

Masonic Secrecy

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(From the book "What Is Freemasonry," published by the Masonic Association of the United States)

THERE has been no attempt to conceal the purpose, aims and principles of Freemasonry. They have been discussed in detail in numerous publications. There are, however, some things which a member of the Craft will want to discuss only with his brothers, just as there are certain informations to which only members of the organization are rightfully entitled. Of these every Mason is well aware.

In this regard, *all* human groups and institutions have "secrets," or better still, private affairs which for good reason they do not want to be made public. Families have discussions on subjects which do not, and should not, concern their neighbors. Governmental bodies meet behind closed doors to resolve problems of state without publicity. Church councils convene apart from the general congregation, permitting a more direct approach to situations demanding prompt action. Civic organizations and committees assemble privately to draft plans which may not be made public for some time, if at all. In industry, boards of directors attack problems and formulate new approaches to their business ventures which are of no concern to their competitors. While all these things are done privately — "secretly," if you will — this is hard-

ly evidence that the subjects under discussion, or the resolutions made, are in any way unwholesome. Thus, if families, governmental bodies, church councils, civic organizations, and directors of industries have private matters which they wish to discuss away from the general public, it is only reasonable that a Lodge of Freemasons should want to meet behind tiled doors while peacefully engaged in the lawful pursuits of Masonry.

Secret societies do exist, to be sure, but Masonry is not among them. Unlike the actual secret orders of past and present, members of the Masonic Order proudly acknowledge their affiliation; their places and time of meeting are publicly announced; the installation of their officers is frequently a public affair, open to any one who wish to attend; and their aims and purposes are made clear so that all may understand them.

To those who issue their unwarranted barrages against Freemasonry as a "secret society" seem to be blissfully unaware of the public declarations which have been made on this particular issue by Masonic writers on many occasions. If they do have knowledge of these, then their stand must be interpreted as blind, bias or a resolute unwillingness to accept

the factual evidence which has been made available to them.

Along this line, it is interesting to note the comments of Masonic writers on the subject. Newton, in *The Builders*, one of the best known and most widely distributed books on the Craft states that:

"There is a common notion that Masonry is a secret society. . . . Thus it has come to pass that the main aims of the Order are assumed to be a secret policy or teaching, whereas its *one great secret is that it has no secret.*"

R. J. Buck, in *Symbolism or Mystic Masonry*, reemphasizes the point with the following:

"In its ritualism and monitorial lessons Masonry teaches nothing in morals, in science, in religion, or in any other department of human knowledge or human interest, not taught elsewhere in current forms of thought, or by the sages of the past. In these directions, it has no secrets of any kind."

W. O. Peterson puts it well:

"Music is a secret from the mute; Mathematics is a secret from the ignorant; Philosophy is a secret from the unscholarly mind. So Freemasonry is a secret from the uninitiated."

There are some things about Masonry which are difficult for the general public to understand, and thus they have become "mysteries."

One of these is aptly illustrated in *Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia*:

"There are, according to an old way of speech, certain 'mysteries of Masonry,' and each Mason knows what they are; one of the major mysteries among these is how, and oftentimes why, men of very large affairs, in high public office or at the head of great enterprises or institutions find the time to give from one to three evenings a week to Freemasonry; make it their secondary vocation, and sometimes almost a profession; hold offices year after year in one rite and Body after another, many of them becoming, and by dint of the hardest study, ritualists of an almost professional expertness."

To conclude this discussion, we find that what was supposed to be a secret is really not a secret at all. The true "secret" is now openly disclosed in "All Sons of One Father," *The Short Talk Bulletin*, November, 1959:

"And because Freemasons still share that hope and that confidence in the possibility of a universal tolerance and understanding, modern brothers still find in Masonry a compelling interest, an inspiring activity. In spite of persecutions, hydrogen bombs and the fears of atomic extermination, Freemasons insist that man has a deathless spirit with infinite potentials for good. That is their hope and their driving spirit. That is the 'secret' of a Master Mason."



Above all things let us never forget that mankind constitutes one great brotherhood; all born to encounter suffering and sorrow, and therefore bound to sympathize with each other.
—ALBERT PIKE