

The Secret Science of Masonic Initiation, by Robert Lomas, San Francisco, CA, Weiser Books, 2010. ISBN-13: 9781578634903.

Robert Lomas' book, The Secret Science of Masonic Initiation, explores the more esoteric aspects of Masonic Initiation and delves into the use of Freemasonry to teach the ancient Mysteries. He believes that, if truly understood, the Masonic Initiation is a transformative experience. Not just in the sense of "making a good man better" but in a physical and physiological sense. Lomas argues that Masonic Initiation, being tied to the ancient Mysteries, actually transforms us spiritually and intellectually into a different stream of consciousness from normal men. He states that the greatest men of all ages that have worked for the advancement of mankind have been initiates of the ancient Mysteries. These ancient Mysteries can be seen in the rites and legends of the Ancient Egyptians, the Phoenicians and all of the major religions of the world which have had their secret initiatic orders, apart from their public religion.

While I found this book interesting, I kept wondering why my Initiations into Freemasonry had not had the major transformative effect on me that Lomas describes. I guess I am just "not there" yet. I do not fully agree with his description of the esoteric side of the degrees, but I do agree that Freemasonry can be transformative. Perhaps as I conduct further research and study I can get closer to Lomas' views on our initiations and their true purpose. I will say that I have read other, similar, books since I read this one; books such as Hall's The Lost Keys of Freemasonry and Steinmetz's book, Freemasonry – Its Hidden Meaning, which discuss the same theories as Lomas, but with a slightly different take on the process of initiation. I would suggest reading Lomas' book, but I think it would have been better to start with Steinmetz, Hall, Wilmschurt and then move to Lomas; perhaps then I would have been more ready and attuned to his message.

Our reviewer, Brian C. Coffey, is a thirty-year Mason, Past Master and Master of two Lodges of Research. A retired Army Officer, he has worked as a Region Manager of defense contracts supporting our Army. He is a member of three Masonic Lodges and two Masonic Lodges of Research in Georgia as well as the Southern California Research Lodge. He is a 32°KCCH Mason in the Valley of Savannah Scottish Rite.