



**“THE ESSENTIALS OF FREEMASONRY
(al-khulāṣa al-māsūniyya)”
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF
Luwīs Shaykhū’s ARTICLE ON
FREEMASONRY¹**

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Rizqallāh b. Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Masīḥ b. Ya‘qūb b. ‘Abd al-Masīḥ Shaykhū² (al-Yasū‘ī) was born in 1859 in Mārdīn (in what is today the mainly Kurdish part of southeastern Turkey), and died in Beirut in 1927. He attended the Jesuit school in Ghazīr (in today’s Lebanon), joined the Monastic Order of the Jesuits in 1874, and adopted the name “Luwīs”. After his ordination he travelled to Europe (England, France, Austria) where he pursued further studies. He also travelled widely in the Middle East. In 1882, he took up a position at the newly founded University of St. Joseph in Beirut where he mainly taught Arabic literature, a topic on which he wrote extensively (e.g., cf. *The Arabic Manuscripts of Christian Writers, The Yields of Literature, Arabic Literature in the 19th Century*)³. During his term of office at St. Joseph he undertook further journeys to Europe, some of which lasted several years. From 1898 onwards, he founded and edited *al-Mashriq*, a journal mainly devoted to Christian issues⁴. This provided Shaykhū with a platform for propagating his views, especially his critical examination of freemasonry, a topic widely debated in intellectual circles in the Middle East of the time. Apart from this particular article, of which an annotated translation will be provided in the present paper, he also contributed further articles on the matter, including *The Well-Kept Secret in the Sect of the Freemasons*⁵.

The Essential of Freemasonry, emanating from a lecture held at the Faculty Club of the University of St. Joseph in Beirut, was also published in *al-Mashriq*⁶. It is essentially a synopsis of his much more detailed book *The Well-Kept Secret in the Sect of the Freemasons*. As scholars refer to Shaykhū’s views on freemasonry mostly from this article and not his book, it can be concluded that this compact text is much more widely known than *The Well-Kept Secret*. However as, to the best of my knowledge the text is yet to be translated into English, instead of providing a summary of the latter, I have decided to provide a translation of his article.

Luwīs Shaykhū’s article, as well as his book on freemasonry, can justifiably be classified as a “polemic”. As such, the text follows the subsequent criteria that constitute the working definition of an “ordinary polemic”⁷ used in this paper. A polemic is either an oral or a written argument which always involves two parties, the attacker and the attacked, although the party attacked need not necessarily be empirically real⁸. The party being attacked has the possibility of either offensively or defensively countering it. A polemic is always goal-directed. It usually contains the condemnation of the attacked, justified by the self-proclaimed authority of the attacker, as well as the “righteousness of the cause”⁹. For the sake of this

“righteous cause” it appears to be legitimate for the attacking party to withhold any argument that is in favour of the attacked, and elude empirically verifiable proofs¹⁰. A certain intensity is typical of polemical arguments, as is a metaphorical usage of language or a “stylization” of statements which are characterized by their stereotyped nature. The³⁵ metaphorical usage and the use of stereotypes will be subsumed here under the terms “stylistic means” or “rhetorical figures”¹¹. These figures can become “topoi” if they are cliché phrases, motives and images, fixed schemes of thought and argument, or stereotypes.

Originally, in classical Greek usage a “topos” indicated a place where arguments were held¹². However, the term has since undergone considerable change of meaning, and when we speak of “topos” today we usually equate it with the terms “stereotype” or “cliché”¹³. As such the term will be used in the present context. “Topoi” portray the social and historical reality of a certain time, and they can be either filled with positive or negative meaning¹⁴.

Shaykhū’s polemic fits neatly into the presented characterization of “ordinary polemics”. This text is an attack by the author on the group of Freemasons, respectively freemasonry. Shaykhū rhetorically asks them who they are, and he answers the question himself by using extracts of Masonic writings. Nevertheless, he practices considerable censorship which is not evident from the text itself, but which becomes obvious as soon as one gains background knowledge of the subject. A few examples will illustrate this. In the beginning of his article Shaykhū mentions a great number of Popes, and it seems as if he considered all Popes equally wise men. However, closer scrutiny reveals that he refers only to those who were prominent in condemning freemasonry. Pope Clement XIV (pontificate 1769-1774), however, is tacitly omitted, most probably because it was he who prohibited the order of the Jesuits in 1773¹⁵.

Shaykhū also omits various characteristics of freemasonry. He does not differentiate between the different rites (e.g. French Rite, Ancient and Accepted [Scottish] Rite, English Rite etc.), and creates thus the impression of freemasonry as a monolithic block. By this simplification of facts, as well as by the withholding of information, he creates the impression that Freemasons themselves do not know who they really are. Part of Shaykhū’s censorship is that he neither asks further questions nor double-checks; he does not investigate particular meanings at all, but simply states his own impression, though without making this explicit.

What about the legitimation of Shaykhū’s work? Firstly, he legitimizes his proceeding in the name of pure, i.e. unbiased historiography. In this context he refers to the works of Hermann Gruber (1851-1930)¹⁶ as a source of authority. The latter, however, was a Jesuit historian and had written extensively on freemasonry, but was probably not known widely enough among the Christians of the Middle East. Since Shaykhū, as a rule, does not give background information on the authors he quotes, it might well be that, because of Gruber’s anonymity in the region, he appears as a reliable

historian, and thus, as a source of legitimation of Shaykhū's viewpoints. Then, as various Popes have issued encyclicals in which they deal with freemasonry, it seems to be of utmost importance for a Catholic, especially a learned Catholic with a responsibility towards his country or his community, to follow these examples. Therefore, Shaykhū's text often³⁶ resembles what was said in the encyclicals of the Popes Clement XII (pontificate 1730-1740), Benedict XIV (pontificate 1740-1758)¹⁷, and also of Leo XIII (pontificate 1878-1903). Similar to Pope Clement XII and, later on, Pope Leo XIII, Shaykhū calls freemasonry a sect, because as such, he can condemn freemasonry and excommunicate its members. Then, in the beginning of his article he says that the world has changed for the worse during the last one and a half centuries, and that most people think that this was freemasonry's doing. Pope Leo XIII obviously thought the same, as can be seen from the encyclical *Humanum genus*, issued by him on April 20, 1884¹⁸. When Shaykhū speaks of the intention destruction of the religious, as well as the worldwide authority of freemasonry, we find that, in this respect, Pope Leo XIII agrees¹⁹, particularly with regard to the "introduction" of civil marriage and divorce, and the promotion of lay schools by freemasonry²⁰. Freemasonry, furthermore, is suspected of making use of anarchists, as well as socialists, which according to Shaykhū adds to its already damnable nature.

In the end of this dispute follows—as described above theoretically—the condemnation of freemasonry. The path towards this condemnation is seen to emerge almost inevitably in the course of Shaykhū's argument. The author examined every claim of freemasonry, and concludes that it is not what it pretends to be. Because of its evil actions, which he lists in great detail, Shaykhū points out that freemasonry, as a consequence, must logically be condemned.

What seems special about this polemic is that it also evinces an apologetic character whereby the author defends both the Catholic church and the monastic order of the Jesuits. This, however, is not as unusual as it might appear at first glance. According to Gunild Feigenwinter-Schimmel, such a defence or justification can be referred to as the "apologetic factor of the polemic"²¹. The fact that Shaykhū not only considers it necessary to defend the Jesuits, but also to emphasize that there is no similarity between the Jesuits and the Freemasons, probably results from the fact that Jesuits were sometimes compared to Freemasons. Helmut Reinalter, for example, holds that this kind of comparison is very common in "left-wing conspiracy theories"²².

As already indicated, Shaykhū broadly uses rhetorical figures. His language is vivid, he often employs metaphors to explain incidents, as with the French Revolution, spoken of as a volcano that has "erupted and is active until today". He also makes frequent use of pairs of antonyms, like "bright vs. gloomy", when describing "darkness" in which Freemasons assemble, and which clearly opposes the "brightness" of Christendom. By using rhetorical figures Shaykhū is able to create the intended atmosphere of horror for his audience. By repeating the above-mentioned over and over

again, stereotypes, and therefore, topoi take shape.

If we apply what has been outlined to the perception of the social and historical reality of the author in a polemic, then it would be safe to assume that the Jesuits and Freemasons—both originating from outside the Middle East—entered into a bitter competition for the same clientele after they were introduced to the region. The course of this competition was influenced by a number of factors. Firstly, Jesuits—like missionaries in general—have often not been as popular as they wished to be in countries with a Muslim majority, since they were regarded as a threat to Islam. Muslims would seemingly have feared to lose their cultural and religious identity because of the Christian missionaries, and as a consequence, they looked upon them as being agents of Western imperialism. Secondly, Jesuits appeared doubly menacing because of their success in educational matters. This is also a reason why Freemasons of a Middle Eastern background preferred secular schools to confessional ones²³. Such apprehensions were not entirely baseless, since the Jesuit schools and universities had a good reputation, as embodied by institutions such as the University St. Joseph in Beirut. Among other subjects, theology, medicine, pharmacy, Oriental Studies, jurisprudence, as well as engineering science were taught²⁴. Karim Wissa describes the fear of a French Mason in Egypt. In one of his yearly reports to the Grand Orient de France, Louis Deleschamps, Master of the Le Nil lodge, condemned the rising influence of the Jesuits and their schools in Egypt. He accused them of "infiltrating all strata of society, of buying land at very low prices through bribery, and of building religious schools throughout the country"²⁵. This quotation highlights the fact that the polemical attacks were not exclusively launched from Jesuits against Freemasons. The accusations of this Mason do not differ greatly from Shaykhū's own criticism.

Finally, some comments regarding the translation are requisite. While translating, the attempt was made to keep as close to the original Arabic text as possible. However, it goes without saying that in trying to produce a readable text in English, compromises had to be made, which means that the Arabic sentence structure had to be adjusted to the English one, and that, often, the subject (e.g. freemasonry, king) was mentioned instead of the "it" that Shaykhū actually wrote. The square brackets in the text indicate where an Arabic term was added for elucidation, or where the need was felt to explain the foregoing. All other brackets, as well as the omission marks and the inverted commas, were in the original text, unless indicated otherwise. Last but not least, the page numbers indicated in square brackets refer to the page numbers of Shaykhū's article.

Translation

A lecture that Father Luwīs Shaykhū, the Jesuit, held at the Faculty Club of St. Joseph. He added images of electric light [i.e. slides] to his presentation. The speaker emphasizes that the aim of his lecture is neither to slander anyone, nor to diminish anyone's good reputation. Therefore, he avoids all personalities [i.e. the mention of their names], despite his knowledge that most of the members [*dākhilīn*] of freemasonry only have a superficial

understanding [p. 326] of the sect. However, the research on freemasonry is theoretical and historical, and relies on the most trustworthy proofs and the strongest sources, which not even the Freemasons themselves reject.

Dear Sirs

Apart from the belief in the existence of God—strong and great is He and the confirmation of His sublime omnipotence as Creator of this wonderful world of ours, that consists of manifold created things, there exists no affair that deserves more respect of the intelligent [being], than this human society, which God fastened upon a system [*nizām*] that astonishes the mind and charms the heart. In it [i.e. human society] one can see the superior and the subordinates, the tall and the small, the exalted and the conventional, and all of them are connected by strong bonds, which nature itself has tied together. No sinful hand will ever be able to undo them, except if it commits a mean crime against the rights of a creature, the echo of which would resound in all human societies.

However, those who let their gaze roam about the history of the countries for roughly one and a half centuries will see, that their [i.e. countries'] circumstances differ immensely, or that they have turned their backs to bellies and their heads to ends. Kings with dignity, power and strength used to rule the communities. If we compare them with their royal predecessors, we do not find [any one] among them, who mistreated his people. This fact would place the newer kings on a lower level than the older ones. The House of the Catholic Bourbons ruled over the majority of the Latin kingdoms. After the renowned Louis XIV, Louis XV ascended [the throne], who, in spite of his weakness in the organisation of affairs, was kind to the people: an apostle of welfare to his subjects. He was succeeded by Louis XVI who was called “father of the people”. Spain had a high standing in the era of its kings Ferdinand V, Ferdinand VI, and Carlos III. Poland was powerful due to its king Augustus III, and Portugal owing to John V. As for Austria, it found in its queen Maria Theresa an intelligent woman with determination and prudence, and with a wide perception that gained her glory and superiority in the eyes of the kings, and love in the hearts of her fellow countrymen.

Those with a sharp intellect did not expect that these powerful nations and glorious kingdoms, which stood at the edge of collapse, would after all become ruined and destroyed.

Likewise, religious leaders were strong and venerable, their speeches were listened to, and [the people] subdued to [p. 327] their authority. We do not hold them capable of despotism and suppression, which [otherwise] would necessarily create distaste for them, or produce hate. [Please] reward the Roman Popes Benedict XIII and XIV, as well as Clement XII and XIII with [your] recollection. All of them were men of general superiority, who were not interested in the censorship of their critics. Nevertheless, during their time a devastating attack on religion was made,

which almost extinguished its traces had religion merely been a man-made enterprise.

After this violent flood that nearly inundated the world, the most reasonable thing to do is to ask oneself what was the reason for this³⁹ immense tragedy, and what caused this grave disaster, which we can still sense today because of its detrimental consequences; until the world becomes like a drunk person who cannot remain on his feet? Does this happen by coincidence, or shall we presume that a deviation occurred in what exists [*al-kawn*]? Then, does an effect [*ma'lūl*] appear without a cause [*'illa*]?

Certainly not. It is impossible in the moral world [*al-'ālam al-adabī*], as well as in the substantial one [*al-'ālam al-hayūlī*] that there should be an effect [*musabbab*] without a cause [*sabab*], or that there should occur an ordinance, that is without a preamble [*muqaddamāt wa-sawābiq*], by which existence [*wujūd*] is informed. There is clearly a relation between cause [*'illa*] and effect [*ma'lūl*], that is not interrupted [*ghayr munfaṣama*], in as much as it is correct to say that the effect springs from the cause, just as the fruit springs from the blossom and the blossom from the bud.

One may say, that we do not find a full explanation for the recent incidents [that have happened] since the French Revolution and the years that preceded it, except in a sect, which was founded sixty years earlier [i.e. sixty years before the French Revolution] in the shadow of England. From there, it [i.e. the sect] infiltrated all of Europe, and became stronger and more violent by all the means which were at its command, however much the means were sinful; until one day [when] its volcano erupted through the French Revolution. Then, the general European Revolution [i.e. the revolutions of 1847/8] succeeded it, and the volcano did not cease its fire until today. Only recently has it dropped [its] ashes over Portugal, as well as Turkey, and today, after years of tame dormancy, it threatens China and the Far East.

All of you, Gentlemen, members of the Masonic sect, should, according to general opinion, be credited with the responsibility for those horrible events. [But,] is this accusation unfounded, and is it not more correct to say, that freemasonry is innocent of the atrocities ascribed to it? Was it not blemished [*yatajannūna 'alayhā*] by crimes that do not originate from it, and [that] are only empty illusions and the imagination of some fanatics? As a historiographer, who is free from every [personal] intention, who bases his speech on nothing other than solid proof, and who accounts only what cannot be rejected, we have been invited to deal with the research on the matter [p. 328].

Tonight, this lecture will deal with freemasonry, firstly, regarding its essence [*kunh*], then, its aims, and after that, the means which it uses in order to attain that aim. Further on [we will be concerned with] its origin and history and, finally, with the result of its activities up to this day.

1. The Essence [*kunh*] of Freemasonry

The first question, which every sensible person will ask freemasonry is that it will present us its nature, and that it will explain the truth of its aims to us. The Gospel narrates that, when John the Baptist appeared beyond the river Jordan, he began to preach the baptism of penitence [*al-tawba*], and he baptized. The Jews sent priests to ask him: Who are you, what do you say about yourself, so that we may return the answer to those who sent us? Do you, Gentlemen, know the answer of John, who was full of wisdom and humbleness ?

Today we also ask the followers of the Masonic sect: Who are you, what do you tell us about yourselves and about your society? Let us hear what the masters of this sect in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent [*Bilād al-Shām*] wrote in this respect, so that we can examine its depth, and compare it to what the Masons have written in their official publications. Below follows what is said in a book, that was printed in Egypt in 1910. It is entitled *What is Freemasonry and Who is the Freemason*²⁶. Writing [this book], Muḥammad S'āid al-Marāghī²⁷, who reached the 18th degree [*daraja*]²⁸, says (p. 14):

'Freemasonry is a humanist method that aims at the reunification [*jam' shaml*] of the human race within the confines of humanity [*ḍimna siyāj al-insān al-kullī al-iḥtirām*]. The Mason is the driving force behind the realisation of this method, as well as its support. Freemasonry in its own view and characterization, as already discussed, is built on three pillars, which are liberty, fraternity and equality²⁹. The author then repeats this characterization in different ways, which [however] do not bring about clarification, as for example: 'Freemasonry is the right and sincere work for the reunification of the human peoples, and the unification of the human race under a law of general loyalty, that rests upon the bond of kinship.' But then he says literally (p. 15): 'The Freemason's duty is the unification of the human race within the confines of [the whole] humanity, which is the substance of the sound truths of refinement [*nash'a*].' He also says (p. 16): 'Freemasonry is a successful method for the transmission of the rights of human kinship, the unification of the human peoples, and the reunification of their race in a bulwark of the venerable humanity', and this is everything he plays on his pandore [*ṭunbūr*³⁰ readable i.e. he plays the same tune over and over again], [p. 329].

Therefore, let us ask another Mason. Maybe we can derive from him what will quench our thirst for knowledge about freemasonry. Listen to what one of the leading figures of freemasonry, and one of its great scholars in our country, Shāhīn Bēk [i.e. Bey] Makāriyyūs³¹, author of numerous publications, founder of many lodges, honorary member in others, and advanced on the summit of its degrees - which is the 33rd degree-literally says in his book, entitled *The Humanity of Freemasonry*³² (p. 8):

'Freemasonry is a society, the aim of which is to encourage the people to love each other and to strive for wisdom, moral excellence, commitment to humanity, and the implementation of good actions. It has two princi-

ples, freedom of the mind [*ḍamīr*] and human solidarity Therefore, every gracious companion of mankind loves it; no one embraces it, who ignores its essence, or who has an inflammation of the eye, or whose heart is straying, and who cannot endure the sight of the light of moral excellence' - these are his words. We ask God to withdraw this⁴¹ inflammation from our eyes, and that straying from our hearts, so that we can bear this dazzling light that our gaze cannot endure.

Shāhīn Bey came back to the [issue of] defining freemasonry in numerous of his writings. However, he did not stick to a single opinion, but rather was very inconsistent. In his book *The Mysterious Secrets of the Masonic Society*³³ he says (p. 6): 'Freemasonry is a moral and charitable society that has been called into being by an elite of meritorious men, whichever faith or denomination they may belong to, and whichever difference of positions or opinions there may be.' What he [also] says, is that freemasonry does not admit 'who does not believe in God or the immortality [*khulūd*] of the soul, and who does not submit to his government and obey its laws'. [He also uttered] other [things], the lies of which you will see [in due course].

Elsewhere in the aforementioned book he states (p. 4): 'Freemasonry is a moral society, that took upon itself the duty of humanity and the support of religion through its literature, the reconciliation of the peoples, and the illumination of the minds'.

Moreover, in his book *The Genuine Truths in the History of Operational Freemasonry*³⁴ (p.17) he informs us that 'its [i.e. freemasonry's] aim is the abolition of aims and taking sides in religions, [the abolition of] forms, crafts [*al-ḥiraf*], centres, and patriotic sentiments, and the destruction of hatred The entire world [is to] be turned into one family, in which there is no discrimination between its members, and no separation'. There he also says, that it is in freemasonry's nature 'to put in order what is bad of the doctrines of religions by teaching them love', [and] so [on] and so [forth].

As far as the *Masonic Constitution*³⁵, printed in Beirut in 1881, is concerned, it is the French *Masonic Constitution*, which was translated into Arabic; and it says (p. 6): 'Freemasonry is a path [*ṭarīqa*], the purpose of which is love for humanity [p. 330], wisdom and welfare, and its subject matter is the wish for truth, the study of the entirety of custom [*adab*], sciences and crafts [*ṣanā'ī'*], as well as the implementation of good actions'.

One can see from these definitions, that freemasonry is controversial, and that it vacillates in the explanation of its condition; one reveals of it what others keep secret. Sometimes they say, that it is a charitable society, and sometimes, that—among other meritorious goals—its aim is to spread the sciences, and to reject ignorance. To prove this confusion it is sufficient [to say], that Freemasons [themselves] do not know how to explain their [own] community and, therefore, pursue the whitewashing of the black slave girl, and attribute all good to her. What if we agreed with their state-

ments without contemplating, and put our seal on their characteristics without differentiation (What do the people call the blind) ?

It is absolutely out of the question that we accept their claims, as their statements have not been accompanied by proof. The first of⁴² the ordinances of freemasonry that disquiets us, is that it conceals itself from the eyes of the people, and hides in the corners of darkness. Its members assemble only in gloomy night, and in houses which they make inaccessible by guards. Only the one who knows the secret word of admission can enter. When they enter, they suppress with all endeavour the talks [that take place] between them. And [even] when their dearest friend asks them about what happens in these secret meetings, they keep silent about the answer, and make him swear that he does not ask them about it, and they remind him of the binding oaths, which they make him swear on the day of his joining the sect, [namely] that he, 'if revealing these secrets to anyone, agrees with his beheading, the removal of his tongue, and the hanging of his body in a Masonic lodge, to become a warning for those entering'.

Does God impose upon an intelligent person to take these oaths, so as not to let him uncover actions of a charitable society that, as they say, has no aims other than the pursuit of all good? Or, do the Freemasons shut the novice's mouth with these seals in order to preserve in his heart the knowledge, with the propagation of which among the entire humanity the brethren are entrusted? It is this, which is not possible to approve of, and it is unavoidable to say that there is more in it than meets the eye.

When Lord Jesus [*al-sayyid al-Masīh*] was enchained during Passion Week [*jum'at al-ālām*] and brought to the house of Annas [*dār Ḥānān*], and when this rabbi questioned him about his teaching, the Lord [*rabb*] found no answer that was more satisfying for his defence than to tell him: 'I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: Behold, they know what I said'³⁶.

As a matter of fact, Lord Jesus incited his disciples to propagate what they heard from him, and he [p. 331] said to them: 'What I tell you in the dark, utter it in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops'³⁷, and thus he warned them about the covered and the hidden, saying: 'For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God'³⁸. It is as if the Lord [i.e. Jesus] anticipated and disapproved of freemasonry, saying that 'men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil'³⁹.

And what we are saying regarding the Christian religion [*al-diyāna al-masīhiyya*] can equally be said for the religion of Islam [*al-dīn al-islāmī*], which declares its doctrines openly, and does not hide them from mankind. Likewise are the teachings of the Jewish religion [*al-dīn al-yahūdī*], which is enshrined in the books of Moses and the Prophets; there is nothing in them, that one should be ashamed of, or that is hidden from

sight.

It is as if I heard the voice of some writer from amongst the Freemasons who challenges me, saying: 'Do the Jesuits not have secret teachings, [too,] and why [then] do you blame the Masonic sect because of the⁴³ concealment of its secrets ?'

Gentlemen! Some of the enemies of our monastic order, who published a booklet in Beirut, entitled *The Mysterious Secrets of the Jesuits*⁴⁰, resorted to this rebuttal. It is a book that was written 200 years ago by one of the hypocrites, who copied the sacred laws of our venerable founder Ignatius in it, and in the booklet he accuses us of some kind of hypocrisy. However, when this book was published without giving the name of this adulterator, the Apostolic See and all bishops of Europe banned it with interdiction, and defended the honour of our monastic order. Even our [i.e. the Lebanese] Sunnite government rejected it, as soon as it was translated into Arabic, and secretly printed. One Egyptian writer who slandered us with this literary work, just placed the bet that we hand over to him 10'000 Francs if he succeeded in proving that one of the Jesuits had written this book, and, in case he should not be able [to prove this,] he imposed, as a condition on himself, the payment of only 100 Francs to a hospital. However, we silenced him as he lost the bet.

Similar to this, in the past year the clergy and the intelligentsia stood up and announced, that in the story of the wandering Jew, which the Freemasons had copied in order to harm our society, there is not a single true letter of our works or teaching. Whoever wishes additional explanation may consult the *Book of the Exhibition of Opinions in the Story of the Wandering Jew*⁴¹, which was disseminated by one of our writers.

Where is the monastic order of the Jesuits? Our churches are open to all believers, our schools consider all students, and they live with us day and night. Our society can be entered [p. 332] by whoever wishes to, and sometimes, someone who has entered it, takes his leave. It is absolutely out of the question that anyone of them would stand up and blame our monastic order of an evil action. How often were our schools raided, and our private papers checked, just as in Portugal lately; but they were not able to find even a trace of the protected secret in it [*fa-mā amkanahum an yajidū baynahā mā tustunshaqu minhu rā'iḥat al-sirr al-maktūm*] !

However, the author of the *General History of Freemasonry*⁴², Jurjī Afandī [i.e. Efendi] Zaydān⁴³, concludes (p. 24): 'The missionary activity of the Christian religion would not have been endorsed, had it not followed ways of secret teaching. In the beginning of its formation it resembled more than anything else a secret society, and it did not deliver its secrets, except to those who demanded them. This proves the intensity of the new Christians' desire for obtainment [of these secrets]'.
⁴² ⁴³

We responded by saying: 'You are mistaken, Right Honourable Efendi, and you thought badly of the Christian religion'. What difference [is there]

between the secrets of the Christian religion and the secrets of freemasonry, and what difference between wine and vinegar?! The secrets of the Christian religion were established for life, whereas your secrets were established for death. The church did not accept anyone among its adherents [*awlādiḥā*], who did not agree with its teachings, not⁴⁴ because its teachings were unknown, but rather because they exceed the comprehension of the uninitiated. If the teachings exhibited themselves to them [i.e. the uninitiated] immediately, without readiness, their virtuous meanings would remain incomprehensible to the new Christians. The Lord did not recommend 'do not give dogs what is holy; and do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot'⁴⁴. This is the way, in accordance with which the church proceeds until today in all countries of the idolators, who will not touch baptism, [at least] not until after instructions and incessant teaching. This matter was urgent and more necessary in the early days of the church, when the idolators suppressed the Christian religion, and subjected to torture and death whoever did not serve their idols, or whoever taught what was opposed to their superstitions and atrocities. Common sense called upon the Christians not to expose their souls to dangers without [good] reason. Nevertheless, when the idolators demanded from them [the revelation of] their religion in front of a judge, they declared their beliefs openly and without shame. Are the secrets of freemasonry like this?

Freemasonry has rituals, degrees, strange uniforms, touches, paces, signs, methods and intimidations in its numerous degrees, from the first degree to the 33rd⁴⁵. We pray to God [and ask], regardless of what the connection between all these rituals and aims, which the sect maintains, may be- and it [i.e. freemasonry] is, according to its own statement, a charitable society-: what is the need for all these rituals? Certainly, if the priest prays or celebrates a religious ceremony, he therefore wears vestments relevant to it, but then, freemasonry is not a religious society.

If they [i.e. the Freemasons] say, that these are honorary decorations, we reply that the decorations of honour are given to those, who are entitled to receive awards in countries [p. 333]. Freemasonry claims that it is not a political society, so how come it bestows these marks of honour? Besides, a lot of these decorations point to controversy, conflict, intimidation and threat, like daggers, spears, swords, hammers, skulls, fortresses and towers⁴⁶. And if other symbols [*nuqūsh*] are found in freemasonry, by which they hint at meanings, then, they do not have any relation with its outward signs, like the beehives, the crosses, the two columns Jakhin [*jākīn*] and Boaz [*bu'ūz*]⁴⁷, the sun, the moon, the stars and the tongues of fire [i.e. flames]. All of these are symbols that are explained to those entering freemasonry, but, even from a charitable and moral point of view, the explanation is far from what is immediately understood. It calls the attention to their talk about the rejection of religion and morality, as well as the glorification of the powers of a brutish nature⁴⁸, the like of which is very disgraceful.

Furthermore, the bestowal of these decorations and distinguishing marks of freemasonry [to a member] is accompanied by questions, answers,

teachings, and instructions, that are definitively not in conformity with the claimed aims, that is, good deeds, and the dissemination of education.

It was said, that also in church things which are similar to these ordinances and these ranks [*rutab*] existed. We reply that the ecclesiastical ranks, the instructions and teachings of the church are all significant, strong, and humble. They were elaborated by the most meritorious and intelligent men, [then,] their virtue increased, and they became rooted in divinity. They took all these instructions from the sources of the holy books or the prophetic traditions [*al-taqālīd al-rasūliyya*]. And it is mainly prayers, which elevate the heart [closer] to God, and studies [*mudhākārāt*] that imprint in the mind of the believer the exaltedness of the Creator, and remind him of the rewards, warn him of the punishment, ask of him the benefactions of his Lord, and ask His pardon for his sins. Where is all that in the degrees of freemasonry, which usually is a ridiculous travesty that a sane man cannot listen to without thinking little of its adherents; he [i.e. the same man] laughs heartily at the triviality of their minds. If we got some [of its] representatives to specify [only] one part of this idle talk before you, surely, you would see the dim-wittedness of the mind, who carried it out. We have lined out some acts [*fuṣūl*] in the book *The Well-Kept Secrets*, accompanied by a section of pictures: Freemasonry relative to the first degrees, a picture of a lodge with its garments, the two mysterious columns, the interior of the lodge, and what kind of symbolic inscriptions and secret instructions it contains that are imposed upon the disciple, and so on.

The ceremonial inauguration of an apprentice [*ṭālib*] of freemasonry comprises many tests which they call "travels". They demonstrate possible dangers to him, sometimes, they accuse him of weakness, sometimes, they lead him up a ladder, the steps of which are not steady, and at times, they make him feel the blade of the sword on his bare chest, or they make him believe that they are opening his veins. Sometimes, they make him enter a dark room which contains intimidating expressions [*'ibārāt*], among these, lifeless skeletons and everything else that may influence the imagination [p. 334] of the apprentice, so that he experiences the reach of freemasonry, and its power over him. One of our Damascene companions assured us, that he knew an eminent Christian of his country who demanded admission to freemasonry, and when the mentioned sufferings were imposed on him he was influenced by them, and whatever the influence was, he spat blood and died after fifteen days. Are you also of the opinion, Gentlemen, that freemasonry, which created these tests, is a charitable society or a moral one? Or is it not more likely, that it resembles the story of the one, about whom Lord Jesus had said 'that he was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth', and [moreover] the 'father of lies' (John 8:44).

When we pursue after [what has been said so far] the inauguration of the one achieving the degree of fellow [*rafiq*], and then the one in the degree of master [*ustādh*], then our conviction grows, namely, that freemasonry is neither a charitable society nor a moral or a scientific one. Rather, it is a

practical society that does not aspire to something like the well-being of humanity, because if it intended that [i.e. the well-being of humanity], it would not have adopted these means, which go far beyond its pretended aims - as far as the Pleiads. The tests of the master degree resemble the ostensible assassination of a man whom the Freemasons call⁴⁶ Hiram⁴⁹. They claim that they are called upon to take vengeance for his assassination. [In this connection] there exists a ridiculous act, about which even a mother [who was] bereaved of her child, would laugh. We wished that a theatre troupe could feature its performance, so that you could hear the story of that laughable victim [man], and see the grief of the Freemasons about him. You would [moreover] witness their movements and their idle talk about his coffin, until they raise [from it] one of their brethren, who lay in it, and [in it] placed instead of him an aspirant [*ṭālib*] to the master degree, so that he may taste in that coffin the flavour of death, yet, that he may become convinced, that he comes into freemasonry's hands like a dead body, with which they can play however they want to⁵⁰.

I wish I knew, whether there is a charitable society in the world that imposes similar tests on its members, in order to fill their hearts with compassion for the poor! Or is there a scientific society that reveals the mysteries of its sciences to its students [only] after having demanded from them submission to similar rites? Would it not be more appropriate for us to say that in its heart the sect hides something different from what becomes manifest, and that it behaves hypocritically in its activities and deceives the inexperienced, in order to let them fall into their net?

Yet, [what has been said so far] concerns [only] the first three degrees of freemasonry. But how many evil aims are there, which show a clearer view and a more exciting picture, if we followed the remaining in succession, until we reached the 33rd, and saw how they make their companions drink the cup of its poison drop by drop, until the Freemason is shaped by its morals, is permeated with its soul, and lives its [way of] life? In what we have said [so far], there is enough to prove our supposition, namely, that freemasonry is neither a charitable society nor a scientific group [p. 335].

Besides, we have their laws in our hands, printed in Paris in 1893, their *Constitution*, printed in Beirut in 1881, and the general statutes of regulations of the Scottish rite, translated into Arabic as *The Universal Philosophy of Ilyās Bey Mansī*⁵¹, printed in Egypt in 1890. We do not find in any of these materials something, from which could be deduced that freemasonry wants to work for welfare, except of some charity dedicated to its victims. In that, however, lies no big virtue, because by way of its deeds it [only] serves its [own] benefit, and no other.

Moreover, we do not [at all] acknowledge freemasonry with one single charitable enterprise in the Fertile Crescent and Egypt which it has carried out, or where it bore the expenses. One of the journals of Beirut (*al-Kawthar* 1:173) attempted to refute us in that, and it argued that freemasonry in Beirut supported the project [brought forth by] the tuberculosis

hospital, to diminish the afflictions of those who came down with this disease. We posed the question to everyone, who was able to teach us something about this project, in order to praise it, and the concluding answer was that [although] some Freemasons have [indeed] considered this affair, their thought remained in the confines of [mere] intention. The dream is measured with what we see of dozens, yet even hundreds of charitable religious societies, hospitals, orphanages, clinics, and homes for the elderly in all the cities of the East, which the monks and nuns, and the followers of charity among the laymen support. [Yet, already] when we confine our look to Beirut alone, we do not find a single quarter [of the city] devoid of these splendid projects. Who of us does not know the society of Saint Manṣūr de Paul and its members, who are compassionate with all [those who are] suffering? They return them [i.e. the ones suffering] to their cottages, and meet their needs, [they do] whatever is in their capacity. Every Mother Superior serves the sick, like those beloved nuns, three of whom died lately in the service of the plague-infected. On the day of the last feast of Saint Joseph we saw a number of young men from our school, who competed [with each other] in the service of the elderly. Freemasonry shall report to us every inch of its charitable works! But even if it wished, we would give proof, that it is a fierce enemy of these projects. It suppresses them, wherever its people sit in a council of authority. Just [remember what] they did in France, where they closed a large number of the nuns' hospitals, or handed them over to the hands of their workers! It did not take them long before these [hospitals] were in bad conditions, until the doctors, who had returned to their religion, did personally hand in requests to the masters of the matter to retrieve the monks and nuns. Furthermore, the missionary community was able to reinstall the hospital of the divine monk Saint John for the mentally ill. The latest news from Portugal say that, due to a Masonic decree, 50'000 of the sick and poor—may they be blessed and comforted—whom the monks had accommodated and supported, [p. 336] met their fate and saw death after the Freemasons forcibly closed the shelters and asylums, which the masters of religion had opened to ease their pain. Doctor Séverin Equère⁵² informed us, that ten percent were buried in lay hospitals in Paris before their natural death, among them were those, who had [agreed on having] their bodies handed over to the anatomists, and they woke up from their sleep under their [i.e. the anatomists'] scalpels!

All these pieces of evidence leave no doubt that freemasonry is not a charitable society [at all], and just as there is no effect in its works, there is no effect in its scientific institutes. We possess an official list, named *Mīnirvā* (Minerva), which contains the description of all the faculties, colleges and astronomical observatories that exist on earth. In this list, not a single scientific institute is mentioned, that is supported by freemasonry. We do not count, however, those lay schools which reject religion and which freemasonry supported, because it [freemasonry] does not spend its [own] budget on them, but the budget of the country. And freemasonry is generous with the money of others.

2. The Truth of Freemasonry and its True Aim

Hence, how do we characterize freemasonry after we stripped off its borrowed garments? What can, closest to the truth, be said about it, is that it is an organized army.

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An army, as is well known, consists of commanders, officers, and soldiers in consecutive ranks, like a chain that connects its links with each other. The lowest leads to the middle one, and the middle to the highest in firm succession, and the army's power is based on this. The army has its uniforms, its distinguishing marks, the differentiation of its strata, and its weapons. It has the military training that instructs the special strategies of war, [i.e.] the knowledge of the varieties of attack and defence, and all the military manoeuvres. Thus, it achieves due preparation for the protection of the fatherland [*waṭan*], and thereby, invasions of the enemies are resisted.

Equally, freemasonry consists of major leaders, minor leaders, masters, fellows, and apprentices. Every stratum has its [particular] uniform and its distinguishing features, like decorations, swords, and aprons. They become acquainted with secret words, like the soldiers, and they have known signs, by which a Freemason recognizes his brother [*raṣīf*] among many [people] and in the middle of a group of strangers. They also have their instructions, and they take organized strides at definite orderliness. And they have, like you saw, their swords, lances and daggers.

What would you say, for whom is this army set up and what kind of enemy does this army fight, what do they [i.e. the Freemasons] aim at, when they deprive their enemies of [their] swords and, [at the same time,] take over their weapons? It is self-evident that they do not defend their fatherland, as the fatherland did not entrust them with its defence. Who, then, do they really attack? They call themselves "free Masons" [*bannā' ūn aḥrār*], but what kind of building [p. 337] is it that they attempt to construct with all their strength, and prepare for it[s building] their aprons, their compasses, their triangles, their protractors, and their plummets? They say that their construction is symbolic, but what is this supposed to mean? They attempt (in their own words) 'the reunification of the human race within the confines of humanity', and then, [they] aim at the reformation of human society. What is this reformation, that human society [allegedly] needs, so that the Freemasons appointed themselves to stand up for it?

[Do] you know, Gentlemen, that human society has invariable laws [*nawāmīs*], which God has inscribed into the hearts of human beings, or He has revealed Himself to them through the word [*lisān*] of those who are near to Him [*awliyā' uhu*]. It is not permitted to deviate from these laws, because the consensus of unity was outlined in them.

These laws are based on two solid pillars: if they fell, the [entire] building of human society would fall with them. These two are the worldly and the religious authority [*suḷṭā*], and no matter where you go, no matter which country's people you analyse, even if it [i.e. country] is on the lowest stage

of civilisation, you will find these two. Certainly, this authority varies in its appearance. Either it is an absolute monarchy or a constitutional monarchy, a group of *shaykhs* and notables or a republic, but the authority is fixed on whatever form [*hay'a*] [of government] there is. Likewise, religion is able to be only ordinary, that is to say, limited to some plain doctrines, to the knowledge of which our intellect leads us, as there is [for example] the existence of a God, or gods, or, at least, the existence of spirits, to which nature is [inseparably] linked, or the belief in the immortality of the soul, and the judgement according to his [i.e. a man's] actions. This religion is able to be larger and more perfect than what God made its doctrines for mankind, with the help of His prophets, through revelation. Be it as it may, it is necessary to accept, that until today, not a [single] people is known that lives without religion. We demand from freemasonry to inform us about any of these two pillars, the reformation of which it supports. Therefore, let us examine freemasonry's history, relate its teachings to the worldly and religious authorities, and its attitude towards the two.

Let us begin with "the religious authority". We say: It is established knowledge that those so-called philosophers, who appeared in France and other countries in the middle of the 18th century, discarded every revelation yet, every religion with their catapults; [they] loaded their books with blasphemous remarks, they denied the existence of the Creator, supported the pre-existence of the world, and they heightened the powers of nature. Yet, they claimed, that the religious authority was given birth to by the swindle of priests, and the masters of religion, [who were] replete with despicable benefits, and accomplished with their power and despotism. Moreover, they spread this nonsense in the minds of the inexperienced by means of treatises and books, which flourished on [p. 338] the market, [in] lectures and public gatherings, and, in particular, [in] their scientific circle [*dā'ira 'ilmiyya*] known as the Encyclopaedists [*bi-l-ansiklūpīdhiyā*]. This is all there was, concerning the weakening of the spirit of religion in the hearts of their contemporaries. They almost achieved what they had wished for, if [it was] not [a fact that] God could not be defeated by human beings.

Today remains the ample evidence, that those philosophers like Voltaire⁵³, Rousseau⁵⁴, Diderot⁵⁵, d'Alembert⁵⁶, and the Prussian king Frederick II⁵⁷, were all followers of freemasonry. In their lodges they prepared those lethal weapons, with which they waged war against religion, with lies and abominations, and a variety of mockery and derision. [Now] listen to one of the great Muslims of our time who knew freemasonry and left it after he explored its obvious, as well as hidden shortcomings. Mister Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī⁵⁸ says about those atheists-the Freemasons -with a special mention of their forefathers Voltaire and Rousseau:

'Voltaire and Rousseau appeared claiming the protection of justice, the struggle against oppression, the accomplishment of the Enlightenment of thoughts, and the guidance of the minds. They excavated the grave of Epicurus "the Dog" [*al-kalbī*]⁵⁹, and revived what had vanished from the influential doctrine of the atheists; they rejected every religious com-

mandment, planted the seeds of divulgence and communism, and they claimed that divine morals were fictitious inventions, just as they asserted, that religions were inventions created due to the shortcomings of the human intellect. Both of them proclaimed the non-existence of divine power, and raised their voice[s] to expose the prophets. A lot⁵⁰ of books that “Voltaire” [sic] has written, [were] on the faults of the prophets, his derision of them, the depreciation of their descent, and he reproached what they brought forth. These idle talks were understood by the minds [*nufūs*] of Voltaire’s countrymen and bestowed upon their reason [*‘uqūl*], they renounced the Christian religion [*al-diyāna al-‘isawīyya*], and they shook it off their hands. After they closed its gates, they opened the gateways of the law of nature, or: the “Sacred Law”, as they claimed. This foolishness increased during their days [to such an extent] that [finally] a group of their people chose to take a beautiful girl from among them, and to carry her to the prayer niche of a church. When they succeeded, the people cried out: ‘Oh, ye people, the fear will not seize you after today, neither from the rocking of thunder nor from the flash of lightning! Do not consider anything of that a threat against you by the God of Heaven ... [for] all of these are signs of nature ... free your necks from the bonds of self-deception, and do not create a God for yourselves out of the desire of your beliefs! If worship is your yearning desire then it is this “Mademoiselle” [*madāmūzīl*] standing in the prayer niche in the manner of a statue. Throw yourselves down before her, if you wish to!’⁶⁰.

Do not think, Gentlemen, that these teachings were deviations from freemasonry, or that the Freemasons emerged in [p. 339] a single country through some individuals! They rather propagated those teachings in their congresses, and proclaimed them publicly in their official newspapers and journals, [although] they have, previously, been kept secret. But it is hidden only as long as it does not come to light, just as Lord Jesus had said. [Some] fellows with determination set out in France, Germany and Belgium. They recovered these hidden treasures, exposed the secret papers of the Freemasons, and presented them to scientific institutes [*ma‘āhid ‘ilmiyya*]. Whoever wants to, is [now] able to occupy himself with these [papers]. There are the official publications of freemasonry and its resolutions which they have printed [only] in a limited number [i.e. fitting its number of members], in order to remain concealed from the eyes of the [general] public. What is your opinion on the publication of the French Orient, established in 1895, ‘that the Masonic kinsfolk rejects any religious truth, no matter what it is’? What would you say [to the fact that] the community of Freemasons of Italy ‘announced the independence of man, emphasizing the necessity of destroying every official church’? What is your opinion on the document of the Grand Lodge [*al-maḥfil al-akbar*] in Berlin [which] acknowledges ‘that science [*‘ilm*] is to be the only basis for every doctrine, and [that] they reject every doctrine that has been built on the basis of revelation’? [Finally,] what do you think about the proceedings of the Masonic Congress in Brussels in 1866, and their declaration ‘that the Torah is the sum of superstitions, lies and wrong views’?

These teachings treat all religions likewise, and the [named] publication of

the Freemasons of Germany from 1866 expressed frankly that ‘it is required from Freemasons that they raise their minds above every belief in God, no matter who He is’. In the books by Proudhon⁶¹, one of the leaders of freemasonry, mentions that ‘if the Freemasons defend the existence of God, then they [only] mean nature and its material powers,⁵¹ and they depict God and man as if they were the same being’.

Similarly to that, is the talk of Weishaupt, the founder of illuminated freemasonry⁶²: ‘Everything is material, and God and the world [*al-‘ālam*] are the same. All religions are imaginary, not enduring; they were invented by those with ambitions’. Likewise said the Congress of the Masonic Federation of Holland in 1872: ‘God and man are of one kind, and we are God’. However, [the highest degree of] insanity was reached by one of them, namely, brother Proudhon, who was previously mentioned. He said (God forbid!), ‘God is the evil’ (*Dieu c’est le mal*).

Although the Freemasons present themselves as venerating “the Great Architect of the Universe” [*muhandis al-kawn al-a‘zam*], their brethren [in freemasonry] answer them, that this is a [mere] Masonic trick, to which they resort, so that the people do not avoid them. In 1878, the Grand Master of the Masonic lodges in Paris said: ‘This expression, that is to say, the “Great Architect of the Universe”, has no underlying philosophical concept, and it is what everyone, who seeks entry into freemasonry, can agree with, regardless whether he is a believer, a materialist or an unbeliever’. Similar to him, the great brother Hayman⁶³ narrates in [p. 340] the journal *The Masonic World*: ‘The Freemasons chose [for themselves] a slogan that enables the entire mankind to accept it, even those, who deny divine power, and [who] reject immortality’. And another one pointed out: ‘The term of the “Architect of the Universe” is, in our view, a designation without a designated ... and Nature is [identical with] God’.

If the Freemasons admitted, that not all of the “Sons of the Widow”⁶⁴ agreed with these teachings, [then] indeed [we would be ready to say that] we know, that only a few of them subscribe to these extremist points of view, especially in our country. Yet, it is sufficient for them to be member of a sect, that because of this, they pronounce these blasphemous expressions, and that they boast about their existence as “brethren”, because freemasonry is the only one that spreads its nets over the entire world. However, freemasonry naturalizes and changes colour to please [i.e. to adapt to] every country. Here, it recollects the “Architect of the Universe”, just as in England and America. There, it excludes him, like the Freemasons of France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal had done, where [the Freemasons] abolished the name of this “Architect”, and declared openly their unbelief⁶⁵. And, after the Freemasons of England and America expressed their discontent with these views, they [soon] fell silent again [about them].

In their books, which are in our hands, the Freemasons of our country repeat their pride of being members of universal freemasonry, which neither makes a distinction between religion and other [belief systems] nor

between unbeliever and believer. In [his] book *The Genuine Truths in the History of Operational Freemasonry* (p. 17) Shāhīn Bey Makāriyyūs lines out:

‘Freemasonry is widespread, and the most significant religions are⁵² envious of it. The [religions] are extended in four populated regions, because that one [church] makes a distinction between the peoples in the world, [between] who is a worshipper and who an unbeliever, who is a denier [*jāhid*] and who an innovator, and who a deviationist. Meanwhile, you can see freemasonry opening its arms [wide] to welcome its children, and calling them [all] brethren’.

These teachings of freemasonry constitute not only unbelief in religion in theory, but [also], as you can see, wherever the Freemasons gain [political] power, they direct their arrows at the [religious] doctrines, and close the houses of God, [they] arrest the religious leaders, and expel the monks from their country, [they] forbid denominational schools, and remove all legislation containing even a hint of religion. They force the nuns to close their hospitals and orphanages. They introduce civil marriage, they abolish the oath to God in court, and have banned His honourable name from their official coins [*min nuqūdihim al-dawliyya*]. Even more, they ordered that their presidents do not mention [the name of God], as you can see in the French Republic, where the presidents did not mention the name of God in their official speeches for 18 years, as if God did not exist at all!

A little of this infidel spirit has just entered our country in theory, as well as in practice. As far as the theory is concerned, some books which were incompatible with religion were printed, like the different books by Amīn al-Riḥānī⁶⁶ [p. 341]. Among those are the *Riḥāniyyāt*, of which we elucidated in *al-Mashriq* (13:379 and 701) the blasphemous and idle talks it contained. Among these are those shameless stories, which the Freemasons took an interest to disseminate, like that of the secrets of Rome and Jesus in the Vatican⁶⁷.

As far as the practice is concerned, we find campaigns, like the ones that the Freemasons or their followers [*munqādūn⁶⁸ ilā āra'ihim*] wrongfully undertook in Beirut, Zaḥla, and 'Amshīt, against the masters of religion in these last years, on the pretext of [establishing] religious endowments [*awqāf*], and the like. They did so, when they delightfully protested against His Eminence, the Metropolitan [i.e. the archbishop], because during the funeral procession of brother Jurjī Ni'mā⁶⁹, he removed from the church the wreaths [that were] decorated with the symbols [*'alāmāt*] of freemasonry. What is your opinion on those, who have drawn burlesque pictures in order to diminish the character of the masters of religion, like Jurjī Ḥaddād did in Brazil in the newspaper *al-Fajr*? He has spread disgusting monsters to oppose the clergy. [As for example], when the war between Italy and the Ottoman Empire [*al-dawla al-'aliyya*] broke out, he drew His Holiness the Pope [*qadāsāt al-ḥabr al-a'zam*] naked, in His right hand the sword and in His left the cross, as if He wanted to fight against His Majesty the Sultan, and as if he wanted to instigate this war

against him in the name of the cross.

The Freemasons of Beirut did something similar to that in 1902, when they wrote a French letter, and signed it in the name of the principal of the lodge of Lebanon; they sent the letter with brother Olivier to the⁵³ Grand Orient in Paris, seeking [in it] assistance for its members in the expulsion of the monks from Syria.

“The worldly authority”. Just as freemasonry destroys religious authority, it launches an attack on the second pillar of human society, i.e. the worldly power. The apostle Paul says in his letter to the Romans (13:1-9⁷⁰): ‘Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, ... Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger [p. 342] to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake’.

These shining words contain every philosophy of law, which shows the mutuality between the superior and the subordinate, between ruler and subject. For the ruler, or leader, is standing in the place of God, and is, if you want, the shadow of God on earth, and he has to take care of his people like the messenger of God, and what was imposed on him by God for the guiding of the subjects. The subordinates have to obey the ruler and follow him in everything that is virtuous and suitable for their conscience. Lord Jesus summarized this earlier when he said: ‘Render ... unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s’⁷¹.

What is your opinion about how freemasonry submits to the order of Lord Jesus, and the order of the apostle Paul? The answer to this question follows from what has been said previously, and it is inseparably linked to it. Thus, if what has been said earlier about freemasonry is correct, [namely that] religious things [*al-dīniyyāt*] are feeble-minded inventions, [that] God—glorious and great is He!—is a designation without a designated, and that there is nothing on earth except the material nature, then, it follows that the worldly authority has no firm basis, but belongs to the body of man’s inventions, the establishment of which is permitted according to the desire of man[kind]. [It is] as if I vested Zayd [i.e. someone] with being my superior today, and dismissed him again tomorrow, in order to take his place. Since I am the source of power, I bestow it upon whom I want to, or take it away like I want to, when I want to, and from whom.

As a matter of fact, it is like this, that freemasonry regards the worldly authority. Brother Rāghūn of the Freemasons of the higher degrees says in his book *The Elucidation of the Masonic Symbols*⁷²: ‘Nobody, whether he is a Freemason or not, has the right to extract laws and teachings, which he, then, imposes upon man. And everyone, who seeks help with the power of a god, whoever he may be, prescribing laws and teachings for

the people, is a liar and an impostor’.

Like him, brother Clavel⁷³ relates: ‘The important contribution of freemasonry is, that it erases every discrimination [*tamyīz*] between the people, which creates a distinction between them, like [ascribing] importance⁵⁴ to origin, religions, doctrines, and fatherland’.

The majority of the Masonic tools, like the triangle, the compasses, the protractors, and the massive stone point to the breaking of the power [*shawka*] of the authority [*sulṭa*], and to its destruction, as a result of which there will be no superior and no subordinate in the world. Listen [now,] how one of the Freemasons explains the meaning of the compass in the book *The Essential of Freemasonry*⁷⁴:

The compass [*barjal*] has a meaning, young man in which the thoughts become a mess, a compass [*dā’ira*] will be brought forth to man and everything will progress. [p. 343]

What is the Masonic compass, or the triangle, into the angles of which all strata of man are pressed?

Among the symbols of freemasonry in the higher degrees is that enigmatic ladder, with which the Freemasons point to their society; they set it up over a triple headed snake, as if to crush these [heads]. The first head is crowned with the papal mitre-with that they mean religious authority. On the second head is a royal crown-symbol of worldly rule. In the mouth of the third head is a sword-allusion to military power [*quwa*]. Freemasonry maintains, that it is commissioned with the crushing of these three heads. In suppressing religion [*dīn*], the [worldly] ruler [*sulṭān*], and the army [*askar*], it thus makes the whole world alike [i.e. it levels all the differences prevalent in the world]. Every person does whatever he wants to do, in whatever way he wants to, and whenever, like the roaming animals and predators of the jungle. Those extremists summarize their teachings about human rights according to human society with the words ‘There is neither god nor master’.

Maybe some let themselves be deceived by the image of the cross which they depict on their insignia. However, only the advanced [ones] in freemasonry know, that the Masonic cross is similar to the Egyptian cross prior to [the advent of] Jesus, with which it [i.e. freemasonry] points to the procreative [*al-nasaliyya*] forces, and the pagan infamies. These are the teachings of freemasonry, and these are its good morals.

The Freemasons do not contend themselves with these theoretical teachings about human power and the good morals of human society, but rather hasten to give birth to them [i.e. the teachings and good morals] in the sphere of existence [*ḥayyiz al-wujūd*]. The first of their attacks were on the Bourbon kings, who reigned over the Latin countries. The Freemasons surrounded them with their adherents, and alienated their supporters from them. Especially [befallen was] the monastic order of the Jesuits, that

instructed the youth, taught them the service of God, and the obedience to His representatives on earth. [But] even when the Freemasons saw the Bourbons without support, they destroyed their thrones, murdered some, and expelled [the] others. They shed the blood of thousands of innocent [people] who had committed no other crime than being of the⁵⁵ nobility [*ashrāf*], or priests who did not approve of the rejection of their religion, and the adoption of the secret morals of the adherents; they even killed women, and the pious amongst the poor. One professor in Paris, Monsieur [*al-misiyyū*] Gautherot⁷⁵, pointed out in numerous papers which he delivered in the capital of France this year, that the governors of crisis during the French Revolution were the Freemasons, and that it was them, who planned its developments. They all played their parts. The murder of Louis XVI was nothing else than the execution of one of their aims, upon which they had agreed in the secret lodges, just as one of them, a certain Abel, had voted for it. Under oath he confessed this on his deathbed to his son, who had entered the monastic order of the Jesuits and spread that [news] on the basis of the instruction of his father [p. 344].

After the Freemasons had drowned France in blood and horror, they set out to bring about revolution all over Europe by means of the Republican armies. From that time on, until today, we can hardly make out a [single] stable country. Wherever it is set free, freemasonry inflates the spirit of revolution. How many thrones did it topple, how many countries did it overthrow, how many kings did it bring down? Sometimes, it seeks help from the socialists, sometimes, from the anarchists, and yet another time, it summons the coal merchants [*al-fahḥāmūn*, i.e. it summons people from the lowest stratum of society], and the nihilists. And if we wanted to trace the history of their conspiracies country by country, our field would [enormously] widen, and [even] voluminous books would become too narrow for us. Over a period of 100 years experts have counted the number of kings, or heads of state, who had been killed through the endeavours of freemasonry. And even if this number exceeds 30, we have not yet mentioned those, against whom they have conspired, and [those] with whom the trickery of freemasonry was not successful!

Whenever a state [*dawla*] is established, you see the Freemasons hastening to glorify it, exaggerating in praising it, [and] aggrandizing its king or head of state. And when they request the country’s protection, [and when] they feel safe from its calamities [i.e. the calamities, that could befall freemasonry at the hands of the country], they resume their conspiracies, and think of its destruction. This is what [in the end] happened even to those kings and heads of state, who were members of freemasonry, just as [it was the case] with Napoléon III, with the murder of whom they entrusted Orsini⁷⁶, [even though] he was not successful.

The first king to enter freemasonry was Frederick the Great, king of Prussia. He joined in 1738, when he [still] was crown prince. The ties between him and freemasonry became very strong. He treated Freemasons like brothers, and he gave preference to them at the head of all offices of his kingdom. He even founded a Grand Orient lodge in his country, and he

thought that freemasonry, like it claims, does not want anything other than the unification of the human race. However, it did not take Frederick long before he became convinced, that those brethren were traitors. Among the entourage of the king was a general, from whom he did not conceal anything. He [i.e. the general] belonged to the leaders of⁵⁶ freemasonry [*muqaddamī al-māsūniyya*], and his name was Walrave. This brother came to know of some secrets of the country regarding the fortifications of the Silesian countries, and sold secret papers to Austria, an enemy of king Frederick. When the king was informed of this betrayal, he had the lodge of Berlin assembled, presided over the meeting, and delivered a speech on the obligations of Freemasons toward their country. Then he said: 'One of the brethren here has broken his oath, and has sold secrets of his fatherland. If he confesses his offense, I shall forgive him. But if he says nothing, I will no longer preside over this lodge that condones a traitor among its members. In my capacity as king, however, I will hand him over to the judges, to have him convicted'.

Then, the king was silent and waited until the general confessed his crime, but the latter did not do so. That day, the king closed the lodge and, after having placed the Masonic hammer on the altar, he left and [all] the brethren followed him. Afterwards, he addressed the traitor and demanded his sword from him, then, ordered the guards to arrest Walrave, and have him put to trial. He was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment, [and] died weakly and anonymously [p. 345] in the citadel of Magdeburg in 1776⁷⁷.

Frederick the Great was also once betrayed by Voltaire, his brother in freemasonry. The king was informed about Voltaire's treachery and entrusted the executioner with giving him sixty strokes with a whip, and the latter had to confirm to the king that Voltaire received them. This order was indeed carried out.

During our [own] lifetime we saw similar acts of national treason. [Just] think of the Jewish officers Dreyfus⁷⁸ and Olmo⁷⁹, who sold secrets of France to its enemies. And think of Ferrer⁸⁰, and his betrayal of the king. [Apart from the fact] that in our time those traitors have helpers from among their brethren, they set in motion heaven and earth to elevate the sinners and exculpate them, like they did in the case of the sinful Dreyfus; or they appeal their cases, just as they did after the conviction of Ferrer. In fact, we saw a group of brethren in Beirut, who did not know Ferrer [at all], neither from hearing nor from seeing, but who were [nonetheless] on his side, obedient to the commands of the Masonic leaders.

[When] the Freemasons loosened the strong bonds between human society and worldly authority [*ḥukm*], they equally destroyed the cord of family life by issuing laws of divorce, by weakening the paternal power in the family, by inciting the children to reject the orders of the [ir] parents, by propagating irreligious teachings, and by forcing the parents to place their children in official schools, that are incompatible with faith.

Nobody shall say, that these norms were enacted by the [people's] representatives. Of course, the representatives publicly gave their consent to them, however, they had decided these [norms] earlier in the Masonic lodges, of which those representatives were members. The sect strove to nominate them to the deputyship in the congregations of⁵⁷ the community and the notables [i.e. in parliament]. They took an oath in their secret assemblies, that in their vote they would follow the decree [*irāda*] of the Grand Orient; as a result, they tied themselves to the Orient's orders and its regulations, and they did not represent the community, but rather freemasonry.

This is [only] a general view on the aims of freemasonry, and its actions. We are not able to elaborate more on this matter, [but] we refer him, who wants [further] details, to [our] book *The Well-Kept Secret in the Sect of the Freemasons*, to which so far no one from the sect has reacted, except for some passages which appeared in the Masonic newspaper in Alexandria, and two short articles in a Cairo and a Beirut magazine. All of these [articles] confirm what we have said, although the Freemasons deny it; they did not present an answer without denial, [or] without the support and glorification of freemasonry without solid proof. Those letters which they sent us, to insult and intimidate us, were negligent of the names of the authors; therefore, we do not consider these to be replies.

3. The Origin of Freemasonry and the Best of its Actions up to our Day

It was our objective to examine the history of freemasonry before you, so you could see an understandable proof of the absurd allegations [p. 346] freemasonry made, or, to be exact, its contradictory teachings. Brother İliyyā-Ḥājj⁸¹ transmits from his masters in freemasonry, that [the] Freemasons 'are a group of English Jesuits in Britain'. Brother Jurjī Zaydān relates, 'that freemasonry appeared in the 17th century, and that it is an association of the Rosecross⁸² [*aṣ-ṣalīb al-wardī*]. There were those, who related it to the crusades, to the order of the [Knights] Templars, whereas others traced it to the days of the Greeks in the 8th century before Christ'. In *The Mysterious Secrets of the Masonic Society* (p. 103) [Makāriyyūs writes]: 'Solomon the Wise was the first Grand Master [*mu'allim a'zam*] in freemasonry.' Then brother Zaydān says: 'Others exaggerate, when they say that its founder was Adam. The most exaggerated of that, however, is the idea of someone that God—praised and exalted is He!—founded freemasonry in the garden Eden, that Paradise was the first Masonic lodge, and that Michael, most supreme of the angels, was its first Grand Master [*ustādh a'zam*].'

We have quoted all this verbatim from the books of freemasonry. What is your opinion, honourable Gentlemen, on nonsense like this? Are you of the opinion that a society, which invented such [absurd] stories for the people, deserves that their talk should be granted respect? I do not think so. After the research, that the renowned historian Hermann Gruber⁸³ has published in Germany, it is firmly established today that the Masonic society was founded on June 24, 1717 in London, the capital of the

Englishmen. Then, in the last days of December in 1722, the *Masonic Constitution*, as it is known these days, was written down. The Grand Lodge gave its consent to it, and it was published in February the following year⁸⁴. After a short while, the kings of England sided with freemasonry, because they found in it a powerful supporter in [their attempts⁵⁸ to] turn the Catholic countries upside down.

Indeed, this society [i.e. freemasonry] was preceded by secret societies other than it[self]. But there is no relation [at all] between them and the modern Masonic sect, in spite of some similarities regarding their methods, that can be found among them. Freemasonry even took over some of their rituals and customs. Likewise, there is no relation between freemasonry, and the societies of the Masons, who formed guilds to help each other with the work. The resemblance of the name is far from the resemblance of the work, and the resemblance of the aim, because those societies [of stonemasons] were under the supervision of the church. And when someone entered it, he proclaimed his faith and his conviction. In their statutes we do not find anything that is secret.

We possess yet another proof [of the fact] that today's freemasonry was founded in the aforesaid period [i.e. in 1717]. It is that all of the lodges that are scattered all over the world today, belong to the Grand Orients, which, in the end, descend directly from the English Orient, founded in 1717, [p. 347].

Roughly 200 years later, its lodges exceed 23,000, and its members number some two million⁸⁵! We request from freemasonry to inform us about its glorious deeds in this period! It maintains, that it 'was invented for the integration of the human race within the confines of humanity'. Moreover, we have its ordinances and its secret writings, but, no matter how much we examine it, we can neither see an account of an agreement for, or a sign of a social action, with which freemasonry, through its efforts, eliminated alienation and controversy between the peoples or between the individuals, nor that it abolished a war or splint a fracture. On the contrary, the numerous proofs, which the scholars collected, confirm indisputably, that freemasonry divides and does not unite [anything]. [Yet,] the crack in its fracture increased, and freemasonry was not able to splint it, until it [i.e. the fracture] was even between its [own] adherents. All of you have heard of the strife, that took place among the members of the local Masonic lodges, the echo of which could be heard even in the common newspapers. Likewise, the protest notes, that the lodges of the Capital [*al-astāna*, i.e. Istanbul] had published regarding Idrīs Bey Rāghib⁸⁶ and his followers, were printed, just as the Egyptian newspapers *al-Muqattam* and *al-Ahrām*, for example, blared out the account of the splits and the controversies, that occurred between the Egyptian lodges.

4. The Result of the Research

After [all] that, are we not entitled to conclude from these activities and teachings [*aqwāl*], that freemasonry is a foul group, regarding its aim,

[regarding] its literary work, and regarding its means, which it makes use of for the attainment of its aim? Do we not have to make the people of our country, who were deceived by it, swear, that they dissociate themselves from it? We suspect, that nine-tenth of the adherents of freemasonry joined it without knowing its truth, and among them are [also] those,⁵⁹ who cursed it in public, after they had become acquainted with it.

The greatest men of religion, and the leaders of the countries preceded them in the refutation of this sect. At the head of them were those greatest of learned men, who, when they discovered the spread of the Masonic society, hastened to criticize it, and they interdicted it to whoever wanted to join. That [happened already] shortly after its appearance. We know of about twenty encyclicals on this matter written by Popes [*al-ahbār al-rūmāniyyūn*]. When the Congregation of Faith found out that the Masonic sect had been squirting out its poison in this country for 115 years, they set out to inform the Christians of the East of freemasonry's power. The Congregation commissioned translations of the encyclical of Pope Benedict XIV regarding the opposition to freemasonry. After that, they took care of its publication in three languages, [namely,] Greek, Armenian and Arabic. This suffices as evidence for the care of the church for its children, so that they will not be struck down by this serious disease.

In our book *The Well-Kept Secret* we have combined the statements of the honourable [Orthodox] patriarchs, the much esteemed bishops, and the excellent priests, with the statements of the Muslim religious leaders [*a'imma*], the Protestants, and others, and all of them agreed on [the necessity of] unveiling the intrigues of freemasonry, and [of] warning of its viciousness.

Just as the masters of religion rose to freemasonry's opposition, you can see, too, that all the countries eager for their own survival, have warned of this disaster. We gave an account of the regulations [*sunan*] in 23 countries, among these was our [own] beloved country, which has prohibited its citizens from partaking in freemasonry for [the past] 160 years under the threat of punishment. It just renewed this interdiction, when last year an order appeared to close the Masonic lodges all over Turkey. After this elucidation, there remains nothing more for us [to say] than to repeat for your ears some of that, with what Pope Leo XIII concluded his encyclical on the sect of freemasonry; it [i.e. the encyclical] was replete with wisdom and righteousness, and issued in 1884:

'We pray and beseech you, venerable brethren, to join your efforts with Ours, and earnestly to strive for the extirpation of this foul plague, which is creeping through the veins of the body politic. You have to defend the glory of God and the salvation of your neighbour, and with the object of your strife before you, neither courage nor strength will be wanting. It will be for your prudence to judge by what means you can best overcome the difficulties and obstacles you meet with. But, as it befits the authority of Our office that We Ourselves should point out some suitable way of proceeding, We wish it to be your rule first of all to tear away the mask from Freemasonry, and to let it be seen as it really is; and by sermons and pas-

toral letters to instruct the people as to the artifices used by societies of this kind in seducing men and enticing them into their ranks, and as to the depravity of their opinions and the wickedness of their acts. As Our predecessors have many times repeated, let no man think that he may for any reason whatsoever join the masonic sect, if he values his Catholic ⁶⁰ name and his eternal salvation as he ought to value them. Let no one be deceived by a pretense of honesty. It may seem to some that Freemasons demand nothing that is openly contrary to religion and morality; but, as the whole principle and object of the sect lies in what is vicious and criminal, to join with these men or in any way to help them cannot be lawful⁸⁷. Then, the Pope elaborated on other means, saying:

‘Under your guidance, let parents, religious instructors, and priests having the cure of souls use every opportunity, in their Christian teaching, of warning their children and pupils of the infamous nature of these societies, so that they may learn in good time to be wary of the various and fraudulent artifices by which their promoters are accustomed to ensnare people⁸⁸.

After [all] this, there remains nothing for us [to say], except that our weak voice shall follow the voice of the Pope of the Popes [*rā’ī ru’āt al-nufūs*], and [that we] beseech God, that he may guide all inhabitants of the fatherlands to the welfare of mankind, and the righteousness of the country, because he is the one, who hears most among those, who hear.

1 I am very grateful to Inge Ammering, Osama Amour, Jan-Peter Hartung, and Yasmin Khan for their help with the translation and their comments on the different drafts of this article.

2 Very often his name is found as “Louis Cheikho”.

3 *al-Makhtūṭāt al-‘arabiyya li-katabat al-naṣrāniyya* (Bayrūt 1924), *Majānī al-adab* (Bayrūt 1883-1888), *al-Adāb al-‘arabiyya fi al-qarn al-tāsi’ ‘ashar* (Bayrūt 1910-1924).

4 Cf. Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī 1980, *al-A‘lām. Qāmūs tarājim* [Eminent Authorities. Bio-graphical Dictionary], vol. 5, Bayrūt, p. 246; ‘Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla 1959, *Mu‘jam al-mu‘allifin. Tarājim muṣannifi al-kutub al-‘arabiyya* [Encyclopaedia of Writers. Biographies of the Writers of Arabic Books], vol. 8, Bayrūt, p. 161; L. Pouzet 1998, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition*, vol. 9, p. 405.

5 *al-Sirr al-maṣūn fi shī‘at al-farmasūn*. This lengthy work was serialized in *al-Mashriq*, vols. 12 (1909) to 14 (1911).

6 *al-Mashriq*, vol. 15 (1912), p. 326-350.

7 I have drawn a clear dividing line between what I will call “ordinary polemics” and “scientific polemics”. The latter follows the “laws of (Aristotelian) logic”, and therefore, has a methodological basis, whereas the former does not necessarily require such a foundation, and is thus open to a wider range of users. For further studies on “polemics”, cf. Gunild Feigenwinter-Schimmel 1972, *Karl*

Kraus. Methode der Polemik, Kleve; Georg Roellenbleck (ed.) 1985, *Le discours polémique. Aspects théoriques et interpréta-*

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tions, Paris. In the latter anthology, cf. especially the contributions by Artur Greive, Peter-Eckhard Knabe, and Alain Roger. 8 Cf. Feigenwinter-Schimmel, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

9 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 7-8, 92, 166.

10 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 117.

11 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 126.

12 Cf. Manfred Kienpointer 1992, *Alltagslogik. Struktur und Funktion von Argumentationsmustern*, Stuttgart, p. 30.

13 Cf. Gero von Wilpert 1969, *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur*, Stuttgart, p. 790.

14 Cf. Max L. Baeumer 1973, *Toposforschung*, Darmstadt, p. 346-347.

15 The imposed ban was only lifted by Pope Pius VII in 1814 (cf. Pedro Arrupe *et al.*, 1975, *Jesuiten. Wohin steuert der Orden? Eine kritische Selbstdarstellung von einem Autorenteam SJ*, Basel, p. 14).

16 Hermann Gruber was an Austrian Jesuit from Tyrol, who extensively wrote and did research on freemasonry. He dedicated his life’s work to the fight against freemasonry. Some of his works include: *Der giftige Kern oder die wahren Bestrebungen der Freimaurerei* or *Mazzini, Freimaurerei, Weltrevolution*. He sometimes wrote under the pseudonym of Hildebrand Gerber (cf. Eugen Lennhoff *et al.*, 22000, *Internationales Freimaurer Lexikon*, München, p. 367). Like Shaykhū, Gruber stressed that the slogan of all Freemasons was “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” (cf. Dieter Binder, *Die Freimaurer*, Freiburg i. Br., p. 143).

17 Clement XII issued his encyclical *In Eminenti Apostolatus Specula* in 1738, and

Benedict XIV did so with his *Providas Romanorum Pontificum* in 1751.

18 Cf. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18840420_humanum_genus_en.html (accessed on January 23, 2006), paragraph 7. 19 Cf. *ibid.*, paragraph 10.

20 Cf. *ibid.*, paragraph 21.

21 Cf. Feigenwinter-Schimmel, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

22 Helmut Reinalter (2001, *Die Freimaurer*, München, p. 119) says that ‘besides the “right-wing”, conservative conspiracy theory there was also a “left-wing” theory that had already spread during the time of Enlightenment (around 1770), and that went back to Rosicrucian origins, and claimed in its core that secret societies aimed at spreading Catholicism, whereby a pathological fear of Jesuits must have played a crucial role. This “leftist” conspiracy theory had a lasting effect until well into the 19th century’ [translation M.C.].

23 Cf. Karim Wissa 1989, *Freemasonry in Egypt 1798-1921: A Study in Cultural and Political Encounters*, in: *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin*, vol. 16/2, p. 143-161, here: p. 152.

24 Cf. Stephen Hemsley Longrigg 1968, *Syria and Lebanon under French Mandate*, Beirut, p. 43.

25 Cf. Wissa, *op. cit.*, p. 152. In his book *Tārīkh al-māsūniyya al-‘amm* (p. 141) Jurjī b. Ḥabīb Zaydān (1861-1914) describes the Jesuits as the most vehement adversaries of freemasonry in Syria. According to him, they established the religious newspaper *al-Bashīr* to refute, besides freemasonry, all religions and creeds except Catholicism. For biographical information on Zaydān, cf. note 43.

26 *Mā hiya al-māsūniyya*

wa-man huwa al-māsūnī. All italics throughout the text are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

27 I was not able to trace information on Muḥammad Sa‘īd al-Marāghī.

28 Freemasonry usually has three degrees: apprentice, fellow and master. These degrees do not only symbolize the age of men, namely, youth, man, and old man, but also the idea of birth, life and death (cf. Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 359). However, there exists also a “high degree freemasonry”, which dates from the middle of the 18th century and has up to 33 degrees (e.g. the Ancient and Accepted [Scottish] Rite), the first and second degrees of which are apprentice and fellow, whereas the remaining 31 degrees are master degrees (cf. *ibid.*, p. 396).

29 Of course, only those lodges belonging to the French Orient have “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” as their motto. On this issue, cf. below in this translation, and note 65. The lodges belonging to the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLoE)—it came into being in 1813 after a dispute between “Moderns” and “Antients” [sic], and the following cleavage into the York lodge and the UGLoE (cf. Binder, *op. cit.*, p. 76)—do not use the slogan of the French Revolution as their creed. The Grand Orientals are the umbrella organizations of most of the so-called non-regular lodges, whereas the UGLoE considers itself the counter part for the regular lodges, i.e. it is the UGLoE that decides, which lodges are “regular”, and which are not. For the question of “regularity”, cf. Reinalter, *op. cit.*, p. 61-62.

30 This is a string instrument resembling the mandolin, and it is often used by public storytellers.

31 Shāhīn Makāriyyūs (1853-1910) was born in Lebanon, but later moved to Egypt with his friends Ya'qūb

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Şarrūf and Fāris Nimr. In Egypt he belonged to the founders of the newspaper *al-Muqattam*, was one of the authors of the literary journal *al-Muqtataf*, and founder of the newspaper *al-Laṭā'if*. He served freemasonry by means of his books *al-Jawhar al-maṣūn fi mashāhir al-māṣūn* [The Hidden Nature of the Most Famous of the Masons], and the two works subsequently mentioned in the text. He was buried in Cairo (cf. al-Ziriklī, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, p. 153-154).

32 *al-Adāb al-māsūniyya* (al-Qāhira 1895).

33 *al-Asrār al-khafīyya fi al-jam'iyya al-māsūniyya* (al-Qāhira 1900).

34 *al-Ḥaqā'iq al-aṣliyya fi tārikh al-māsūniyya al-'amaliyya*. On this work I could not find any bibliographical information. However, a book by Shāhīn Makāriyyūs, entitled *Tārikh al-māsūniyya al-'amaliyya*, was published in Cairo in 1897, but in spite of the likeness of the two titles, it does not seem to be the same book.

35 *al-Dustūr al-māsūnī*.

36 This quotation from the Bible is John 18:20-21.

37 This quotation from the Bible is Matthew 10:27. For a similar passage, cf. Luke 12:3.

38 This quotation from the Bible is John 3:20-21.

39 This quotation from the Bible is John 3:19.

40 *Asrār al-jizwīt al-khafīyya*. Neither was I able to find any information on this work nor on its author.

41 *Kitāb ma'riḍ al-afkār fi riwāyat al-yahūdī al-tā'ih*. Here, as well, I was not able to trace neither text nor author.

42 *Tārikh al-māsūniyya al-*

'amm (al-Qāhira 1889).

43 Jurjī Zaydān was a Greek Orthodox Christian from Lebanon, a Freemason, and an outstanding representative of the Arabic cultural and literary revival in the late 19th and early 20th centuries [*al-nahḍa*]. In 1883 he moved to Egypt, where he later founded the journal *al-Hilāl*. For further information on Zaydān, cf. Thomas Philipp 1979, *Jurjī Zaydān. His Life and Thought*, Wiesbaden; and al-Ziriklī, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 117.

44 This quotation from the Bible is Matthew 7:6.

45 Shaykhū knew Zaydān's book *Tārikh al-māsūniyya al-'amm* (first published in 1889, and again in 1982 in: *Mu'allafāt Jurjī Zaydān al-kāmila*, vol. 17, *Bayrūt*, p. 7-184), and even cited parts of it in the present article. Therefore, he quite certainly knew that there are not only Masonic rites with 33 degrees, but also those with only three degrees, since Zaydān deals with the different existing rites. For the reference to the three degrees, cf. *ibid.*, p. 82.

46 When mentioning these "threats", Shaykhū, however, does not say what they mean. In relation with the master examination, for example, the skull symbolizes the overcoming of fear by the aspirant (cf. Binder, *op. cit.*, p. 169).

47 Freemasonry has five columns, three of them carry the small lights of freemasonry, which are wisdom, strength and beauty. The mentioned two columns usually carry the portico of the lodge. They are of Biblical-Cabbalistic origin, and are supposed to remind the Mason of the columns in the forecourt of the temple of Solomon (cf. Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 742).

48 Again, Pope Leo XIII says something similar in his encyclical: '[...] the fundamental doctrine of the naturalists, which

they sufficiently make known by their name, is that human nature and human reason ought in all things to be mistress and guide'. (cf. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18840420_humanum-genus_en.html [accessed on January 23, 2006], paragraph 12).

49 As legend has it, Hiram Abiv, son of a widow from the clan of Naphtali, was entrusted by king Solomon with the supervision of the construction of his (i.e. Solomon's) temple. Three of his fellows, who took part in the erection of the temple, did not accept the fact that they had not yet received the "master's word", although the process of construction was almost completed. Therefore, they wanted to force Hiram to tell them that secret word, but, when he refused to reveal it, they killed him. The Freemasons identify themselves with Hiram (cf. Binder, *op. cit.*, p. 353-356), and they symbolically avenge his death.

50 In the master degree the coffin symbolizes the aspirant's overcoming of mortal fear.

51 *Kullī al-ḥikma Ilyās Bēk Mansī*. I was neither able to find any information on Ilyās Mansī nor on the named work.

52 The spelling of this name is uncertain, but deducing from the Arabic text (*Savran Aykār*), it is most likely a French name.

53 François Marie Arouet ("Voltaire") (1694-1778) was a French novelist, poet, and philosopher of the French Enlightenment, and he belonged to the circle of the Encyclopaedists. He was a member of the Paris lodge "Les neuf soeurs" (cf. Allan Oslo 2002, *Freimaurer*, Düsseldorf, p. 410; Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 881-882).

54 I could not find any indi-

cation, that the Geneva-born political philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was a Freemason.

55 Denis Diderot (1713-1784) was the leader of the French Encyclopaedists, and a philosophical writer. The convinced pantheist wrote a book entitled *Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature* (1754). On his life and works, cf. e.g. Jacques Proust, 1995, *Diderot et l'Encyclopédie*, Paris; Paolo Quintili, 2001, *La pensée critique de Diderot: Matérialisme, science et poésie à l'âge de l'Encyclopédie*, 1742-1782, Paris. There exists, however, no evidence of Diderot ever having joined freemasonry (cf. Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 227).

56 Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1789) was a French philosopher, and mathematician, and one of the driving forces among the Encyclopaedists. On his life and works, cf. e.g. Martine Groult 1999, *D'Alembert et la mécanique de la vérité dans l'Encyclopédie*, Paris. Moreover, he belonged, just as "Voltaire", to the lodge "Les neuf soeurs" (cf. Oslo, *op. cit.*, p. 394; Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 62).

57 Frederick II (1712-1786), commonly known as "the Great", was accepted into the lodge "Absalom zu den drei Nessel" in Braunschweig, Germany (cf. Oslo, *op. cit.*, p. 400). For a standard biography, cf. Wolfgang Stürner 1992, *Friedrich II.*, Darmstadt.

58 Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1839-1897) was one of the most influential Muslim scholars of the 19th century. Together with the later Grand muftī of Egypt, Muḥammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), who became one of his disciples, he was instrumental to the constitution of a movement, that aimed at reforming Islam, and became known under the name of "Salafiyya". For further biographical information, cf. Nikki R.

Keddie 1972, *Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn 'al-Afghānī: A Political Biography*, Berkeley; Albert Hourani 1962, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*, Oxford, p. 103-129; for information on al-Afghānī's involvement in freemasonry, cf. Albert A. Kudsī-Zadeh 1972, *Afghani and Freemasonry in Egypt*, in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 92/1, p. 23-35.

59 Diogenes of Sinope (d. 323 BC), the Cynic, due to his lifestyle, bore the nickname "the Dog" (*kúon*), whereas the followers of Epicurus (d. 270 BC) were given the epithet "the Pigs" (*porci*) by the opposing Stoics. The Roman poet Horace (d. 8 BC), who considered himself a true follower of Epicurus, used this epithet positively by calling himself "a pig from the herd of Epicurus" (*Epicuri de grege porcum*) in his famous epistles (book 1, letter 4). Bearing in mind the usually solid education of the Jesuits in Classical Philosophy, it remains odd that Shaykhū obviously confuses the two philosophers, especially as their ways of thinking were diametrically opposed to each other. Cf. also Michael Erler 1994, *Epikur – Die Schule Epikurs – Lukrez*, in: *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, begründet von Friedrich Ueberweg*, vol. 4/1, Basel, p. 35-202.

60 I was not able to find out anything about the origin of this statement.

61 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) was a French economist, and socialist philosopher, who is considered to be one of the first theoreticians of anarchism. On his life and works, cf. Guy Bordes (ed.) 2001, *Proudhon, anarchisme*,

art et société, Paris. He was a member of the lodge "Sincérité, parfaite union et constante amitié" in Besançon (cf. Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 679).

62 Adam Weishaupt was born in Ingolstadt, Germany, around 1748. He was brought up by Jesuits, and has studied and taught in different Jesuit schools. In 1775 or 1776 he founded the order of the Illuminati, and in 1777 he became a Freemason, in order to poach brothers from freemasonry for his society (cf. Reinalter, *op. cit.*, p. 80-83; Harry Leroy Haywood³ 1968, *Famous Masons and Masonic Presidents*, Richmond, VA, p. 152). Moreover, Reinalter says (p. 83) that 'the main distinction between freemasonry and the illuminati was that the latter had a rationally enlightened system with an ideological-political objective' [translation M.C.].

63 I was not able to find information that could clarify the identity of this particular Hayman.

64 The designation "Sons of the Widow" originates from Hiram Abiv who the Freemasons commemorate in their rituals (cf. note 49).

65 Here, Shaykhū refers to the fact that in 1877 the French Orient declared that its members were free to appeal to the "Great Architect of the Universe". This was even embodied in the Constitution of the French Orient, which then read: 'Freemasonry in the first place is a philanthropical, philosophical, and progressive institution that aims at the search for truth, the study of general morality, art, and sciences, as well as the carrying out of charity. Its principles are the absolute freedom of the mind, and human solidarity. It does not exclude anyone because of his faith, and it establishes "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" as its motto.' [Translation M.C.] (cited in: Binder, *op. cit.*, p. 111).

Binder explains that this decision by the French Orient was made, firstly, as a result of the increasing politization of the life in the lodges, and secondly, because of the many papal publications in refutation of freemasonry (cf. id.). For the status of the French Orient versus the English Grand Lodge, cf. also above, note 29.

66 Amin b. Fāris b. Anṭūn b. Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Aḥad al-Riḥānī (1876-1940) was born in Lebanon, later on went to the USA and settled in New York. In 1898 he returned to Lebanon. Riḥānī is considered the founder of Lebanese immigrant literature (cf. al-Ziriklī, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 18-19; <http://www.ameenrihani.org/> [accessed on January 26, 2006]).

67 I was not able to obtain information on these “shameless stories”.

68 The word found in the article is *munāqidūn* which, however, seems to be rarely used. Dictionaries instead refer to *munqād*, i.e. someone, who is submissive.

69 [This is footnote 1 in the original text] If only His Eminence had not recently answered ‘the lodge Light of Affection [*Nūr al-muḥabba*], which follows the Grand Ottoman Orient’, when the lodge congratulated Him on His patriotic fervour. Quite as we regret what Mister Shaḥāda did in Zaḥla recently, when he arranged the funeral procession for the Master of the Masonic lodge, who [i.e. the Master] was excommunicated from his church and ours, too (see *The Well-Kept Secret in the Sect of the Freemasons*, 4th book, p. 66). [I was not able to find any information on Jurjī Ni ‘ma].

70 The reference on this Biblical quotation given by Shaykhū is incorrect, i.e. the quoted passage is actually Romans 13:1-5, and not 1-9.

71 This quotation from the

Bible is Matthew 22:21.

72 Neither was I able to find information on this ‘brother Rāghūn’ nor on the mentioned book *Sharḥ al-rumūz al-māsūniyya*.

73 François Timoléon Bégue-Clavel (1798-1852) was a French Masonic writer. In 1843 he published the *Histoire pittoresque de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, and in 1844 the *Almanach pittoresque de la Franc-Maçonnerie* (cf. Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 181).

74 *al-Khulāṣa al-māsūniyya*. I was unable to find this book.

75 Gustave Gautherot (1880-1948) was professor of the History of the Revolution in the Institut Catholique de Paris, and author of several works on modern anti-Christian movements.

76 Felice Orsini (1819-1858) belonged to an old Roman aristocratic family, from which three popes emerged. The attempted assassination of Napoléon III (reigned 1852-1870) was based on Orsini’s assumption, that the French emperor was the chief obstacle to Italian independence, and source for anti-liberal movements all over Europe. Orsini and his two conspirators were put to trial, and he was executed on March 13, 1858. For an early biography, cf. Enrico Montazio 1862, *Felice Orsini. I contemporanei italiani*, Torino.

77 Gerhard Cornelius von Walrave (1692-1773) was a Prussian major general, and engineer under Frederick the Great. He seems to have been kept in imprisonment until his death, because of fraud in the construction of the fortress in 1748. The story told by Shaykhū seems to have been a widely spread, but nonetheless wrong one. According to that story, Walrave is supposed to have exposed the fortress Neisse to Austria during the second Silesian war. As a conse-

quence, Frederick demanded an explanation for this during a meeting in the lodge, which Walrave denied. Then, Frederick is said to have

laid down the hammer, and closed down the lodge. The genealogist Stephan Kekulé von Stradonitz (1863-1933), according to Lennhoff, collected the material on the Walrave case, as well as on the lodge “Die drei Weltkugeln”, where all this is supposed to have taken place, and concluded that this story was definitely invented, and that Walrave had not even been a Freemason (cf. Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 886).

78 Capitaine Alfred Dreyfus (1859-1935) was the highest-ranking Jewish officer in the French army. His wrongful conviction for treason in October 1894, mainly out of anti-Semitic sentiments, caused a political scandal, and divided the French public even beyond his pardon in September 1899. I was, however, not able to find any indication that Dreyfus was a Freemason, but it seems that his older brother Mathieu was one (cf. Philippe E. Landau 1995, *L’opinion juive et l’affaire Dreyfus*, Paris, p. 21).

79 The spelling of this name in the Arabic text (*Ul[uj]mū*) is uncertain. Apart from that, I was unable to find information on this particular Olmo, and there seems to be no connection between him and the aforementioned Dreyfus.

80 Francisco Ferrer y Guardia (1859-1909) was a Spanish educationist, as well as a revolutionary with anarchist inclinations, and a Mason (he belonged to the lodge “Verdad” in Barcelona). In 1909 he was executed under the suspicion of having instigated teachers’ strikes. The death sentence was imposed practically without proof under the martial law, that had prevailed since 1909 (cf. Lennhoff, *op. cit.*, p. 279).

81 I was unable to find

anything on İliyyā-Ḥājj.

82 Another name of this society is “Fraternity of the most esteemed order of the Rosecross”. It refers to Christian Rosencreutz (1378-1484), but the origin of this movement is dated around 1600 AD, as a result of the tension between Reformation and Counter-Reformation in Germany. The Rosicrucians demanded a continuing Reformation, and aimed at establishing a Christian republic of scholars. One of the movement’s most prominent members was Johann Valentin Andreä (1586-1654). For further information on the Rosi-crucians, cf. Roland Edighoffer 1995, *Die Rosenkreuzer*, München.

83 On Gruber, cf. note 16.

84 This is the set of rules, which all of the so-called regular lodges draw upon today. These rules were written down by James Anderson in 1722/23, and are called *Constitutions*.

85 It is impossible to give even rough figures of the total number of Masons worldwide at that time. To make matters even more complicated, one would also have to distinguish between active Masons and those, who have been initiated into freemasonry, but apart from that, were never seen in a lodge again.

86 Idrīs b. Ismā‘il Rāghib (1862-ca. 1928) was chairman of Egyptian freemasonry for almost 30 years, i.e. from 1890 to 1920 (cf. Wissa, *op. cit.*, p. 149).

87 Cf. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_18840420_humanum_genus_en.html (accessed on January 23, 2006, paragraph 31).

88 Cf. *ibid.*, paragraph 36.