

Education & Enlightenment

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WHO IS A SCOTTISH RITE FREEMASON?

Ill. Bro. David Freeman 32°

British Columbia and Yukon Jurisdiction

Scottish Rite Freemasons are Freemasons who have completed the three degrees of the Symbolic Lodge and choose to follow the Scottish Rite path. This summation acts as parentheses for Scottish Rite Freemasonry but does not speak to a Scottish Rite Freemason's essence or substance. This substance is discovered in the Scottish Rite Freemason's personal spiritual journey. This essence is found in the Scottish Rite Freemason's moral excellence.

Manly Hall reminds us the true Mason is not creed-bound and his faith is universal. The name by which Deity is called means little for the true Mason for he recognizes the originating light not the name of its source. He understands the oneness of all spiritual truth. He knows the only heathen is that man who has great ideals but chooses not to live up to them. W.L. Wilmshurst suggests the emphasis for each Brother should be to reduce the implications of the Masonic System into a personal spiritual experience.

These two affirmations are the crux of the Scottish Rite method. Anchored in the belief God is above all and the founder of all and human distinctions are infinitely insignificant, Scottish Rite work is to encourage and assist by giving support, confidence, and hope removing barriers for mankind to progress. Scottish Rite degrees are not just a resume of interesting historical events or moral imperatives but rather a spiritual path for each Brother to pursue. The path dictates the application of Scottish Rite doctrine leading a Scottish Rite Freemason becoming a being of Light.

To be a mortal of light requires an understanding of the Nature of Deity. So, says Albert Pike. Scottish Rite Degrees chart the means to this understanding of this Nature. This knowledge derives from the Jewish Sages, the Magi and followers of Zoroaster. The Scottish Rite Freemason comes face to face with Deity in the fourth degree for it is in the sanctuary that He resides. In the 5th° the Brother starts to understand the nature of Deity through the soul given

by Deity. In the 6th° the seeker is told to exalt the Divine. The parameters of the nature of Deity are provided in the 7th° demonstrated in the balanced way Deity judges. In the 8th° the Deity opens the door to his Nature through knowledge. In the 9th° the Scottish Rite Freemason is given permission by Deity to seek His nature through spiritual freedom. In the 10th° the Scottish Rite Freemason is encouraged by Deity to never stop his quest. In the 11th° the Scottish Rite Brother is taught his quest to understand the Nature of Deity is also mankind's quest. In the 12th° Deity reveals his nature through our soul and its connection to Him. In the 13th° the Scottish Rite Freemason sees that when mankind understands the Nature of Deity then the family of Brethren will be constructed and in the 14th degree Deity reveals man is his highest creation and the nature of Deity is in all things of this world.

The gaining of this knowledge is the process of intellectual, emotional and personal transformation concentrating on recreating oneself in the image of Deity. This transformation fashions the belief in a power operating in the Universe that is greater than one's nature, a sense of interconnectedness with all living creatures, and an awareness of the purpose and meaning of life. It is the search to know one's real self. The Scottish Rite Freemason understands at some point he will depart life and then his soul will be united with Deity. This gives him a strength and ability to face the trails of life with fortitude.

The spiritual journey of the Scottish Rite Freemason directs him to be more like and in greater relationship with Deity. The Incommunicable Attributes (Self-existence, Infinity, Unity, Perfection, Immutability, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscience) of God are beyond men. But the degrees of the Scottish Rite teach the Communicable Attributes of God (Holiness, Love, Grace, Mercy, Patience, Goodness, Righteousness, Truthfulness, Faithfulness, and Humility) are within man's capacity forming the foundation of his identity. He progresses to maturity through understanding himself, and his relationship with the God. He begins to comprehend his and Gods purpose for his life and thus is better equipped to serve mankind.

Through the understanding of the Nature of Deity the Scottish Rite Freemason develops his own self-knowledge, self-worth, identity, motivation, social responsibility, a perspective on interpersonal relationships and a Scottish Rite Freemasons world view. Guided by this knowledge the Scottish Rite Freemason understands the duties he owes to himself are precisely those he owes to mankind. This results in behavior that honours all of God's creation. He lets no ethnic, cultural, religious or social construct infringe on his relating to and accepting all souls within God's domain. He strives to strengthen, protect and encourage those he meets never lowering, dishonoring, or disgracing anyone. He never subordinates their moral or intellectual character to his own. The nature of Deity is translated into the Scottish Rite Brothers lifestyle. This exalts the Divine in every man, allowing the Scottish Rite Freemason to make positive and just judgements, and to search and obtain knowledge. It points him to the need to relieve suffering, comfort the distressed and assist the destitute. The Scottish Rite Freemasons knowledge of the nature of Deity brings him the belief all wisdom and knowledge is pointed to the elevation of mankind and in some future time all men will form one great family.

Scottish Rite moral excellence requires frankness, self-revelation, taking a friend's criticism as seriously as their praise, loyalty, and self-sacrifice. It demands an applied effort to meet the lessons taught in the degrees and the courage to stand one's ground rather than disregard Scottish Rite virtues and standards. Scottish Rite moral excellence is bounded by self-discipline. The Scottish Rite Freemason makes a disciple of himself and is teacher, trainer, coach and disciplinarian in his own development. His moral excellence inculcates compassion and responsibility providing the individual with the power upon which to act appropriately in all circumstances. A Scottish Rite Freemason's moral excellence allows him to practice what G K Chesterton believes is the highest form of charity. This charity is to forgive those who have acted towards him in such a way they are unforgiveable. The Charity of forgiveness is spoken of in the Torah "as going to others to seek and give forgiveness". The New Testament advocates forgiveness is a conscious choice "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" The Quran declares "They should rather pardon and overlook". "If you pardon [their faults], and forbear, and forgive- then, behold, Allah is Forgiving, Merciful". "Hold to forgiveness, command what is right....." The Scottish Rite Brother understands by forgiving he repairs the foundation of Scottish Rite Brotherhood.

The essence and substance of a Scottish Rite Freemason is the application of the imperatives taught by the Scottish Rite. It is the transformation of the inner and outer man. The Scottish Rite Freemason does not crave worldly distinction but rather the distinction of the Soul. In experiencing the transformation to light he understands his real self. He believes in a power operating in the Universe that is greater than himself. He has an interconnectedness with all living creatures, and an awareness of the purpose and meaning of life. He practices the work of holiness, love, grace, mercy, patience, goodness, righteousness, truthfulness, faithfulness, and humility. Having a greater relationship with and being more like the GAOTU he holds to a higher level of morality than society in general. A Scottish Rite Freemason has belief in self, self-knowledge, self-worth, identity, motivation, social responsibility, a perspective on interpersonal relationships and a Scottish Rite world view. He loves his Brothers' soul as deeply as he loves his own. A Scottish Rite Freemason is self-disciplined, compassionate, responsible, courageous, genuine, authentic and practices perseverance. A Scottish Rite Freemason sees people with differing beliefs having a harmony of purpose within the unity of God.

Scottish Rite Freemasons are the epitome of the male archetypes arising out of our mystical past. They live an empowered life. They understand each Brother creates his own happiness. They rest their opinions on foundations of fact not rumor. As a Chivalrous Man the Scottish Rite Freemason optimizes piety, valor, gentleness, compassion and a spiritual inner life.

A Scottish Rite Freemason is what Aristotle, Shakespeare, Homer, Wordsworth, Dickens and many others would call a man of integrity and honor.

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