

⊕OUR PURPOSE

David T.
Lang, 32°

AND PATH IN LIFE

In *Morals and Dogma*, Pike tells us “Masonry is a succession of allegories, the mere vehicles of great lessons in morality and philosophy.” In this vein, the Scottish Rite Degrees take us from the lessons of the Secret Master in the 4° to the lessons of the Master of the Royal Secret in the 32°. Along this journey, we are taught what it means to be a Mason—mastery not of our environment or our neighbor, but of ourselves.

In the Lodge of Perfection Degrees, 4° through 14°, we are reminded to be true even when severely tempted to be false, to be honest even when honesty is most costly, and to be charitable even when we find charity uncomfortable. The 7°, Provost and Judge, makes a lasting impression with its message of justice and the heavy responsibility of sitting in judgment on others.

In the Chapter of Rose Croix Degrees, 15° through 18°, we are reminded of the value of knowledge and the excellence of truth whereby we may be able to open the Book of Nature and ponder the words of God upon its pages.

In the Council of Kadosh Degrees, 19° through 30°, characterized by Pike

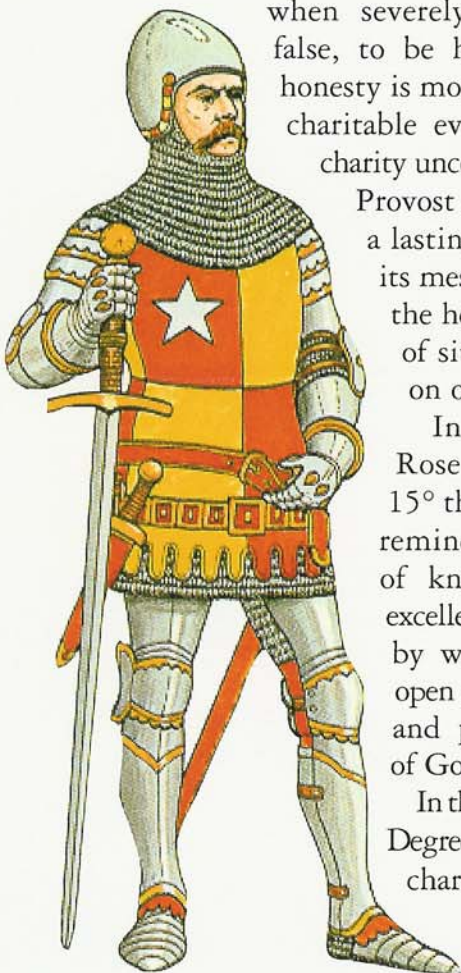
as chivalric and philosophical, we learn the virtues of generosity and forgiveness while accepting the obligations of duty and honor. Thus armed, we can venture back into the

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Freemasonry's central teaching.*

world as true Knights of the Temple devoted to civil and religious liberty.

Though these knightly virtues are seldom seen in today's modern world, these are the virtues that, overcoming terror, brought the world to its feet on September 11, 2001. On that day, modern knights of both genders—firefighters, police officers, and everyday citizens—gave the last full measure of devotion as they summoned the courage to overcome fear. Putting their neighbors above themselves, they charged into crumbling buildings in New York City and Washington, D.C. Even more inspiring to the spirit of freedom were the knights and ladies high above a Pennsylvania field who took up the sword of justice and refused to yield to those who would spread oppression, death, and darkness. Like September 11th, these Degrees steel us to overcome our fears and stand firm against the enemy.

One of the greatest fears alluded to in the allegories of the Higher Degrees is the fear of death. The power of not fearing death is well documented in history by actions of men such as Thomas Jackson, who sat high in his saddle during the fierce battle of the First Manassas,



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earning himself the nickname of “Stonewall,” which, in a show of leadership, he passed on to his brigade.

That evening after the battle, as Jackson was surveying the field, a young lieutenant asked him how it was that he could remain undisturbed as deadly projectiles whizzed all around him. Jackson’s answer was the simple answer of a true knight—he was at peace with his Maker and did not fear death as long as his motives were honest and pure. Like “Stonewall” Jackson, Scottish Rite Masons must concentrate on the task at hand and not allow the specter of death to cloud their thoughts or alter their noble course.

In the Consistory Degrees, the 31° and 32°, we learn to balance the energy of the pillar of severity and the pillar of mercy. This is a concept known to every child, but somehow it fades from our consciousness as we grow up and are overtaken by the daily demands and false priorities of the world. However, the Scottish

Rite opens our eyes anew so that we may see as children again and rediscover our true purpose and path in life.

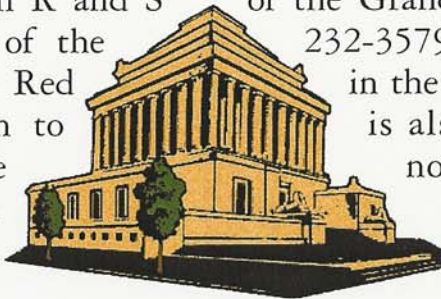
Morals and Dogma reminds us that thought is a force to be used for positive and lasting change. Managed by intellect and guided by law, thought is to be put into action by deed. Moreover, if we apply the force of thought powered by the energy of philosophy, we can drive the motors of truth and love. The Rite’s Degrees give us the tools and direction for this—and more. ♦

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~ Visitors Welcome ~

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We are also open on weekends for groups consisting of 25 or more, provided special arrangements are made in advance (30-day arrangement appreciated) with the office of the Grand Executive Director (202) 232-3579. Visitors are asked to enter in the rear of the building, which is also handicap accessible. If notified in advance, we are better able to handle large groups during the week.