

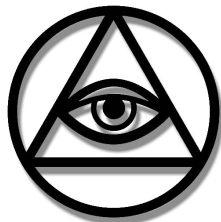
# ***Cults and Other “Gospels”***

***Recognizing and Understanding the Differences***



# ***Cults and Other “Gospels”***

- ♦ **Remember our definition of a “cult”**
  - ♦ **I've recommended six questions to ask yourself about any religious groups that seem at least potentially suspicious to you...**
    1. **Does the group have a prophet/founder who is revered by followers and claims to have *special* revelation from God or from angels?**
    2. **Are there authoritative writings or scriptures *in addition to* or *instead of* the Bible?**
    3. **Does the group view itself as the one *true* church, founded because the *true* gospel was lost in the early centuries of the church?**
    4. **What does the group believe regarding the Trinity? Is Jesus fully God, the second person of the Trinity? Is the Holy Spirit fully God, the third person of the Trinity?**
    5. **How does the group believe we are *saved*? By grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, or by faith plus good works?**
    6. **What belief does the group hold regarding life after death? What is its concept of Heaven and Hell?**



# ***Cults and Other “Gospels”***

- ◆ Introduction to Cults
- ◆ Peoples Temple
- ◆ Latter-Day Saints (“Mormons”)
- ◆ Jehovah's Witnesses
- ◆ Christian Science
- ◆ Scientology / Dianetics
- ◆ Unification Church (“Moonies”)
- ◆ **Freemasonry (“The Masonic Lodge”)**  
(NOTE: The Freemasons form and meet in “Lodges” or established groups of Masons—they do not meet *in* a lodge *house*, but *are* a Lodge)  
(NOTE<sup>2</sup>: Traditionally, Masons regularly meet in Masonic Halls or Masonic Temples)



# Freemasonry

- ◆ **Let's go through our six questions...**
  - ◆ **Who is their founder?**
    - ◆ **Hiram Abiff, King Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre**
      - ◆ **Long story short, Freemasonry was established at the building of Solomon's Temple in the Bible**  
(Note the details given in 2 Chronicles 2:3-14—  
“Solomon sent this message to Hiram king of Tyre: “... I am about to build a temple for the Name of YAHWEH my God... Send me, therefore, a man skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, and in purple, crimson and blue yarn, and experienced in the art of engraving, to work in Judah and Jerusalem with my skilled craftsmen...”  
Hiram king of Tyre replied by letter to Solomon: “... I am sending you Hiram-Abi [AKA “Hiram Abiff”], a man of great skill... He is trained to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, and with purple and blue and crimson yarn and fine linen. He is experienced in all kinds of engraving and can execute any design given to him.”)



# Freemasonry

- ◆ **Let's go through our six questions...**
  - ◆ **Who is their founder?**
    - ◆ **Hiram Abiff, King Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre**
      - ◆ **Long story short, Freemasonry was established at the building of Solomon's Temple in the Bible (Note the details given in 2 Chronicles 2:3-14 or in 1 Kings 7:13-14, which abbreviates it— “King Solomon sent to Tyre and brought Hiram [AKA “Hiram Abiff”] whose mother was a widow from the tribe of Naphtali and whose father was a man of Tyre and a craftsman in bronze. Hiram was highly skilled and experienced in all kinds of bronze work. He came to King Solomon and did all the work assigned to him.”) (This is why “Hiram Abiff” is often referred to in Freemasonry as “The Widow's Son”)**



# Freemasonry

- ◆ **Let's go through our six questions...**

- ◆ **Who is their founder?**

- ◆ **Hiram Abiff, King Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre**

- ◆ Long story short, Freemasonry was established at the building of Solomon's Temple in the Bible

- ◆ One night, as Hiram Abiff was leaving the nearly-completed Temple to go home, he was accosted by a series of three ruffians, who—each in turn—tortured him in order to learn the secrets of a “Master Mason,” including the rituals and signs that allow him to be so respected and revered

- ◆ Badly injured by the first two ruffians, Hiram was finally killed by the third, and they buried him in a shallow grave... where he was later found by other Master Masons

- ◆ King Solomon himself then ordered that the signs, symbols, and rituals of the Master Masons be hidden away so that no “uninitiated ruffians” may learn their secrets



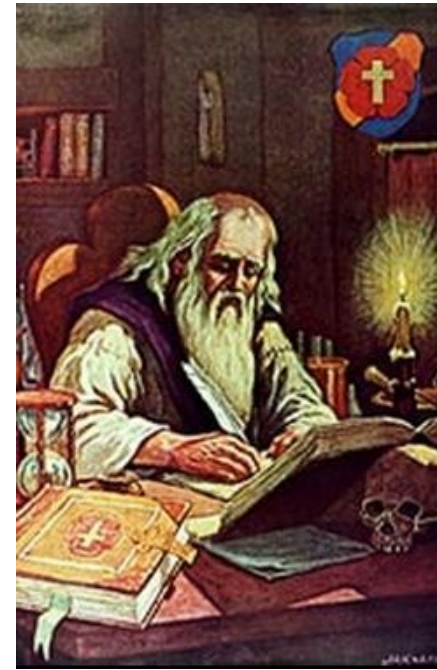
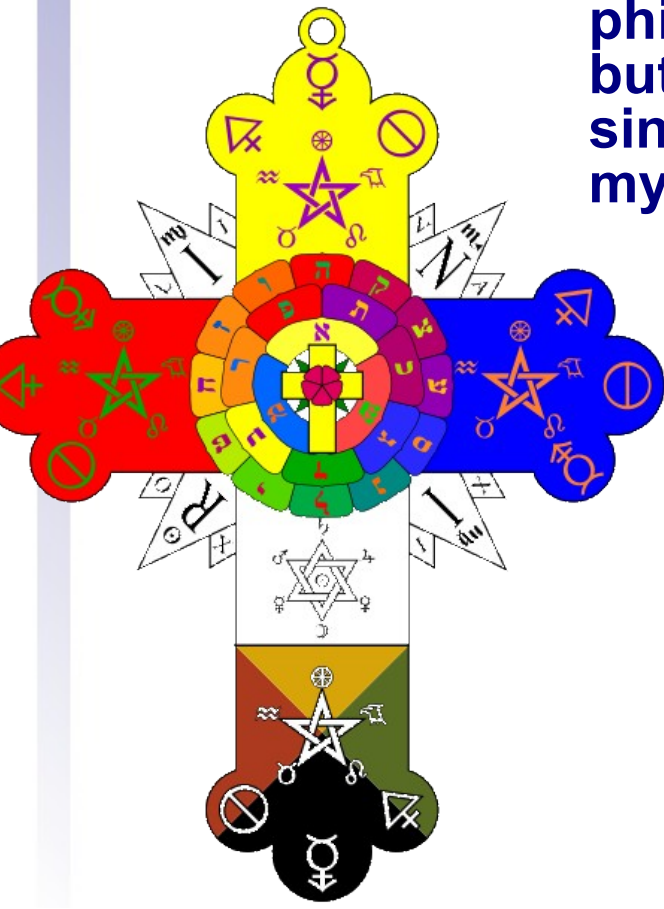
# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ♦ Of course, none of that ever actually happened—other than that there was a guy named Hiram
  - ♦ The rest was made up centuries later on by various guys who wanted to make their own secret clubs
    - ♦ For instance, the “Rosicrucian Order” (“Knights of the Rose Cross”) was created in the 17<sup>th</sup> century—based in part on the pre-Christian mystical philosophy of the Kabbalistic “rosy cross” symbol—but who loved to claim that they had been around since being founded by the 14<sup>th</sup> century German mystic, Christian Rosenkreutz

(whose name fortuitously means, “Christian Rose Cross,” who had travelled extensively to learn esoteric knowledge from the Eastern adepts... and who never existed prior to being invented in the 17<sup>th</sup> century)

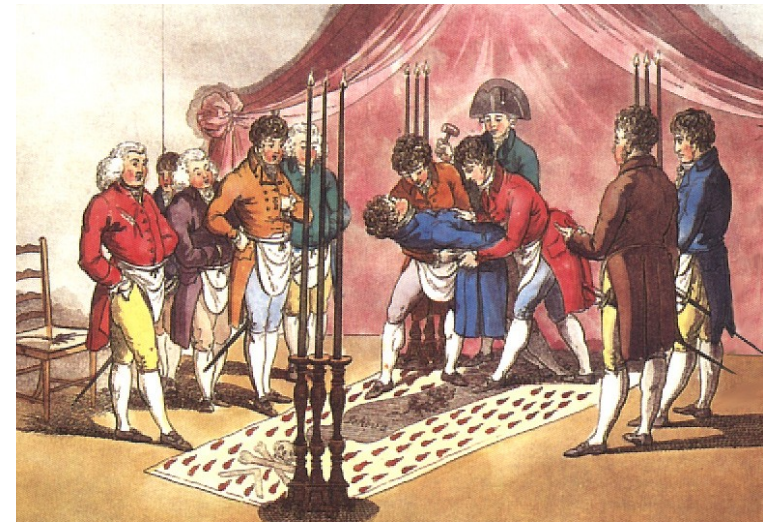


# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ Of course, none of that ever actually happened—other than that there was a guy named Hiram
  - ◆ The rest was made up centuries later on by various guys who wanted to make their own secret clubs
    - ◆ For instance, the “Rosicrucian Order” (“Knights of the Rose Cross”) was created in the 17<sup>th</sup> century
    - ◆ Freemasonry adopted several of the Rosicrucian symbols and rituals when it was created in 1717 when a bunch of rich British guys met together and formed it on a lark at the Goose and Gridiron Ale House in London
    - ◆ But, amazingly, that doesn't sound as prestigious as claiming direct descent from the great “Master Masons” who designed and built the Temple in Jerusalem, and whose “mysteries” have been “hidden” from the world for centuries... waiting to be discovered again by a bunch of drunken British frat boys





# Freemasonry

- ◆ **Let's go through our six questions...**
  - ◆ **Do they have any authoritative writings or scriptures *in addition to or instead of* the Bible?**
    - ◆ ***Not written down, per se...***
      - ◆ **“The Mason does not pretend to dogmatic certainty, nor vainly imagine such certainty attainable. He considers that if there were *no* written revelation, he could safely rest the hopes that animate him and the principles that guide him, on the deductions of reason and the convictions of instinct and consciousness. He can find a sure foundation for his religious belief, in these deductions of the intellect and convictions of the heart.”**
        - Morals and Dogma*
        - ◆ **“The authoritative source for Masonry is the *ritual*.”**
          - Bill Mankin, 32nd Degree Mason*  
(i.e.; the beliefs and statements actively expressed and committed to by initiates into Freemasonry during the various secret rituals that they take part in)



Morals and Dogma



Albert Pike



# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ They're supposed to take that “secretiveness” very seriously, though they are not a “Secret Society”
  - ◆ (Q) *Is Masonry a Secret Society?*  
(A) Masonry is not “a Secret Society” but it is “a Society with Secrets.” A secret society is one of which the membership's aims and ideals are unknown to the general populace. There is no secret about who is a Freemason.
  - ◆ (Q) *What discussion of Freemasonry is proper in the presence of Non-Masons?*  
(A) As little as possible, unless in answer to a direct and respectful question, the answer to which is not secret. Such questions as “How may I become a Mason?” or “When does the Masonic Lodge in this town meet?” or “What is the expense in becoming a Mason?” of course are answerable questions.  
—from the website of *The Electric Lodge No. 495 of Hamilton District “C” under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario*



# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ They're supposed to take that “secretiveness” very seriously, though they are not a “Secret Society”
- ◆ Then again, “If your wife, child, or friend should ask you anything about your invitation—as for instance, if your clothes were taken off, if you were blind-folded, if you had a rope tied around you neck, etc., you must always emphatically deny everything; you must conceal—hence, of course, you must deliberately lie about it. It is part of your obligation...”

—*Masonic Handbook*

HAND BOOK  
FREEMASONRY.  
RONAYNE.

EDWARD  
CHICAGO



# Freemasonry

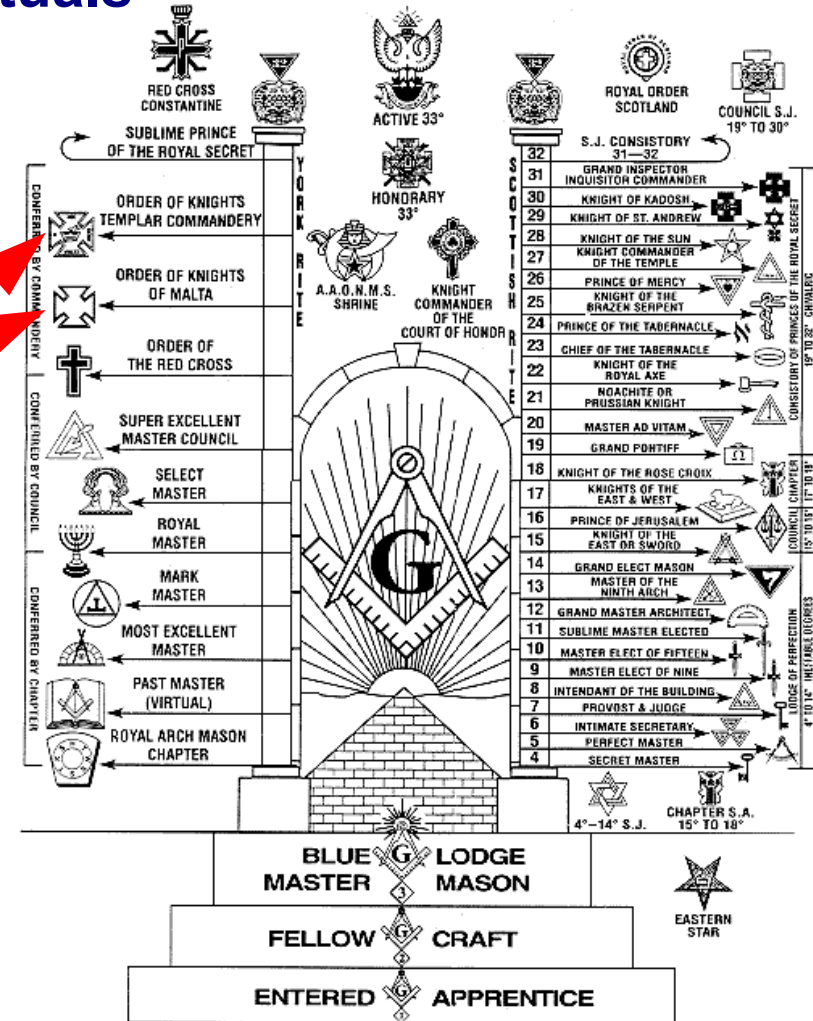


## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ They're supposed to take that “secretiveness” very seriously, though they are not a “Secret Society”
- ◆ See, Masons are initiated into ever-rising “degrees”

(NOTE: There are 33 “degrees” of Masons, each learning new symbols and rituals— but what they're called and how they're set up depends on whether your Lodge follows the “Scottish Rite” or the “York Rite” of Freemasonry)

(for instance, in the “York Rite,” many non-Christians often skip the “Knights of Malta” and “Knights Templar” degrees, since those require you to take up arms and defend the Christian faith, if necessary)

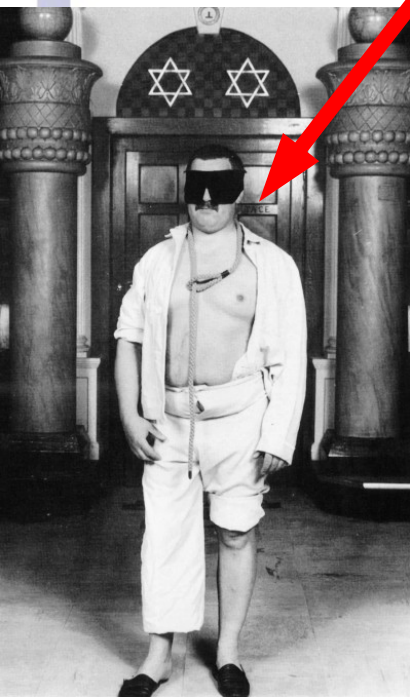


# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ They're supposed to take that “secretiveness” very seriously, though they are not a “Secret Society”
- ◆ See, Masons are initiated into ever-rising “degrees” and with each degree, you have a new initiation (usually requiring the initiate to be blindfolded, at least partially stripped, and lightly strangled with a rope around his neck—in a symbolic re-enacting of the murder of Hiram Abiff by the ruffians, due to his unwillingness to share the secrets of the Master Mason, no matter what they threatened)



# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ They're supposed to take that “secretiveness” very seriously, though they are not a “Secret Society”
- ◆ See, Masons are initiated into ever-rising “degrees” and with each degree, you have a new initiation, where you promise *never* to share the secrets...
  - ◆ “binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my throat cut from ear to ear, my tongue torn out by its roots, and my body buried in the rough sands of the sea, a cable length from the shore”  
—from the initiation to the 1<sup>st</sup> “Apprentice” degree
  - ◆ “binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my left breast torn open, my heart plucked out, and given to the beasts of the field and fowls of the air as prey”  
—from the initiation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> “Fellow Craft” degree
  - ◆ “binding myself under no less penalty than that of having my body severed in twain, my bowels taken out and burned to ashes, the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven”  
—from the initiation to the 3<sup>rd</sup> “Master Mason” degree



# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ They're supposed to take that “secretiveness” very seriously, though they are not a “Secret Society”
- ◆ See, Masons are initiated into ever-rising “degrees” and with each degree, you have a new initiation, where you promise *never* to share the secrets...
- ◆ Once you've become a “Master Mason,” you also have the opportunity to potentially become a “Shriner” focused on fun and philanthropy



Shriners are most famous for wearing distinctive fezzes and for supporting Shriners Hospitals for Children—a network of 22 non-profit medical facilities across North America that provide free medical treatment for children for burns, spinal cord injuries, cleft lips, and various orthopaedic conditions



- ◆ Here in Peoria, Shriners built the Old Mohammed Shrine Mosque in 1936 (to replace the original, 1909 building that had just burned down)
- ◆ Parades like Morton's annual Pumpkin Festival Parade often include Shriners driving around in their famous “tin lizzies” for fun



# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

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  - ◆ Shriners are most famous for wearing distinctive fezzes and for supporting Shriners Hospitals for Children
  - ◆ As part of *their* initiation, Shriners *also* promise never to share any of the secrets of Freemasonry
    - ◆ “in willful violation whereof, may I incur the fearful penalty of having my eyeballs pierced through to the center with a three edged blade, my feet flayed and forced to walk the hot sands upon the sterile shores of the Red Sea until the flaming Sun shall strike with a livid plague, and may Allah the god of Arab, Moslem and Mohammedan, the god of our fathers, support me to the entire fulfillment of the same”





# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ They're supposed to take that “secretiveness” very seriously, though they are not a “Secret Society”
- ◆ See, Masons are initiated into ever-rising “degrees” and with each degree, you have a new initiation, where you promise *never* to share the secrets...
- ◆ Once you've become a “Master Mason,” you also have the opportunity to potentially become a “Shriner” focused on fun and philanthropy
- ◆ To distinguish itself from run-of-the-mill Masonry, the Shriners emphasize an “Arabian” origin for their group (which started in 1872 in New York City)
  - ◆ Their website explains their symbol—

“The scimitar stands for the backbone of the fraternity, its members. The two claws are for the Shriners fraternity and its philanthropy. The sphinx stands for the governing body of the Shriners. The five-pointed star represents the thousands of children helped by the philanthropy each year.”



THE SHRINERS  
EMBLEM



# Freemasonry



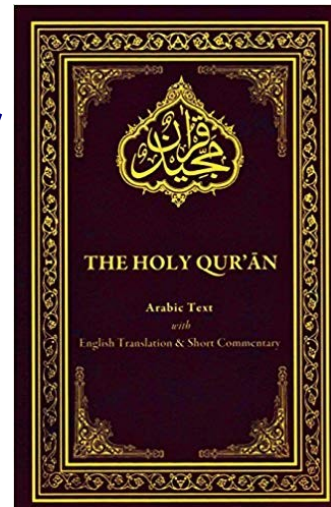
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  - ◆ Their website explains their symbol
  - ◆ Candidates for induction into the Shriners are greeted by a High Priest:

“By the existence of Allah and the creed of Mohammed; by the legendary sanctity of our Tabernacle at Mecca, we greet you.”  
(and a Qur'an sits open on their altar —because it's “cool” to be *exotic*...)



THE SHRINERS  
EMBLEM



# Freemasonry

- ◆ Let's go through our six questions...
  - ◆ Do they have any authoritative writings or scriptures *in addition to or instead of* the Bible?
    - ◆ *Not written down, per se...*
      - ◆ “The authoritative source for Masonry is the *ritual.*”  
—Bill Mankin, 32nd Degree Mason
      - ◆ “The prevailing Masonic opinion is that the Bible is only a symbol of Divine Will, Law, or Revelation, and not that its contents are Divine Law, inspired, or revealed.”

—Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia

(i.e.; though all of the Lodges in “Christian” countries have a Bible on their altars, it's *not* because the Bible is the **I**ruth, but rather because the Bible *points to* the **I**ruth—the key point of religion being our reasoned faith *itself*, not what that faith *actually is*)

(NOTE: In traditionally *Muslim* countries, Lodges have a *Qur'an* on their altars —which is why the open book on the altar is always referred to generically as a “Volume of the Sacred Law”)



# Freemasonry

- ◆ **Let's go through our six questions...**
  - ◆ **Does the group view itself as the one *true* church, founded because the *true* gospel was lost in the early centuries of the church?**
    - ◆ ***Sort of...***
      - ◆ **“Every religion and every conception of God is idolatrous, insofar as it is imperfect, and as it substitutes a feeble and temporary idea in the shrine of that Undiscoverable Being.”**

—*Morals and Dogma*

(NOTE: The most famous symbol of Freemasonry is the Compass and Square—the Compass and the Square themselves symbolizing the Craft of Masonry, and the “G” in the center symbolizing Geometry... which is pretty much the same thing as God, since God is just the undiscoverable and unattainable Ideal that built the universe like, y'know, a Master Mason would)



# Freemasonry

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  - ◆ **Does the group view itself as the one *true* church, founded because the *true* gospel was lost in the early centuries of the church?**
    - ◆ ***Sort of...***
      - ◆ **“Every religion and every conception of God is idolatrous, insofar as it is imperfect, and as it substitutes a feeble and temporary idea in the shrine of that Undiscoverable Being.”**  
—*Morals and Dogma*
      - ◆ **“Masonry makes no profession of Christianity... but looks forward to the time when the labor of our ancient brethren shall be symbolized by the erection of a spiritual temple... in which there shall be but one altar and one worship; one common altar of Masonry on which the Veda, Shatra, Sade, Zeda-Avesta, Koran and the Holy Bible shall at whose shrine the Hindu, the Persian, the Assyrian, the Chaldean, the Egyptian, the Chinese, the Mohammedan, the Jew and the Christian may kneel.”**  
—*from the “The Kentucky Monitor” Fellowcraft Degree*

KENTUCKY MONITOR  
— by —  
HENRY PIRTLE



# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ♦ It's often argued by Masons—like my Uncle Bill—that Freemasonry is thus not really a religion at all
  - ♦ (Q) *Is Freemasonry a Religion or has it a Religion?*  
(A) No to both questions. “A Religion” connotes some particular Religion, while Freemasonry is Non-Sectarian. Before its Altar, Christian; Jew; Mohammedan; Buddhist; Gentile; or Confucian may kneel together. If the question be phrased “Is Freemasonry religious?” then the obvious answer is that an Institution which begins its ceremonies and ends a meeting with prayer; which has a Holy Book upon its Altar; preaches the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, of course has a religious character, although let it be emphasized once again, is wholly non-sectarian. All Grand Lodges require their Initiates to express a belief and trust in a Supreme Being. No Atheist can become a Freemason.  
*—from the website of The Electric Lodge No. 495 of Hamilton District “C” under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario*



# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ◆ It's often argued by Masons—like my Uncle Bill—that Freemasonry is thus not really a religion at all
- ◆ Traditionally, four arguments are given why Freemasonry isn't actually its own religion—
  - 1) Freemasonry doesn't fit any accepted definition of a “religion”
  - 2) Freemasonry offers no plan of salvation to its members
  - 3) Freemasonry contains no theology, creed, confession of faith, or ritual of worship
  - 4) Freemasonry makes no use of religious symbols (as would be used by a church)
- ◆ So maybe it would be good to spend a second and look at each of these arguments, before we continue discussing Freemasonry as if it really were some sort of religious cult...



# Freemasonry

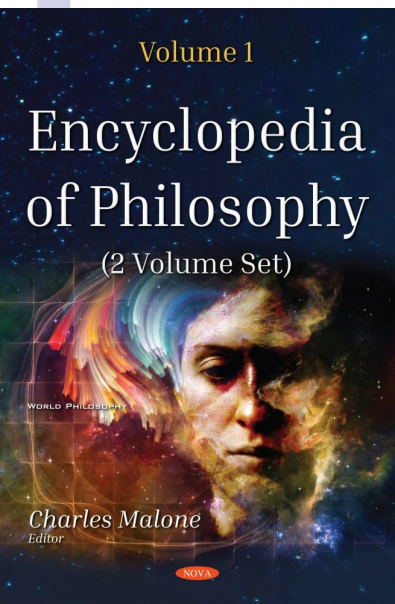


## Why Freemasonry is totally a religion...

### 1) Freemasonry doesn't fit any accepted definition of a "religion"

- ◆ "Religion: (1) a belief in a divine or super-human power... to be obeyed and worshipped as the Creator and ruler of the universe; (2) [an] expression of [that] belief in conduct and ritual"  
—*Webster's New World Dictionary*
- ◆ "Religions are often characterized by:
  - ◆ A belief in supernatural beings
  - ◆ A distinction between sacred and profane objects
  - ◆ Ritual acts that are focused upon sacred objects
  - ◆ A moral code that has supernatural sanction
  - ◆ Religious feelings aroused by sacred objects or ritual, and connected in idea with God or gods
  - ◆ Prayer
  - ◆ A particular world view that encompasses the individual's place within the world
  - ◆ The more or less total organization of one's life based on such a world view
  - ◆ A social group bound together by the above traits"

—*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*



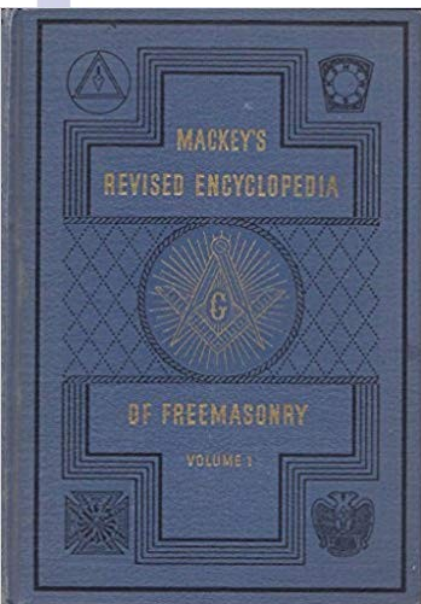


# Freemasonry



## Why Freemasonry is totally a religion...

- 1) Freemasonry doesn't fit any accepted definition of a “religion”
  - ♦ Note that Masons are expected to pray, such as, “Vouchsafe Thine aid, Almighty Father of the Universe, to this our present convention; and grant that this candidate for Freemasonry may dedicate and devote his life to Thy service, and become a true and faithful brother among us.”  
—*Standard Masonic Monitor*
  - ♦ Thus, “Freemasonry may rightfully claim to be called a religious institution.”  
—*Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*



# Freemasonry



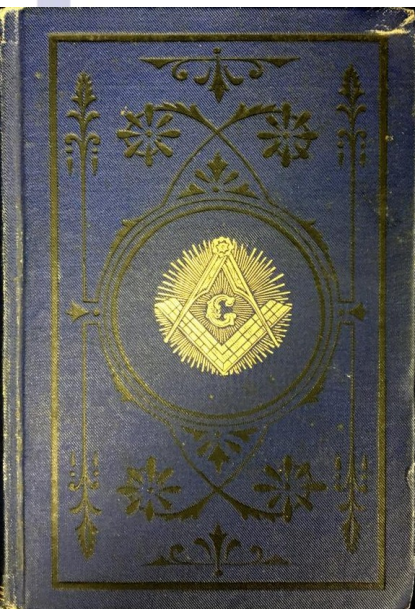
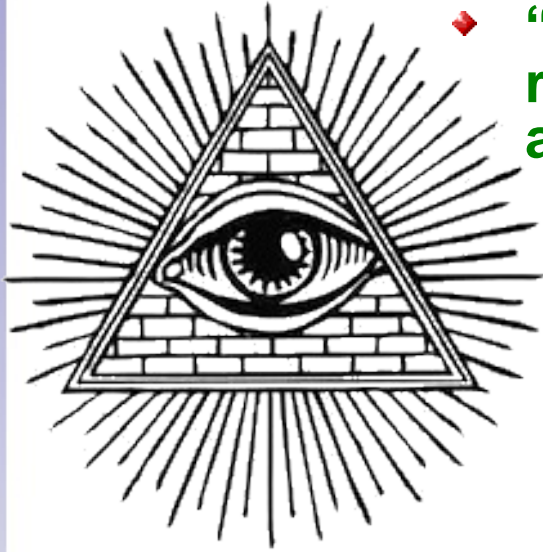
## Why Freemasonry is totally a religion...

2) Freemasonry offers no plan of salvation to its members

- ♦ “The All-Seeing Eye... pervades the inmost recesses of the human Heart, and will reward us according to our merits.”

—*Standard Masonic Monitor*

(i.e.; the “Eye of Providence” or the “Eye of God” who sees everything, and thus always knows how to properly respond to everything —an iconographic image that finds its origins as far back as ancient Egypt's “Eye of Ra” or the Middle Eastern “Hamsa,” intended to protect people from the “evil eye”)



# Freemasonry



## Why Freemasonry is totally a religion...

### 2) Freemasonry offers no plan of salvation to its members

- ♦ “The All-Seeing Eye... pervades the inmost recesses of the human Heart, and will reward us according to our merits.”  
—*Standard Masonic Monitor*
- ♦ “Let all the energies of our souls and the perfection of our minds be employed in attaining the approbation of the Grand Master on high, so that when we come to die... we gain the favor of a speedy entrance to the Grand Lodge on high, where the Grand Architect of the Universe forever resides, and where, seated at his right hand, he may be pleased to pronounce us upright men and Masons.”  
—*Standard Masonic Monitor*
- ♦ By wearing the white apron of a Mason, the deceased “was constantly reminded of that purity of life and rectitude of conduct so necessary to his gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge Above. He will now wear that apron forever as the emblem of the virtues it represents.”  
—*from the standardized Masonic funeral rites*

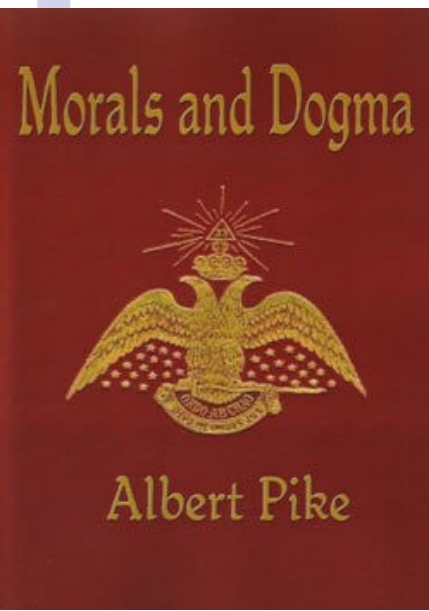


# Freemasonry



## Why Freemasonry is totally a religion...

- 3) Freemasonry contains no theology, creed, confession of faith, or ritual of worship
- ♦ “The Masonic test [for admission] is a Supreme Being, and any qualifications added is an innovation and distortion.”  
—*Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia*
  - ♦ “Freemasonry is far from indifferent toward religion. Without interfering in religious practice, it expects each member to follow his own faith and to place his Duty to God above all other duties.”  
—*Masonic Service Association of North America*
  - ♦ “Masonry says to its Initiates this: 'God is One; Unapproachable, Single, Eternal and Unchanging... There is but one God, infinite and incomprehensible, to whom no human attribute can be properly assigned, even when imagined to be infinite'.”  
—*Morals and Dogma*

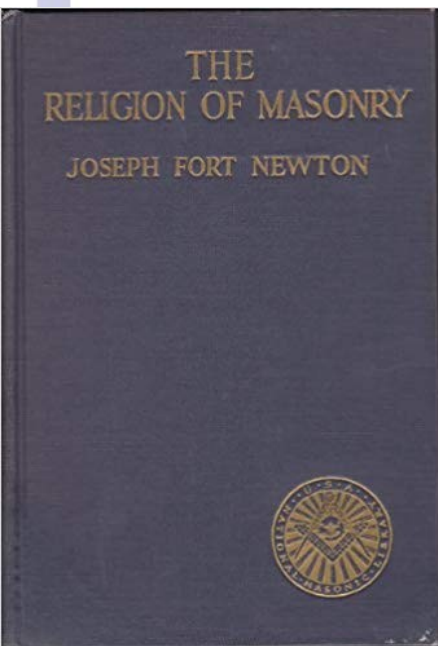


# Freemasonry



## Why Freemasonry is totally a religion...

- 3) Freemasonry contains no theology, creed, confession of faith, or ritual of worship
- ♦ “Everything in Masonry has reference to God, implies God, speaks of God, points and leads to God. Not a degree, not a symbol, not an obligation, not a lecture, not a charge but finds its meaning and derives its beauty from God the Great Architect, in whose temple all Masons are workmen.”  
—*The Religion of Masonry*
  - ♦ “Look at [Masonry's] ancient landmarks, its sublime ceremonies, its profound symbols and allegories—all inculcating religious doctrine, commanding religious observance, and teaching religious truth, and who can deny that it is eminently a religious Institution?”  
—*Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*



# Freemasonry



## Why Freemasonry is totally a religion...

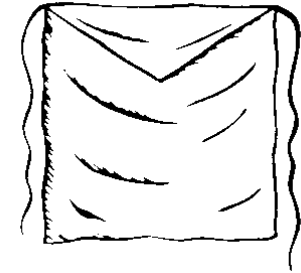
4) Freemasonry makes no use of religious symbols (as would be used by a church)



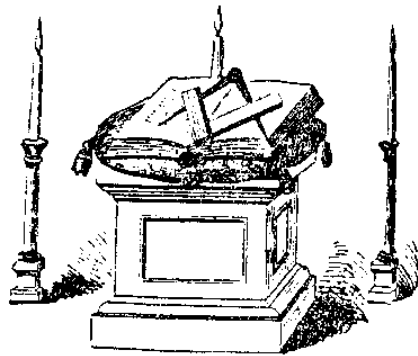
◆ The Compass and Square



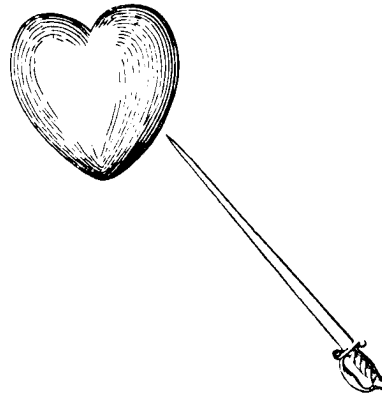
◆ The Shriner's Symbol



◆ The White Apron (AKA "Lambskin")



◆ The Altar and 3 Burning Tapers



◆ The Sword and the Naked Heart



◆ The All-Seeing Eye

◆ Freemasonry is totally a religion...



# Freemasonry



## Funky little teaching moment...

- ♦ And yes, the “All-Seeing Eye” (or the “Eye of Providence” or whatever you want to call it) on the dollar bill is a Masonic symbol—as well as being the reverse of the Great Seal of the United States
- ♦ But the seal was designed in 1782 by *non-Masonic* Swiss-American artist Pierre-Eugène Ducimetière and wasn't used as a *Masonic* symbol until 1797 (So it's not that it's an American symbol because a bunch of Masons were in charge and inserted their own symbolism into American history—it's a Masonic symbol because a bunch of Masons were in charge and retroactively inserted American symbols into their Masonic lore...) (There were at least eight Freemasons who signed the Declaration of Independence, including Ben Franklin, and 14 of our 44 Presidents—roughly 1/3 of our Presidents—have been Freemasons, including George Washington, Andrew Jackson, both Roosevelts, and Gerald Ford)

