who were born before the United States was founded. We were in the midst of a war with the invading armies of the British Empire for the second time in living memory. The shores of the Mississippi River were our western frontier. We were an agrarian society with a few local craftsmen to produce goods and supply the few services the average man could not do for himself. Most common people constructed their own homes themselves, and made their own clothes. Few, if any, went to a doctor in their life, and if so, most likely no more than once or twice. People knew how to take care of many common, minor ailments with things they had locally. There was almost no modern mechanization or manufacturing. Because the average person, life and sustenance were directly tied to the land they tilled with their own toil, they were more keenly aware of a benevolent, unseen provider of all things. They knew that without the blessings of a source above, all of their hard work and efforts would account for little. A self-professed atheist farmer was a rare thing. While the industrial revolution was in full swing in Europe, America was only beginning to enter into the age of steam.

Bro. Thomas Webb had just finished condensing the rituals composed by Bro. William Preston and

the first Monitor in America came off the press. Most Masonic business was conducted in the EA Degree, as the rank and file of members were either EA or FC. Variations of several rituals were worked by various Lodges. Charity was practiced, but always covertly and in secret, and usually for the benefit of the widows and orphans of brothers past.

A decade later the scandalous events of the Morgan affair took place, which would stigmatize the craft of Masonry and the institution of Freemasonry in America for the next twenty years. From the pulpits to the public square Masonry was demonized and damned. The masses always ridicule what the populace chooses not to try to understand. By 1842 over 1/3 of the Lodges in the United States had demised.

In 1843, 16 Grand Lodges convened in the city of Baltimore Maryland, for the purpose of attempting to revive a quickly dying institution by making alterations and setting forth further laws. Lodge business was only to be conducted in the 3rd Degree. Knowing the signs, grips, and passwords were no longer deemed sufficient to gain admission, thus the issuance of dues cards was instituted. The Moveable and Immoveable Jewels were reversed and the EA working tools were reduced to two. All ritual was to be based on the work of Thomas Webb. The common man of good moral character and professing a belief in deity became eligible for membership, as opposed to only those of scholarly demeanor or property owners of noble pedigree. True esoteric studies would now take a back seat while a new and outward emphasis would be placed on charity and philanthropy. This civic and philanthropic face it continues to present to the public.

By the 1850s the anti-Masonic furor had subsided and by the beginning of the Civil War both armies had many Masonic bros. in their ranks. A decade after the Civil War America was becoming a much different place. Railroads now tied one shore of the continent to the other. Vast gold deposits were discovered which

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drove the expansion west. The indigenous inhabitants were either eradicated or exiled from their lands. Manufacturing in the east was fed by mineral resources from the west. Store bought goods were becoming more common and considered a sign of affluence. Communities were growing into towns and towns into cities, but, for the most part, people still maintained an agrarian life. Even many people in towns still maintained a garden and kept chickens and a milk cow. They were not dependent upon distant corporations and conglomerates to create their basic needs. When you wanted music you made music; when you wanted to hear a song, you sang one. When you wanted to capture and preserve an image, you drew an illustration. Idle time was spent in social intercourse playing parlor games. But things were to change.

Masonry again attained its lofty status and Lodges began to follow the pioneers and establish themselves across the country. But the reemerging success of Freemasonry did not come without a loss to the Craft. Many seem to have entered Freemasonry with the motive of raising their status and prestige in their community. More time was spent on the workings of outer charities than on inner study of esoterica. In 1875 Albert Mackey lamented this change as well as the fact that many symbols and their meanings had been lost in the generation before his, and he devoted his life's work to Masonic research.

Over the next sixty years or so dozens of Masonic scholars would follow in Albert Mackey and his protégé, Albert Pike's footsteps, writing profoundly upon many very esoteric topics. However, most brothers considered these writings more for ones own private study, rather to be spoken of in a Lodge. This period of esoteric publications came to an end just before World War II.

During this time much had changed in society. Mechanization had blossomed and mass production was seen as the key to abundance. Personal automobiles had made each one of us able to be mobile as never before. We could travel across the country in days instead of months. Cities grew in population while little towns either died or were consumed by the growing metropolis. Where telegraph once linked cities and countries, telephones now linked individual people. We were becoming dependent upon others to produce food and make most of our clothes and all of our tools for us. Home made, unless speaking of food, was becoming a symbol of poverty. People visit doctors on occasion throughout their lives, but only as necessary. House calls and office visits were affordable on a working man's wages and even a surgery and hospital stay was not necessarily a cause for financial ruin. Rather than spending our evening hours playing games, making music, or conversing with each other, it was common for families to gather in the living room, sitting in silence around a box and listen while someone spoke to them from across the

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country. Things were speeding up.

During and in the years immediately following World War II, Freemasonry saw its membership roles grow to their largest numbers in history. My father tells me that in 1946 it was common for his lodge to open at 6:00am on Saturday and confer degrees all day, closing Lodge at midnight. In reading the Masonic record of brothers who went through the degrees, during this period, I see that many had the degrees conferred upon them a month apart, and questioned my dad as to the proficiency standards at that time. He assured me that proficiency standards in Texas were more stringent than they are now, and reminded me the questions as well as the answers were necessary to know. While those in the military about to be shipped out were cut a great deal of slack, it was common to meet with your instructor on a daily basis, often meeting with a knowledgeable brother during lunch at work. He said, during that time, that he saw many brothers turn in their work in 30 days for each degree, as he did. However, when I asked my dad if his instructors ever spoke of the various esoteric meanings contained within the work, he drew a blank, as do many brothers I have spoken with who were raised in this time period.

Times of war, in America, have historically been good for the membership numbers of the organization, up until the Viet Nam war. For whatever reason these throngs of men came into Freemasonry: comradely, fellowship, civic consciousness, or family tradition, or to seek advancement in career; serious and profound esoteric study does not seem to be one of them. This is illustrated by the sudden cessation of publications on esoteric topics at this time, with the exception of the little known work by Harold Percival titled *Thinking and Destiny* published in 1948.

This brings us into the 2nd half of the 20th century, followed by the dawning of the 21st. The 2nd great world war has been won and good again triumphs over evil. But there is always another evil at foot. Those who were once enemies are now allies, and those who were allies are now the adversary. The real winner of both world wars was not the powers of God over the Evil One. The true victor—especially of the second world war—was technology cloaked under the veil of Science. As machine guns and tanks—mechanization and industry—won the first war, radar and the atomic bomb—electronic engineering and physics—won the 2nd. Our current world is the by-

product of these things.

Never had any generation in human history lived through so many changes in life and concepts in so short a period of time as those alive during the greater part of the 20th century. Never before had mankind lived such a physically easy and pampered existence as we now do. Our surroundings need never to go dark merely by the setting of the sun. Many are hardly aware of what phase the moon is in nor know the time of year by observing the night sky. When it is hot, we make it cold; when it is cold, we make it warm. Anyone can cross the continent in hours and travel to the far side of the globe in a day. A chosen few have made a round trip to the moon in about a week. Never before in history have so few people lived in an agrarian manner and never before have the great majority of our lives become so divorced from the reality of the natural world. We are moving at full throttle at breakneck speed in all directions at once, and yet, we are unable to find time for things as folks used to, we often complain.

Now, for the first time in the history of the world, it has become common and expected for healthy mothers to go to the hospital to give birth. The majority spends their last hours in this life in a hospital or extended care facility, cared for by a team of health care professionals rather than in the familiar surroundings of their home and family. It is also now an almost unquestionable custom that we pay someone to prepare and dispose of our dead. Never before have so few been able to provide their own food, clothing, and shelter, or anything else directly and literally with their own hands. Why should they? The very act of paying others for these goods and services is what oils the wheels of the modern social/economic machine. Our inability to take care of ourselves is now what keeps things going. Perhaps that is why many will tell you that their many seemingly good fortunes in life came because of their own hard work, rather than through the blessings of a benevolent supernatural being.

If the masses became self-sufficient, and few bought mass produced commodities, or allowed themselves to fall prey to the medical/industrial complex, our total economic scheme would begin to dry up and decay. But this is very unlikely to happen. Most have never given this a thought as they sing praise to the modern, autonomist, responsible individual.

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Mammon is the supreme monarch of the kingdom of consumerism; avarice, hubris, and ostentation are its theoretical virtues. To covet is its commandment. To seek entertainment is to find salvation. Thus is part of the theology of materialism brought about by science, technology, and the folly of human nature.

Just before the fourth quarter of the 20th century American culture and society began to cleave into two diametrically opposing factions, brought about, in a large part, by the civil rights movement and the Viet Nam War. Long assumed traditions, values, and paradigms were questioned and some found to be flawed. People began to look at things from different perspectives and look for answers and guidance from many various sources that were not traditional in the previous generation. Reactionary responses from both sides laid the ground work for fanaticism to rule and shout the loudest from each camp. This has been perpetuated into the 21st century by politicians on both sides pandering to their base. In this phrase, it seems the term ,base, may have two different meanings, either as a supporting platform or as in lowest common denominator, each definition validly describing this same group.

After World War II, those large numbers of young, new Masons began to create the baby boom. The economy was booming and work with good wages was plentiful. Once they had a couple of school aged children and had received promotions into more demanding jobs, there was little time left in the curriculum for Lodge. They continued to pay the inexpensive dues each year but were active, only in theory, on the Secretary's role of members. Some of these brothers. would finally return to a lodge after retirement, often fraught with the anxiety of having long forgotten any of the work.

Freemasonry, long an institution seeped in culture and tradition, seemed of no interest to those who sought openness of thought and a break with the established culture. And no one attempted to tell them any different; perhaps that is because they did not know any better themselves. Many lodges throughout the country have books by the prominent late 19th and early 20th century Masonic scholars, but most have set on a shelf or in a closet, unread for generations. After all, who has time or interest in some weird esoteric mumbo-jumbo when one is advancing themselves through the real consumer driven world? Isn't going

to church now and then enough to keep one on the spiritual straight and narrow? Besides, Masonry is not supposed to be like a religion.

Once the Masons forgot about Masonry, the public quickly followed and forgot about it also. By 2003 every Grand Lodge in the country was panicking over the large number of losses due to death by old age without new members for replacement, and for the first time in the history of the Craft there were subliminally covert, and sometimes blatantly overt, recruitment campaigns. Grand Lodges are now run as and see themselves as corporations; and bureaucracies are expensive to maintain. Just as the quality of American made cars declined in the 1970s when accountants began to run the companies rather than engineers, so everything declines when proceeds and profits become paramount and knowledge of the true essence of something is seen as secondary.

Part 2 Present 2013: Observations and Opinions

In present 2013 American society all of the fanaticism, ignorance, and ambition of the past 40 years remains and has been intensified and sped up now even more. Our desires are still driven by consumerism and now the drum of fear pounds louder than ever, clouding our minds, further perverting our rationale. Be it fear of financial crisis and crash, or terrorist attack, or impending global conflagration; infectious disease, cancer, climate change, drunk drivers, government, or termites. We have fear. We have become conditioned to be afraid. And we have found that fear and consumerism work well together; just ask the firearm and ammunition manufacturers. We fear for the loss of our comfortable lifestyles, for our families physical safety and our own personal health and security. We say we fear the loss of our freedoms, but few seem to fear the loss of free thought or a free conscious. For the fact is that no one can be really free until they learn to be free of fear.

I cannot even number the long list of distractions technology has brought us, in the past few years, under the excuse of entertainment and being connected and being informed. Entertainment, being connected, and news, have now all merged into being one and the same. We are barraged, on a daily if not hourly bases, with an enormous amount of information and fact; but we have no time to assimilate it or contemplate

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them and therefore it all results in the formulization of very few new ideas. We tune in to the commentaries of pundits to tell us what to think.

We now are unable to find the time to put all of our attention into one specific project, giving that one thing our full concentration that we may produce the best possible results our abilities can muster. Instead many find it necessary to continually do several things simultaneously, even if the results of each end up being less than our best. When we read something we want information, short, precise wording with list and bullet points to show us what is important. When we watch a movie, we want action scenes and look for special audio/visual effects, rather than in depth dialogue and a complex plot. When someone presents a talk, they are advised it should not last over ten minutes, no matter how interesting the subject; for after that amount of time half of the audience will tune out. As a group, we seem to have lost the ability to concentrate on any one thing, no matter how important or interesting, for much over ten or fifteen minutes without our minds wandering to unrelated subjects. If this is true with a captive audience, how much more so when we are left to our own devices? How much time do we voluntarily devote to the reflection and contemplation upon any one particular thing, or concept?

Freemasonry, an old institution seeped in tradition, now finds itself in the midst of this fast-paced world of new distractions with little time to devote to anything except for making money or seeking entertainment. The large roles of members have shrunk to a fraction of what they were sixty-five years ago, as the World War II generation passes from this world.

Grand Lodges today declare that Freemasonry is a fraternity dedicated to taking good men and making them better through moral teachings and acts of service and charity in the community. Many join for the laudable purpose of giving back to the community and to contribute to civic causes. These Brothers are usually well adapted to the present paradigm and choose to, as a group, do outward work under the admiring gaze of the community. As this has been the energy supplying the organization with most of its members for the most recent couple of generations, it has now achieved a fixed place in the roles of the fraternity and, to some, is its main purpose—exactly as Brother Albert Mackey warned in 1875. But many

young men, who would come into Masonry for this reason, find their available free time to be very limited. As their fathers and grandfathers, they find the restraints of job and family to encompass all available energy. There are many venues through which to channel ones charitable desires, most requiring only a warm body and a check to join. It is no wonder that Freemasonry feels it is hurting for members as it now has placed itself in competition with every other benevolent, charitable organization.

But mostly Freemasonry finds itself in competition with the many distractions technology has brought onto our lives. Masonry is not about multi-tasking; just the opposite, it is about concentration and focus. It is not about doing things with speed, it is about performing acts with heartfelt meaning. It is not accomplished by gathering talking points into a brief synopsis; it slowly evolves by paying attention to exact details. These may be the greatest challenges for Masonry today; but they are, for some, the greatest indirect rewards to be reaped in memorizing the catechism.

But an underground stream of knowledge, which has flowed since time in memorial, had begun again to resurface with the birth of the 21st century. The families of deceased brothers, having no interest in Masonry, donated to used book stores and second hand shops the volumes written by the Masonic scholars in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which their family members had long owned, but had not read. Most of these books merely sat on a shelf for half a century, as many are still in great shape. I would venture that most every used book shop in this country has had a copy of *Morals and Dogma* on its shelves at one time or other.

These books were found, usually by younger men, who read them out of curiosity and became intrigued by what they contained. Some of the information made reference to topics found in the category labeled New Age, such as Theosophy, Qabalah, numerology, as well as mythology and comparative religion. There are many books available on such topics, but not all are from a reputable source. The fact that Masonry was a time honored institution of great reputation gives the logos in these books the ethos necessary to accept the legitimacy of their claims. The authors of these books, written 75 to 125 years earlier, provided, for some, their first introduction into the concept of Masonry.

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But could the men who practice such profound philosophical concepts be the same ones who wear the funny hats and drive go-carts in parades?

Driven by the desire for something they could not find in their schools or in their churches, and seeking the company of learned, enlightened minds, these men sought initiation. They came into Masonry to learn! They knocked, and when the door was opened and they gained full admission, they were quickly disillusioned and some degenerated into apathy. These brothers, who came into Masonry seeking knowledge, can be divided into three groups.

A small few were ridiculously foolish enough to think the secrets of the universe would be handed to them on a silver platter, and were never heard from again after initiation. They are the blossoms which rot and dampen off as they were not capable of ever bearing fruit.

Many who were initiated in the 1990s and 1st years of the 21st century, when business was only conducted in a Masters Lodge, learned the catechism and were raised. But after attending several Stated meetings, were disappointed at finding little if any substance in them, and were rarely heard from again, even though they may retain a current dues card. They are fruit which are in a climate not right for ripening.

And some, especially those with living Masonic relatives, knew somewhat what to expect in regards to the attitudes of those who were to be called their brothers. They realized that time, patience, and perseverance would be required. These brothers learned the catechism well and burned it into their conscious as well as subconscious. Even though they were bored at most Stated meetings, and repulsed by the childish rhetoric about riding the goat that occurred before degrees, they persevered in their Masonic educations, and became intimately familiar with the rituals. They learned the work by rote for two reasons: that they might teach, perform, and perpetuate the work; and that they may dissect, contemplate, and speculate, there by gleaning more meanings of the many concepts concealed within it. These are the fruit which will produce the seeds which will germinate and propagate into future generations.

There is always duality in everything: yin & yang, With one usually more dominant than the other. But for equilibrium to be established there must be a

balance and harmony between these two opposites. To be almost all of one and virtually none of the other renders to ignorance and fanaticism. It creates a division between people and a polarity in the populace. They become ignorant of the reason behind one belief system while they become fanatics for their own.

In Masonry this concept of duality is alluded to in several ways. The checkered pavement being an obvious example of duality, as are the terms operative and speculative, which imply exoteric and esoteric. It is this polarization between exoteric and esoteric which is today being felt in Lodges around the world.

Freemasonry, today, has become a very big tent under whose canopy different troupes perform different acts all at once. It is like a three ring circus which has the potential to become the greatest show on Earth, if only the members could get their acts to harmonize together.

For the past 150 years, Freemasonry has taken on the persona of a benevolent society or association, rather than a school of thought. Charity and philanthropy have become interwoven into the craft, and no man of morals and compassion can campaign that such endeavors are misguided or wrong. Indeed, it is now, perhaps, the greatest service that we perform for the community at large. It has always been, to various extents, a social club where good men of different backgrounds and walks of life can congregate and enjoy fellowship. And there is a small but rapidly growing group who practice Masonry for the same purpose as was done 300 years ago: for personal growth and enlightenment.

Charitable endeavors, social intercourse, and personal enlightenment are all three, in theory, integrated into Freemasonry, but not always equally, nor in harmony with each other. Each of the 3 has their faults. I will now point out a few problems with the way these three focuses are currently implemented, and perhaps offer some ideas of how they can be improved upon.

All GLs will state to their members that the purpose of Freemasonry is not that of a charitable organization, yet this is the horn that gets blown the loudest. It seems this is the reason many give to justify the existence of the organization. Money, it seems, must be involved, in some manner, to justify just about anything and everything anyone does. Most of the charity is highly

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organized, rather than being dispersed randomly as may be needed. These days, at least in Texas, the 3rd largest Grand jurisdiction in the world, detailed records are to be kept regarding any and all philanthropic undertakings. It is ignored that deeds, when announced to be charity, are devalued into just another form of advertisement, with recognition being the chief underlying purpose. In Texas, this is done to be relieved of paying city and county property taxes, of which a large portion goes to public schools, which Texas Masons always love to say they support. True charity comes from the heart and is done quietly and anonymously. Charity begins at home, as it is made mention of in two of our obligations. And charity is most effective and prudently employed when done on a local community level, with brothers having direct knowledge of the needs and the administration of the relief, rather than on a grand scale which requires a beauocracy to impersonally implement.

Perhaps the most delightful surprise I found in Masonry was the fellowship. Men of all professions and ages come together and socialize as equals. Men, who would pass each other on the street, careful not to so much as make eye contact, find themselves to be friends upon joining a lodge. I find this to be a wonderful thing. But some seem to have difficulty in extrapolating on this a bit farther. All GLs proclaim in their law books that Masonry is open to all good men with race, religion, and ethnics posing no barrier. But we know, in Texas at least, that in reality this is not always the case. If professors and painters, pipe fitters and physicians, Democrats and Republicans can meet together for a few hours in harmony, think how much richer and fuller a Masonic experience could be had if we extended true brotherly love to good men of all cultures and diversities. The purpose of Masonry is to unite men rather than to divide them. Enlightenment can only come about when the world is viewed from a myriad of different perspectives. This cannot be accomplished by being legislated in law books or through GM edits; it can only come through the heart of each man who calls himself a Mason.

The purpose for the mystery schools of antiquity was to seek enlightenment: to become one with the gods and to know immortality. The gods of antiquity represented the various aspects of the human psyche, the mind, and natural law; these in turn, being but

various aspects of the Creator. And all of these are the aspects found within ourselves as we become aware that we are now, as we always have been, and always will be, in the midst of eternity. A great many of the renown Masonic scholars, from Albert Pike to Manly P. Hall to Jewel P. Lightfoot, believed what we know today as modern speculative Masonry, had its roots in these mystery schools and is an offshoot of them, sharing many of their same symbols and customs.

Those who have read the books written by these and other Masonic authors are looking in the craft for a deeper meaning than is offered on the surface, and realize that to learn Masonry means not just to memorize, but to forever study it. These brothers have come to Masonry to find an education not offered in our schools and of spiritual truths rarely broached in their churches. They have come here to learn all they can that they might improve upon their beings. This was the original purpose of Freemasonry: to look within and study ones self, to study the entire knowable natural world in which a part of us temporarily resides, and our relation to the unseen realms in which our essence will always belong. Such is the Geometry which is of a Divine and moral nature.

What the scholarly esoteric brothers must realize is that even though someone is not as esoterically sophisticated nor had the opportunity to have read and comprehended the same books, it does not necessarily mean they have no understanding of Masonry as it has existed for the past century and a half. Masonry in America began to change into its present form in the first half of the 19th century, brought on by the Morgan Affair in 1826 and made into law in 1843 at the Baltimore Convention. By World War II the transition was almost complete. In Texas, most overt mention of esoterica was removed about 1978 when Lightfoot's Manual with Ancient Craft Commentaries was eliminated. The social and charitable aspects of Freemasonry were all many had been aware of for generations. Many who became 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Masons did so only as a portal into the Shrine.

The great majority of these are good hearted men who I am happy to call my brother. Many such brothers came to my aid a few years back, in my hour of need. A sharp intellect may be important in this world, but a pure heart and clear conscience may reap more rewards in the next.

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And it is a good thing that not all brothers share the same aptitudes, otherwise we would eventually find ourselves preaching to the choir with no new ears to hear. Truth must propagate itself, even if it be very slowly and only from time to time. Our more esoteric brothers must never shine a bright light into someone's face and expect them to keep from squinting and shutting their eyes tight. Whoever thinks they know more and has greater understanding than another, should, through that greater understanding, have no trouble having compassion for the other who has less. Otherwise one is perceived as arrogant and elite, which only incurs the wrath and distain of others.

Just as all good men are not just alike, nor all communities just the same, neither are all Lodges just alike. Grand Lodges should accept and embrace the threefold aspects of Freemasonry and celebrate this diversity. If GLs would recognize that noble contention of who best works and best agrees, respecting the autonomy of brothers and allowing each lodge to place accent on whichever of these three aspects it chooses, rather than forcing them to fit into a preordained cookie cutter mold, brothers would more easily find their rightful place within the fraternity. Just as there are various denomination churches in Christianity, so could there be lodges which lean more towards the social, philanthropic or esoteric parts of Masonry.

As I have heard stated before, Freemasonry is a three-legged stool: remove one leg and the stool will collapse. All three of these factions must recognize this and acknowledge the importance of the other two. To divide is to weaken, to unite is to strengthen. Unity, the recognition of a common denominator, is the purpose and method of Masonry. Even though Masonry's original intent may have been for learned men and enlightened artist to congregate and share their thoughts, this purpose, over the last 150 years or more, has become diluted with social intercourse and philanthropic undertakings. What has come about over the course of a century and a half cannot be undone in a decade or so without a total break down of the entire system.

Without the socializing aspect of Freemasonry, the entire concept of fraternity and brotherhood becomes a farce. Part of the aspects of brotherhood is to have allies to count on when needed, which extrapolates into the aspect of charity. Masonry would become a cold and lonely place if the social and relief aspects

were totally removed. But both of these aspects, while being important to the exoteric organization of Freemasonry, are only secondary to the esoteric Craft of Masonry. For without esoterica, Freemasonry would no longer be what it claims to be and the Craft would no longer exist.

The three legs of the Masonic stool, each placed in proper position, form a stable support. But when a fourth appendage is added in an inappropriate position and at a skewed angle, equilibrium is lost. A group, small in number and with inappropriate power, who have long called themselves esoteric, with no knowledge what so ever of the word's true meaning, now attempt to upset the balance and harmony. Ignorant of all allegorical and underlying meanings, this group, fanatic in their literal and materialistic interpretations, is driven by the ambition to gratify their egos and perpetuate their power. They become the very antitheses of esoteric, perverting the very meaning of the word. They are the most exoteric of them all. They are the pontiffs of Freemasonry. I have recently heard this group referred to as ritualist, but I find this term to be inappropriate. To refer to them as such I find to be a gross debasement of the term. I prefer to call them literalist.

There should be no divide between an esotericist and a true ritualist who sincerely performs the work with meaning. I proudly claim both titles. However I was an esotericist long before I was a ritualist. I came to Masonry because I was an esotericist; and I became a ritualist because I was an esotericist. In an ideal world these two aspects should be in complete harmony with each other. An esoteric brother should want to learn and perform good ritual, and a ritualist, who is a truly Speculative Mason, should grow in esoteric knowledge. But such is not the case when a literalist becomes a ritualist. Here lies the problem.

The purpose of this group should never be to clarify or interpret the work. No group of men can tell you what to think about what something means. This goes against the very concept implied in being a Speculative Mason. Masonry has many layers of meaning, many are meant for each man to seek for himself. Some are representative of various universal archetypes, while some are more subjective and personal. No man can tell a Mason what he should think or believe.

Neither should they dictate to a Lodge the way

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it interprets the performance of the ritual, as they usually only condone the most bland and vanilla of performances, as long as every that and which is correct. Nor should there be a Committee to Change the Work, as I have often heard referred to. It seems every few years some change is implemented. Whether it be to enforce a literal interpretation at the expense of the symbolic—changing the 1st degree dueguard—or to restore back from a minor detail in form which was previously changed. They then chastise brothers and, at times, whole lodges for not keeping up with their new rulings. I guess that, in this way, they gratify their egos and feel they have left their mark upon Masonry.

They should have but one very important function: to be and act as an archive of the work. A repository of correct wording and basic form and floor work, they are the vault in which a treasure map is preserved for reference, and for safekeeping from change or any dictated dogmatic interpretation. It would require humble as well as esoteric brothers with well sated egos to fulfill this office as such. Only by a reduction of power through legislation or the election of sincerity over ego can true and valuable esoteric ritual be restored. Keep this in mind when Grand Lodge of Texas communication comes again. Otherwise, the stream which has resurfaced and been flowing strong for a few years, will again retreat into its subterranean depths, much to the detriment of both Masonry and mankind alike.

Part 3 The Future? The Underground Stream

The eternal stream of knowledge has flowed continually through human history since time immemorial. It flowed in torrents during the golden days of Hellenic Greece and in the later Ptolemy period in Egypt and survived in Alexandria into the 4th century A.D., where the philosophies of Hellenic Greece, Judaism, the new teachings of Christ and other more arcane schools were beginning to merge, each offering their own elements and perspectives of Truth.

Beginning in 315 A.D. at the Council of Nicea, and continuing a hundred years after Martin Luther nailed his manifesto to the door in 1517, the dogma and authority of the Universal Christian Church dictated the beliefs and politics of Europe and the western world. Their thoughts, words and fate were determined by a supreme pontiff, a man whose decisions were deemed infallible and whose divinity was without question. Only one spiritual belief system

was acceptable. Those who disagreed with the dictated dogma, like the Cathars, were deemed heretics, hunted down and eradicated.

The eternal stream of knowledge went underground in the west and surfaced in the near east, only to flow back west, into Iberia, by the Moors. In 1517, the divine and ultimate authority of the Universal Church was officially challenged, which resulted in several bloody wars over the next 150 years. With the Christianization of Spain quickly followed by the inquisition, the stream of knowledge flowed underground into central Europe during the Renaissance. As the Reformation directed its course, the Renaissance broke the ground for springs of arcane wisdom to bubble forth. This information was kept closely guarded and only conveyed through symbols and written in code and taught by allegory.

And the Renaissance gave birth to the Age of Enlightenment, where newly found laws of the natural world around us were proved, and long dominating church dogma was found to be in error. In a reactionary response to church dogma, natural philosophers like Rene Descartes began to view the entire universe and everything within it through a mechanical paradigm. With the found flaws in the dogma of the church began a mind set which still exist today: a rejection of the spiritual in preference for an embrace of the physical. The age of mysticism was giving way to the age of materialism. Isaac Newton has been called the last of the Magicians and the first of the Age of Reason. He was able to live in and study both the realms of the physical as well as the spiritual simultaneously. He and some of his like minded, learned peers, formed an association, sanctioned by the English monarchy, known as the Royal Society. These men knew that wisdom only came when reason of the physical and the institution of the spiritual are united within the human psyche. Newton's lab assistant, a charter member of the Royal Society, became the 3rd GM of the Grand Lodge of England in 1719—John Desagulares. Such brothers as he incorporated the symbols and teachings they gathered from the old Renaissance manuscripts, written by those fleeing the inquisition in Spain 300 years before, into what is now modern Masonry.

In the latter half of the 1700's the industrial revolution had begun. By the end of the Napoleonic

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wars, in 1815, it was in full bloom in England, with Europe and America not far behind. And the merits of materialism and mechanization were proving themselves, providing more available merchandise, and raising the standard of living for a growing middle class. The concept of consumerism was being born. Spiritually was practiced through various protestant denominations, as well as the Roman Catholic Church, which often joined together in unity for very secular common causes such as the Manifest Destiny doctrine in America and wars between the four dominating, dynastic empires of Europe.

A hundred years after the end of the Napoleonic wars, in 1916, Europe found itself in the midst of the greatest conflagration in its history. A war of attrition waged between the four Empires, the Hohenzollern Empire of the Teutonic lands, the Hapsburgs of Austria-Hungary, and the Romanov Czar of all the Russias, all related either by blood or marriage to Queen Victoria of Brittan. As usual, the churches condemned the inevitable horrors of war committed by the other side, but cheered for their own side, just as the others did the same. On the heels of the end of this war, in the winter of 1918-1919, came the Spanish influenza.

Between 1914 and 1919, more people lost their lives to either war or pestilence than at any time in history since the black plague of the middle ages. In the aftermath of this came a renewal in spirituality and a new interest in esoterica on both sides of the Atlantic. Mediums conducting seances became popular. Groups such as the Theosophical Society and the Anthroposophical Society flourished, as did others such as the Golden Dawn and the OTO. And a new wave of esoteric Masonic authors came upon the scene such as William Wilmshurst, Rev. Charles Vale, Oliver Day Street, M.P. Hall, and J.P. Lightfoot. This revival lasted about two decades and began to taper off, ending in an abrupt stop just prior to World War II.

There was no noticeable spiritual revival in consciousness following the second world war, as been the case following the American Civil War and World War I. Many of the cities in Europe sustained considerable damage due to aerial bombings which needed rebuilding. Many struggled for their mere survival in a life where ideology had given way to reality. However the American homeland and its people, those not in services overseas, remained

virtually unharmed. American troops came back to an economy that was about to boom, thanks to the myriad of new technologies that came as the by-product of the conflict. There was the implementation of the G.I. Bill, which helped veterans to go to collage, and finance homes. As if to make up for loosing four years of their young manhood, they flourished finically in the growing economy and reproduced for a decade. There seemed neither time nor incentive for contemplation of subjects beyond the physical realm, much less for truly esoteric matters.

America had just won a war fought on two fronts on opposite sides of the globe, the largest war in history, affecting six out of the seven continents. They had saved the world from tyranny and were now about to lead the world in manufacturing, technology, and especially science. After all, it was the technology brought out of science which won the war.

America took upon itself what it perceived to be its divine mission of saving the world from itself and remaking other nations in its own image and likeness, which continues into this day. It glares the blazing light of democracy into the eyes of those who are not ready for it, causing them to squint and shut their eyes tightly against its blinding rays. As Charles Martel introduced Christianity to central Europe at the point of a sword, so America attempts to bring democracy to the world at the point of a gun.

The true meanings of most of the world's major religions seem to be lost today, as they have all descended into fanaticism. Claiming a religion seems to mean little more than wearing the insignia of one's tribe. Religion is used as an excuse to justify ones chosen secular methods and missions. Sacred texts and scriptures are only interpreted literally, as our modern minds have been conditioned to only accept concrete concepts. To compensate for the lack of depth in meaning in the literal, the religious inject the passages with pathos in order to connect with them and to convert others. Yet, when our conscious, rational minds look at these texts in a tangible manner, the premises seem preposterous and are rejected, and their entire essence is long lost. Such has been the fate of all organized religions throughout time, once their tenants are lost to literalism.

In America today, fundamental Christianity has become interwoven into politics, using pathos for the

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promotion of secular purposes. They, as all literalist, are excellent in the memorization of chapter and verse; yet seem to spend little time in contemplation on the underlying meanings conveyed within them. And it is no wonder, as they do not even understand the titles they put upon themselves. For example, the term pro-life as is used today, seems only to refer to those who are not yet born, but once they have taken a breath, they become fair game. For most of these people who call themselves pro-life also seem to be pro gun, pro foreign intervention, and pro death penalty. Similar cases can be made for many terms, including Liberal, conservative, and, libertarian. If one does not even consider the meanings contained within the titles they give themselves, why should they ever take time to ponder the true meanings behind anything. They become short-sighted literalist, controlled purely by pathos, at the expense of the loss of logos, and when not convenient, even ethos. They become ignorant of reason and intuition, fanatical through their passions, and easily controlled by those clever and cunning and with nefarious ambitions.

The dogma of 20th century science has began to take on the role and wield the power over men's thoughts somewhat as the Universal Church had done almost two millenniums before. And why should it not? The evidence of its infallibility seems demonstrated empirically in the physical world around us. Tangible rationalism has done away with intuition, without concrete evidence there is no validity in speculation. Your mind is a meat computer, your heart is a pump, and your body is who you are. The universe and everything in it, including ourselves, is seen in black and white, and any shades of gray are deemed the derogatory title of pseudo-science, and thereby discredited.—This is the reason Carl Jung's Red Book lay hidden in a Swiss vault for over 70 years.—Many in today's world, under 40 years of age, regard science to be their religion, and all other belief systems, which cannot be repeatedly demonstrated as empirical fact, to be mere superstition. They accept unquestioningly the logos of science, reject the fanatical pathos of religious dogma, and therefore even question the ethos of its underlying precepts. All of this is the end product of the age of reason, which becomes sheer fallacy when fanatically taken to the extreme.

However, there is a field of science which is, by definition, divorced from technology: the fields of

theoretical physics. Quantum physics, as perceived by the lay public, is a very new and illogical endeavor. But quantum physics has its roots in the 2nd quarter of the 20th century, when Albert Einstein referred to the concept as spooky. When physics, such as Werner Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, and Wolfgang Pauli, were asked to translate their intricate mathematical formulas into common language, their words and descriptions are almost one and the same as those of the mystical Vedic poets of 2,500 years earlier. Perhaps there is a limit to the words we can use to describe the effable, which the human mind can comprehend. I highly recommend the book *The Tao of Physics* written in 1975 by Fritjof Capra.

The stream of knowledge, which has flowed since before the dawn of the human species, laid hidden deep underground for over two decades following World War II only seeping up in a few remote corners such as Henry Percival's *Thinking and Destiny* in 1952. Between the late 1960s and early 1970s there were a few trickles in the so called anti-establishment counter culture, but most soon dried up by 1976. However these trickles did cut channels through which it could again resurface in the future, by introducing certain words and terms into a more common American lexicon and with a rudimentary and often only half correct interpretation of their meanings. Many of these terms, becoming in some circles of the youth, more common during that time, were of an oriental origin.

By the end of the 20th century and now, within the second decade of the 21st century, growing numbers are beginning to reject the dogma of both the accepted sciences and religions, and beginning to pay more heed to intuition. They are looking to perceive a reality they feel must exist beyond the veils of Maya, from whence we all sprang, and to which we must return. This is now expressed through the teaching of the east, but also through the teachings, symbolism, and mythology of the west, encompassing both the classical teachings of the ancient Mediterranean world, which spans three continents and over 5,000 years, but also some of the belief systems of indigenous cultures from around the world, which trace their sources back thousands of years further. Many of these schools of thought and belief systems seem to all share several common threads, even though they are spread out over time and place. And some are seeing that

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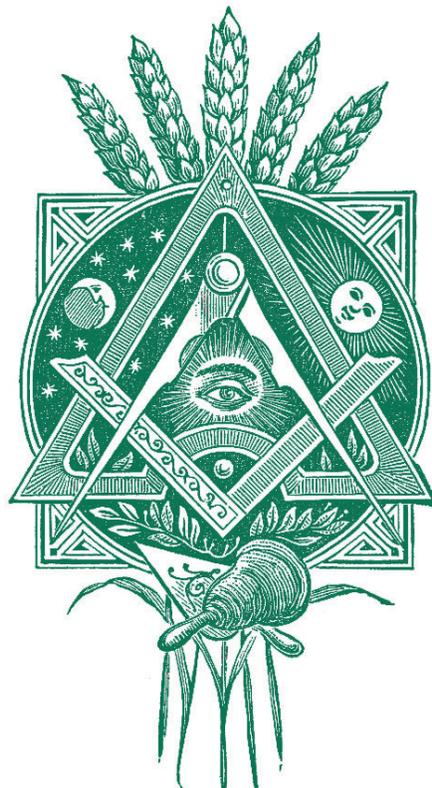
cutting edge theoretical quantum physics as well as analytical psychology seems to interlace perfectly with ancient wisdom. Most every new concept proposed by quantum physics seems to have a ready made niche waiting for it in Hermetic philosophy.

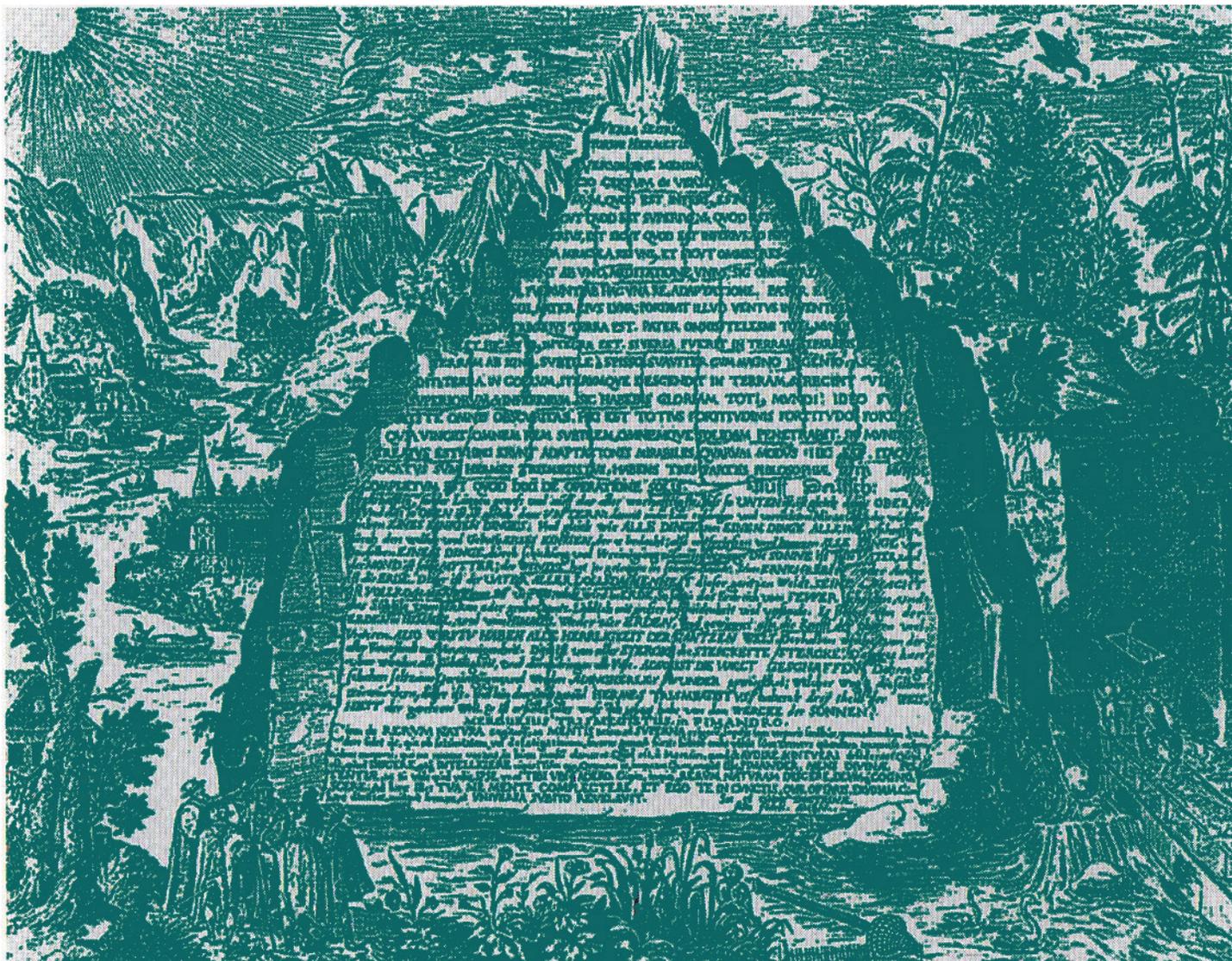
Logos and pathos—the rational of reason put into action through will and desire—interwoven together in harmonizing proportions, provides an ethos—validity and authority—established by our intuition. The Craft of Masonry is the perfect vehicle for this already, as a wooden maul, prepared for the purpose. It provides a system of initiation and the symbolism to incorporate many different teachings into a few simple allegories. Its universal precepts appeal to the logos of reason, when the allegory is viewed metaphorically; the will and pure desire for understanding as well as the ability for Agape and compassion provides the pathos; and the ancient and universal nature of its teachings establishes the ethos which is validated by our own intuition. Any institution without all three of these concepts in balance cannot withstand the test of time.

On a basic level, science and religion exist for the same purpose: to understand where we came from and to where we are going. But the questions they ask are different: Science asks how, when, where, and religion asks why. Both how and why, the two great questions

are valid. When and where are merely details, which can be used to find answers to the primary two questions. Only when all of these questions are answered with equal satisfaction can we begin to arrive at understanding.

The ancient stream of knowledge, which has flowed since chaos was spoken into form, addresses the subjects of science and religion equally, uniting the microcosm and the macrocosm together in its own unified field theory: anciently by the Hermetic axiom As above, so below; later, stated by the Anointed Healer, as On earth, as it is in Heaven. A part of us is now, for a time, temporally exist in the temporal, but we will always belong in the spiritual. In order to begin to comprehend ourselves and our relationship to everything else, in all the realms in which we, from time to time exist in, we must study both the physical and the spiritual with equal diligence and zeal. This discipline is slowly emerging under the labels of quantum mysticism and the science of conciseness. This study has always existed, hidden silently in one form or another, as it has been for the past several hundred years, in the Craft of Masonry. Perhaps, once the institution of Freemasonry recognizes and celebrates this fact, Masonry will become not only relevant in the modern world, but indispensable to it.





Coming in the January issue of Emerald Tablet

Feature Article:

May Brotherly Love Prevail: Freemasonry's Delimma with Extremism

—by Brother Robert G Davis, G.:C., Executive Secretary, Valley of Guthrie

Recommended Reading—more books for your consideration

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Photos, accompanied with descriptions, of events or sites visited are welcome.

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ghost town

Photos of Nevada Lodge Number 4 in Nevadaville, Colorado

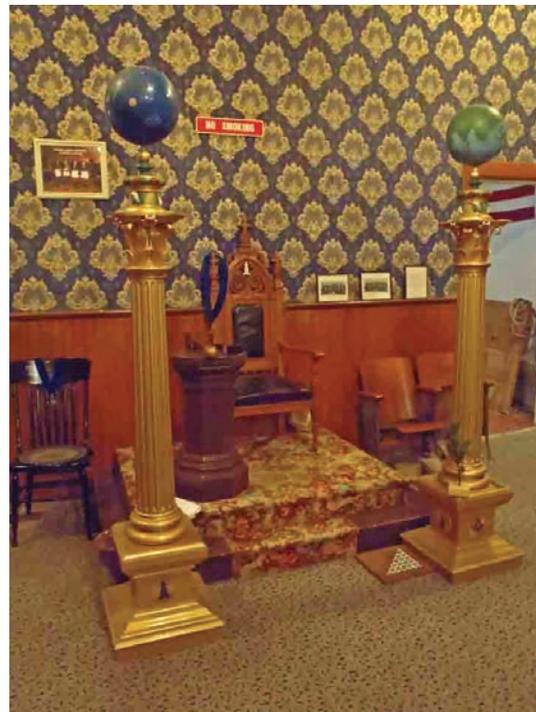
Nevadaville is a true ghost town where the town ran out of water, abandoned Nevadaville and moved development of the town to another community down in the valley.

The Masonic Lodge remained behind and it is still active. There is no air-conditioning.

Brother John Tolbert, PM, while visiting Brother Paul Dickerson in Dever, traveled to Nevada to witness a MM degree at Nevada Lodge No. 4 in June of 2012.



Nevada Lodge 4 looking to the East

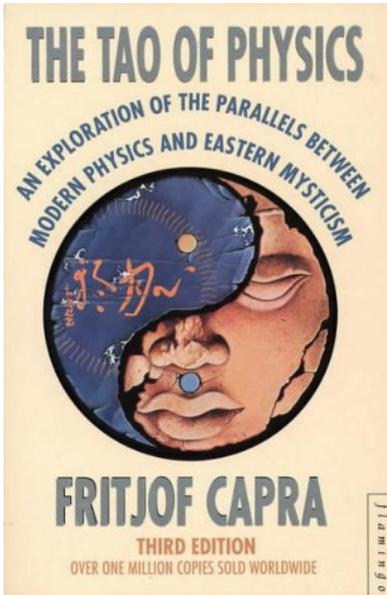


Nevada Lodge 4 looking to the West



Members of Nevada Lodge 4 costumed for Master Mason's Degree, circa 1920s

Recommended Reading



The Tao of Physics Fritjof Capra

Capra's first book, challenges much of conventional wisdom by demonstrating striking parallels between ancient mystical traditions and the discoveries of 20th century physics. Originally published by a small publisher with no budget for promotion, the book became an underground bestseller by word of mouth before it was picked up by a major American publishing house. Since then, *The Tao of Physics* has been published in 43 editions in 23 languages.

From the epilogue— *Science does not need mysticism and mysticism does not need science, but man needs both.*

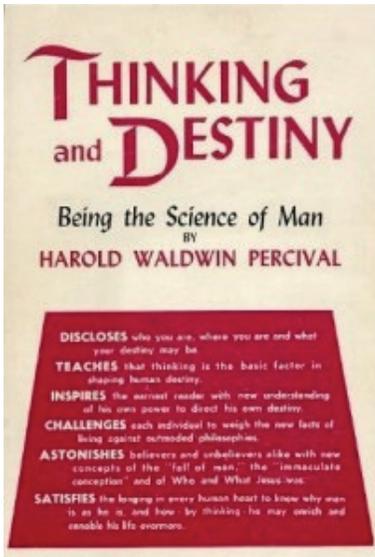
According to the preface of the first edition, reprinted in subsequent editions, Capra struggled to reconcile theoretical physics and Eastern mysticism and was at first “helped on my way by ‘power plants’” or psychedelics, with the first experience “so overwhelming that I burst into tears, at the same time, not unlike Castaneda, pouring out my impressions to a piece of paper.” (p. 12, 4th ed.)

Capra later discussed his ideas with Werner Heisenberg in 1972, as he mentioned in the following interview excerpt:

I had several discussions with Heisenberg. I lived in England then [circa 1972], and I visited him several times in Munich and showed him the whole manuscript chapter by chapter. He was very interested and very open, and he told me something that I think is not known publicly because he never published it. He said that he was well aware of these parallels. While he was working on quantum theory he went to India to lecture and was a guest of Tagore. He talked a lot with Tagore about Indian philosophy. Heisenberg told me that these talks had helped him a lot with his work in physics, because they showed him that all these new ideas in quantum physics were in fact not all that crazy. He realized there was, in fact, a whole culture that subscribed to very similar ideas. Heisenberg said that this was a great help for him. Niels Bohr had a similar experience when he went to China.—*Fritjof Capra, interviewed by Renee Weber in the book The Holographic Paradigm (page 217–218)*

—*Recommended by Brother Al Matthews, PM*

Recommended Reading



Thinking and Destiny-Harold W. Percival

Thinking and Destiny by H.W. Percival is one of the most remarkable books ever written. It deals with the age-old question, Quo Vadis? Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? He explains how our own thoughts become our destiny, as acts, objects, and events, in our individual lives. That each of us is responsible for these thoughts, and their affects on us and others. Percival shows us that what appears as “chaos” in our daily lives has a purpose and Order which can be seen if we will begin to focus our thinking, and begin Real Thinking, as outlined in his masterpiece. Percival himself acknowledges he is neither and preacher nor a teacher, but presents to us a cosmology based upon Intelligence. A Universe of Order and Purpose. No metaphysical book has ever presented the clear, concise,

information that is available in this book. Truly inspired and inspirational.

—Amazon.com, Recommended by Brother Al Matthews, PM

About nine months ago, a Masonic Brother sent an email which made reference to Harold W. Percival, and his various works, including his magnum opus, *Thinking and Destiny*. I've read a few of Percival's shorter works and I am just about to make the plunge and dig in on this very large tome. I urge you to read *Masonry and its Symbols*, which is essentially one chapter of *Thinking and Destiny*, and it was removed from the primary work to be published as a separate book.

Percival's concepts and descriptions of “reality” are not for everyone and some will undoubtedly find aspects of his ideas bizarre or absurd. However, I think that we Brothers, who have already demonstrated our willingness to maintain a pursuit of open consciousness, will find much of what Harold Percival conveys to be very inspiring and deeply meaningful. His conceptions expressed in words have, in my opinion, the potential to provide a lifelong means to implement what we “learn” in Masonry in a practical, day to day manner.

—Brother John Tolbert, PM

A PDF copy of Percival's *Thinking and Destiny* has been uploaded to San Marcos's website:

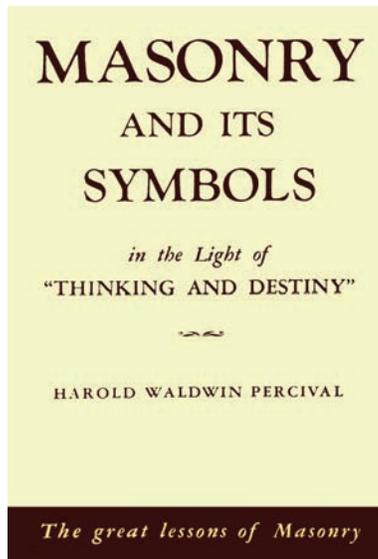
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Recommended Reading



Masonry and its Symbols-Harold W. Percival

Masonry and Its Symbols casts a new light on the age-old symbols, emblems, tools, landmarks, teachings, and the exalted purposes of Freemasonry.

This ancient Order has existed under one name or another long before the building of the oldest pyramid. It is older than any religion known today!

The author points out that Masonry is for Humanity for the conscious self in every human body.

Masonry and Its Symbols illuminates how any one of us can choose to prepare for the highest purposes of mankind Self-knowledge, Regeneration and Conscious Immortality.

Harold W. Percival (1868 - 1953) In 1893, and twice during the next fourteen years, Harold Percival had the unique experience of being conscious of Consciousness, a potent spiritual and noetic enlightenment. Percival stated, Being conscious of Consciousness reveals the unknown to the one who has been so conscious. These experiences enabled him to know about any subject by a particular method of focusing he called real thinking. Because his body had to be still while he engaged in this process, he dictated whenever assistance was available. It was through this method, and over a thirty-four year period, that Thinking and Destiny was written. Mr. Percival was genteel and modest for all his wisdom, a gentleman of incorruptible honesty and moral standards. He preferred to leave his personality in the background. It was because of this that he did not wish to write an autobiography or have a biography written. His intention was that the validity of the statements not be influenced by his personality. --I do not presume to preach to anyone; I do not consider myself a preacher or a teacher. Were it not that I am responsible for the book, I would prefer that my personality be not named as its author. The greatness of the subjects about which I offer information, relieves and frees me from self-conceit and forbids the plea of modesty. I dare make strange and startling statements to the conscious and immortal self that is in every human body; and I take for granted that the individual will decide what he will or will not do with the information presented.—H. W. Percival It has been stated that no one could meet Mr. Percival without feeling that they had met a truly remarkable human being. His works represent a towering accomplishment in addressing the true state, and potential, of the human.

—Amazon.com, Highly recommended

A PDF copy of Percival's *Masonry and its Symbols* has been uploaded to San Marcos's website:

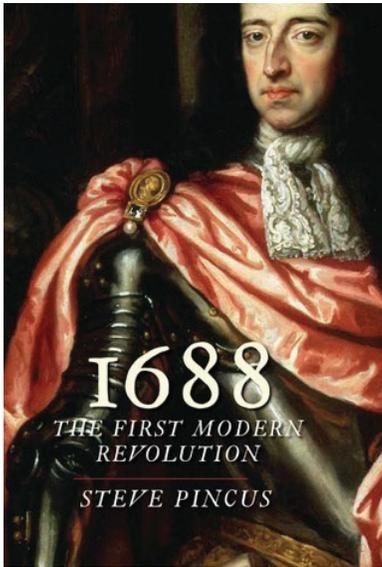
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Recommended Reading



1688: The First Modern Revolution-Steve Pincus

In this brilliant and provocative book, Steve Pincus creates a welcome stir that will enliven the study of the later 17th century. Its author is like his revolutionary Whig subjects: self-conscious and polemical about a desire to set things on a new footing. The result is a bracing, combative, highly stimulating argument, written in vivid and lively prose. The book is an ideal one to give to students, not only because Pincus enthuses about and revels in his subject in a way that is highly infectious, but also because he writes such a strongly argued and argumentative piece. Almost all the chapters court controversy and should provide ample scope for debate.

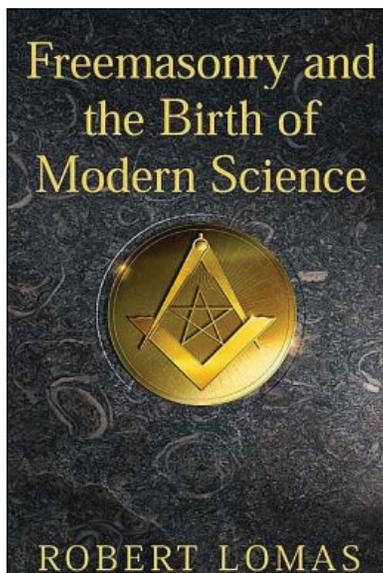
The overall argument is relatively easily summarised. The revolution of 1688 was the first modern revolution. Like more recent revolutions, it was violent, popular, and divisive. It was not an aristocratic coup or a Dutch invasion, but a popular rejection of James II's French-inspired, Catholic, absolutist modernisation of the state in favour of an alternative Anglo-Dutch vision that prized consent, religious toleration, free debate and commerce. By the mid-1690s this second, Whig version had triumphed. Britain had experienced a truly transformative revolution that had reshaped religion, political economy, foreign policy and the nature of the state.

—*Professor Mark Knights, University of Warwick*

To understand the men who created the Moderns Grand Lodge of 1717, it is essential to understand the social and political climate during the period preceding its formation. The turmoil existing over religious tolerance and monarchical control during the reigns of Charles II and James II provided the spark for revolution. Steve Pincus's book is a radical departure from previous works about the Glorious Revolution and explains much about the rise of the Whigs, the transfer of power from the Monarch to Parliament and the cultural revolution which ensued. Steve Pincus is a Professor of History at Yale University.

—*Brother Paul Bullock, PM, Highly recommended*

Recommended Reading



Freemasonry and the Birth of Modern Science Robert Lomas

In 1660, within a few months of the restoration of Charles II, a group of twelve men, including Robert Boyle and Christopher Wren, met in London to set up a society to study the mechanisms of nature. At a time when superstition and magic governed reason, the repressive dogma of Christian belief silenced many, and where post-war loyalties ruined careers, these men forbade the discussion of religion and politics at their meetings. The Royal Society was born and with it modern, experimental science.

This situation seems unlikely enough, but the fact that the founder members came from both sides of a brutal Civil War makes its origins all the more astonishing. *Freemasonry and the Birth of Modern Science* is a fascinating study of the turbulent political, economic and religious background to the formation of the Royal Society - an era of war against the Dutch, the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London. In particular, it reveals the hidden motives of one man, Sir Robert Moray, the key driving force behind the society, even though he was not a scientist. Building on his detailed experience of another organization and the principles on which it was based, Moray was able to structure and gain finance for the Royal Society. This other organization, the 'Invisible College' as Boyle called it, is known today by the name of Freemasonry.

Freemasonry and the Birth of Modern Science will make you reassess many of the key events of this period and will show how Freemasonry, supported by Charles II, was the guiding force behind the birth of modern science, under the cover of the Royal Society.

—Amazon UK, *Highly recommended*

parting shot



The Palette of Narmer

Menes is thought to be King Narmer, whose image we find on a slate slab from Hierakonpolis. The slab, or palette as it is called, was originally used as a tablet on which eye makeup—to protect the eyes against sun-glare and irritation—was prepared. The *Palette of Narmer* is an elaborate, formulized version of a utilitarian object common in the predynastic period. Its importance is great, not only as a historical document that records the unification of the two Egypts and the beginning of the dynastic period, but as a kind of early blueprint of the formula of figure representation that was to rule Egyptian art for some 3000 years. On the palette's back, the king, wearing the high, bowling-pin shaped crown of Upper Egypt, is about to slay an enemy as a sacrifice. Before him a hawk, symbol of the sky god, Horus, protector of the king, takes into captivity a man-headed land from which papyrus grows (a symbol of Lower Egypt). Below the king are two fallen enemies and, above, two heads of Harthor, a goddess favorably disposed to Narmer. The other side of the palette shows Narmer wearing the cobra crown of Lower Egypt and reviewing a pile of the beheaded enemy. In both cases it is significant that the king, towering over his own men and the enemy—by virtue of his superior rank—performs his ritual task alone.

—Helen Gardner, *Art through the Ages*, 1926