



The Rite Word

From the Venerable Master

Brethren,

December, the month of big holidays in most western religions, whether your belief is of one of the Christian or of Judean faith, and even some of the Muslim celebrate Mohammed's birthday end of December.

And it is the month of St. John's Day. Saint John the Evangelist was the second patron of the old masonic guilds (after St. John the Baptist), added at a later time when speculative Masonry became more formalized and more elaborate in ritual and symbols used.

It is also the time of Winter Solstice, the time with the shortest day in the year.

You may remember one of the symbols used in Masonry, the point in a circle, placed between two vertical lines. The right one of the parallel lines is said to represent Winter Solstice, and within Masonry Saint John the Evangelist. Like the other three of the four cardinal milestones (equinoxes and solstices) that are based on astronomical understanding of time in order to understand the ups and downs of nature caused by the changes of Sun's influence to Earth, it was celebrated in ancient times as such: a time of peace and rest, before the chores of Spring will once again require full atten-



tion and energy in order to make it a successful year, hoped to be crowned by a successful and rich harvest in the fall. The Winter Equinox signals a time of hope, as days will get longer again, it signals a time of rebirth. While it is at a time of slow-down in pace, this is what allows us to recharge, and it is a message of joy – the darkest and coldest time will be over soon, Spring is to come!

We will continue with our virtual meetings for the time being, and will continue refining their format as we receive feedback or see an opportunity for improvement. At our November Stated Meeting we were honored by the presence of Illustrious James Cole, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander for the Southern Jurisdiction of the Scottish Rite, Illustrious Frank Louie, 33° as well as several Personal Representatives from other Valleys.

To all Masons: Happy St. John's Day, may the light overcome the darkness! May the new year bring us joy and closer social interaction again.

To everyone, happy holidays, whether this is part of your belief, or just some extra quiet days, working on that recharge. May peace be everywhere, and most importantly, in your life!

You should have received your Dues Notice and 2021 Dues Card in the mail by now. Please pay your dues as soon as possible. Even though we are currently unable to meet, the bills continue on.

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Make an annual Donation to the San Jose Scottish Rite Bodies in the amount of \$100 or more and have your name included on the "Honor Roll" Your gift allows the San Jose Bodies to provide the quality events that you deserve.

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Bro. Paul Trejo 32°
Sept 15, 2020

"Soft and safe to thee,
my Brother, be thy resting place"

Correction

In July Issue of the Rite word I miss spelled
Ill Glenn Mac Bride's name. My apologies

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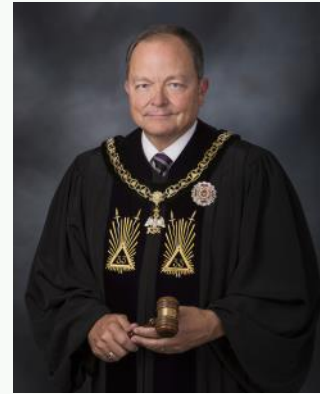
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Ill. James Cole 33°
Sovereign Grand Commander
Supreme Council A.A.S.R.
Washington, D.C.



Ill. Frank Loui, 33° P.G.M.
Sovereign Grand Inspector
General in California,
Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite
Southern Jurisdiction, U.S.A.

The Bodies of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, sitting in the Valley of San Jose, in the Orient of California, acknowledge and yield all allegiance to the Supreme Council (Mother Council of the World) of the Inspectors General, Knights Commander of the House of the Temple of Solomon of the Thirty Third Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of freemasonry for the Southern Jurisdiction of the United States of America.

From the Wise Master

My Brethren,

I hope that on Thanksgiving you were able to have Dinner or a get together with family and friends and still adhere to Covid 19 requirements. I am planning to do so with my family. It will be special to meet and celebrate this holiday. We do have a lot to be thankful for.



Here it is December and a great Religious Holiday to celebrate, the Birth of our Lord. It's also a time to share opening of gifts and having Dinner. My hope is that you will all be able to share in this experience. A very Merry Christmas to all my Brethren and their Families.

In our December Stated Meeting we will be Electing New Leaders for the 2021 year for the Four Scottish Rite Bodies. Stay Tuned. At our Virtual Stated Meeting for November, we had the pleasure of having the Illustrious James Cole 33 Deg. Sovereign Grand Commander attend. His words were well received.

In this Covid 19 times and around the holidays, it might well be a good time to remind us of one of the tenets of Freemasonry--Brotherly Love

Brotherly Love might very well be supposed to be an ingredient in the organization of a society so peculiarly constituted as that of Freemasonry. But the brotherly love which we inculcate is not a mere abstraction, nor is its character left to any general and careless understanding of the candidate, who might be disposed to give much or little of it to his brethren, according to the peculiar constitution of his own mind, or the extent of his own generous or selfish feelings. It is, on the contrary, closely defined; its object plainly denoted; and the very mode and manner of its practice detailed in words, and illustrated by symbols, so as to give neither cause for error nor apology for indifference.

Every Mason is acquainted with the Five Points of Fellowship--he knows their symbolic meaning--he can never forget the interesting incidents that accompanied their explanation; and while he has this knowledge and retains this remembrance, he can be at no loss to understand what are his duties, and what must be his conduct, in relation to the principle of Brotherly Love.

May you always have love to share, Health to Spare, and friends who care. May you be Blessed.

From the Commander of Kadosh Brethren,

We are approaching the end of a most interesting year and Christmas is almost upon us.



Christians celebrate December 25th as the birth of Jesus however historians are not certain of the exact date, month or year. One theory uses the Biblical account that "shepherds were watching their flocks". The flocks would not be out in the open fields during the winter so this theory places it in the spring. Other theories using astronomical records believe the year was 5 BC, based on a slow-moving comet or the conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter (October 7 BC) or Venus and Jupiter (June 17, 2 BC).

Our current religious observances and secular celebrations and festivities were not always so. In America it could be said that Christmas was, at one time, banned in Boston.

The Puritans who founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630 brought a contempt for Christmas celebrations. Shops and schools remained open but churches were closed on December 25. Some even called it "Foolstide". This contempt was reinforced when the English Puritans overthrew King Charles I in 1647. Parliament decreed December 25 should be a day of "fasting and humiliation". The Colony's General Court went so far as making it a criminal offense to observe Christmas by forbearing of labor or feasting. Punishment was a 5 shilling fine.

Moving into the early 1800s it looked like Mr. Scrooge was being proper by not observing Christmas. The Industrial Revolution gave workers little free time to celebrate Christmas. The early Victorian period in England, however, saw changes. Early in that period, Prince Albert brought to England the German tradition of decorating trees. The 1840s saw the first Christmas card.

The major change in how we celebrate Christmas was due to Charles Dickens. His writing of "A Christmas Carol" was a result of his desperate need for money. He had a large mortgage on his house and lagging revenue from the monthly Martin Chuzzlewit left him short on cash.

Dickens paid for the first printing of "A Christmas Carol" out his own pocket. The original edition was expensive to produce. It had a gold stamped cover and hand colored etchings. To make the book affordable, he set the price at 5 shillings. It was published just before Christmas 1843 and became an instant success. Due to loosely enforced copyright laws he spent much time and money in copyright disputes.

From the Master of Kadosh

I thought I would say a few words regarding the November Scottish Rite California "Virtual" Reunion. It came out real good considering the very short time span to prepare for such an inaugural event. My hat is off to all the tech-staff as well as the participants. Great Job!

I remember with joy of helping with my preparations and performances at previous reunions. The fun of having to wade through the dressing rooms to find the right pieces of clothing that make up the correct costume for each part in the exemplification of the assigned degree. Each player had to be dressed properly and know their lines and make the proper stage movements "on que" and we had to learn it all by heart.

So! How were things different in the virtual setting? Well, for one, you didn't get to "see" beautiful stage settings with all the dressed-up actors at each one's station, nor to have a chance to follow their movements and interactions. Actually, in "virtual", since the visual input is missing, one has to fully concentrate on the words and there is so much talk and so many words, that it may have the tendency to overload the memory bank. One might only be able to remember, in large part, that a lot of good and important things were presented and would somehow be reinforced and expounded on in future reunions or readings "A Bridge to Light" should help.

For comparison, in the 'normal' reunion for example there are so many beautiful stage settings and costumes and actors/presenters of each part of the degree that one's visual senses enhance and emphasize the spoken words better. But don't get me wrong, I'm not saying one way is better than the other, it's just that there is only so much of one thing that may be able to be remembered at one sitting. And this is different from the normal reunion where an overload can result from all of the verbal and concurrent scenery/props/costumes/ and personal movements at once. So please bear with me on this.

In conclusion I would like to say that no matter which type of reunion we have, they are both good. Its sort of like when you have to go to war; you bring what you have with you at the time and do your best to do your job or assignment. In this most recent 'Fraternal war' against the Covid virus our guys put together what they had and what was needed. And they won the War for our side and for Scottish Rite in California. This was a real time move using a brand new technology. Again my congratulations to you all, and a job well done.

Dell Bleiler



From the Secretary

We are down to only 10 members who have not paid their 2020 dues. All have been contacted many times. I will be sending out final notices, but know that you will be suspended as of December 31st if you do not pay or contact me to make other arrangements.

We are doing fairly well on 2021, we now have over 1/2 paid, if you have not already done so, please take care of this as soon as possible as you already have your dues card in your possession.

Our normal end of year work has commenced, we will finalize the Foundation Budget shortly. Between the Bequest we know is coming and the Amazon contract to rent the parking lot we are projecting that we will need to pull no money from investments for operations. This should allow those funds to grow, although we still have a few capital improvements in the works.

The new floors will go into the clinic in early December and we can then buy some new furniture and fixtures. We have been working with the Clinicians to decide exactly what they would like to have to serve the kids once they can get back to regular work.

Unfortunately we have been moved back to the 1st tier, so that means we are no closer to being able to meet in person. But we are working on getting a plan in place to hold our installation via the Zoom platform. We will have a new zoom log on for our stated meetings beginning in January so please look to your emails for that information latter in December.

Finally, a warm welcome to our 12 new Masters of the Royal Secret, welcome to the Valley of San Jose.

Gary Hall



Twenty-Fifth Degree, Knight of the Brazen Serpent or Sufi Master — Part 2

Last month, we looked at the first half of the 25th degree, and shared an introduction to the faith of Islam with some of its vocabulary and philosophy. We followed the story of Idris, a faithful Muslim, who has taken the vows of initiate into the mysteries, and who is devoted to the search of truth. His friend Abudullah is a Sufi, and has introduced Idris to a synod of Sufi Masters.

The Masters questioned the results of the vows Idris had taken. And lamented that for most people, taking a vow is next to meaningless. Then the Masters tested Idris's knowledge of Islam, because if you don't know the essence of religion, you are not prepared to advance into its mysteries. Idris was found ready. He got his first lesson and learned that wisdom often appears in unexpected — and initially unrecognizable — ways.

Now we continue with Idris on his journey into Sufism.

Lesson about Light

The Second Sufi Master (2SM) explains that the enlightened man has no need of ordinary light. Thus he is not dependent on the light or knowledge of other men. When properly understood, initiation is a transformation, after which a man can no longer view the world as his did, using the simile of how a butterfly no longer sees the world as a caterpillar.

The Third Sufi Master (3SM) adds that what most people call "truth" is conditioned by their experiences and limited by their knowledge. One must pierce the veils of illusion in order to progress towards enlightenment.

This saying is similar to the Buddhist concept that what we think of reality is actually an illusion. One must recognize that before he can perceive the truth of existence.

The First Sufi Master (ISM) asks, "Now my brother, do you see that there are many layers to knowledge and perception? If you are ready to pierce the veil of appearances and see beyond it into the heart of truth, then you may enter into the House of Light."

As a reminder, the meeting place of Sufi Masters is a tent called Bayt al-Noor, meaning House of Light. In this degree, to enter the House of Light is to become a Sufi.

ISM recites from the Qur'ān, Surah 24, verse 35: "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the similitude of His light is as a niche, in which is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass; The glass is as it were a star shining bright, lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern or western, the oil thereof almost glows forth (of itself), and (even) though fire does not touch it; God guides unto His Light whomsoever He wills; and God sets forth parables for people; and

God is All-Aware of all things."

2SM asks, "Tell us Idris, what does this mean to you?"

Idris pauses for a few moments and then says, "That Allah is light?"

2SM says, "I did not ask what it said, but what it means."

Idris displays a look of frustration and replies, "If it does not mean what it says, I do not know."

3SM explains, "It means what it says — and more. We may say truly Allah is light, by which is meant He is the source of light, which is also truth. The niche (referring to the passage ISM just quoted) is the true believer's heart. There is light in his words and deeds. Therefore, it is the light of Allah which inspires all believers to do His will."

The Fourth Sufi Master (4SM) adds, "Allah speaks to the heart which knows Him, the spirit who Loves Him, and the soul that contemplates Him. Therefore, open your heart, spirit, and soul to Allah, that He may fill you with His light."

Lesson about Prayer

ISM comments, "Man prays for evil, it is said in the Qur'ān, as he prays for good; for man seldom considers the consequences of his desires (Qur'ān 17:11). Therefore, do not weary Allah with petitions but give Him thanks, and have a grateful heart. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the world, the most merciful, the King of the Day of Judgement. (Qur'ān 1:2-4)"

2SM says, "Allah is the wise, the all-knowing." (Qur'ān 4:26)

3SM adds, "There is no God but Allah (Qur'ān 3:18), He gives life, and the light shines forth from Him, and He withdraws them, and lo! Death and darkness."

The Sufi Masters pray, each one speaking a verse in turn: "You O Creator, do we worship. You we thank for life and light. We thank You for the coming of the dawn.

We thank you for the regular rising of Your sun. (Note the word is "sun", not "son".)

To You only, the Beneficent we look for comfort and assistance. Unto You only, we ask for strength to resist temptation. Unto You only, we beg for direction in the right way, in the way of those to whom You have been gracious. O true believers, remember Allah, with a frequent remembrance, and celebrate His praise, the the morning and when the evening shadows fall. We thank and magnify and glorify the one true God, to Whom all things return."

Lecture

Just like with prayer, the four Sufi Masters take turns delivering portions of the lecture of this degree.

1SM begins, "The destiny of man is to make or create himself. He is and must always be the child of his own works, for time and for eternity. The necessity of competition is imposed on all men; but the number of the elect, that is to say, of those who succeed, is always small. In other words, men desirous of being important are numerous; but men who excel are always rare.

2SM continues, "Life is a warfare, in which one must prove his soldiery if he would rise in rank. He only is worthy of imitation in the profounder mysteries who has overcome the fear of death, and is ready to hazard his life when the welfare of his country or the interests of humanity require it, to die even an ignoble death, if thereby the people may be benefitted."

3SM adds, "Abdallah, the Son of Maimoun, the fourth of the seven concealed Imams, said, 'Religion is a difficult and abstruse matter, profound in its meaning, veiled over by the winds of the Almighty, and a matter of far too great importance to be abandoned to the profane use of the wicked, inasmuch as it is the sealed holy secret, and His Impenetrable mystery.'"

4SM comments, "Take care not to be too hasty in such matters as these. Some truths are too valuable to be entrusted to those who are not worthy. Those who would penetrate their mysteries must first be prepared to make a covenant. God has always required this from His servants, and so it is often said the the Qur'ān."

2SM adds, "If a man fulfills his duties out of fear of punishment or expecting to earn resurrection, all that he does must fail to be acceptable to God."

Finally, 1SM finishes, "According to our ancient customs, a probationary term of twelve months was prescribed, during which your behavior would be narrowly watched. Only at the end of the year, if you gave clear proof of your sincerity and honesty, would you be admitted to our order of the mysteries.

"Because we already know you are fit, we choose to dispense with a year's probation. We will permit you now to assume the white turban, emblem of the purity of your faith."

Speaking to Idris, the Candidate: "I invest you with the jewel of the Degree, conferring upon you therewith the name of Knight of the Brazen Serpent."

The jewel of the 25th Degree is a tau cross. On the top is a ring, and around the ring a snake is entwined. On the horizontal bar is the Hebrew word *Nehushtan*, the derogatory name for the brazen serpent Moses fastened to the pole. On the vertical bar is the Hebrew word *Haleetee*, meaning "I got sick".

The brazen serpent is a holdover from the earlier version of this degree. The story is found in the Bible, Numbers 21:4-9. The Israelites, on their 40-year desert journey to the Promised Land, are temporarily camped in the land of Edom. Every day, the Israelites have been dining on manna. At first the manna was seen as a miracle but eventually the people got tired of eating it every day. That is certainly understandable. As usual, the Israelites complained to Moses.

God, who has arranged for the daily delivery of the life-saving food, sent poisonous serpents into the Israelite camp to bite the complainers. The people quickly got the message and pled with Moses to persuade God to take away the serpents. The Lord gives Moses a solution the bites. He directed Moses to make a serpent of bronze, and then set it up on a pole. All a snake-bite victim had to do was look at the serpent on the pole — and they were healed. This is an example of sympathetic magic.

The lecture continues, "It also, and more especially and essentially, is the symbol of religious faith. Faith is a conviction of the truth. Such a conviction is revelation, the word of God uttering as a voice in the human soul. Conversely, the serpent is also the symbol of that insolent human reason which rejects everything as unreal that lies beyond its own understanding. That insolence poisons men and nations with the venom of irreligion that at last produces atheism.

"Finally, heard and heed this admonition: Be not content with what you have already learned, thinking you may not improve your store of your wisdom. Do not fall into a state of indifference and inactivity, saying to yourself, 'I have no further need to study, or to fatigue myself with acquiring more', for this would only prepare the way for losing what you already possess. The brightest and sharpest sword, left to remain too long in the scabbard, rust and loses its edge; and the intellect, left to lie fallow, becomes arid and barren."

Closing

The Synod closes when the First Sufi Master arises and claps his hands, then the other Masters arise. All exclaim, "Bismillah al Raham al Raheem" commonly translated as, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!"

But it really means much more. Every surah (chapter) of the Qur'ān, except the ninth, begins with the Arabic phrase, "Bismillah al Raham al Raheem". Like the Hebrew word "Shalom", commonly translated, "Peace", the phrase actually represents a deep and complex concept. Read more at <https://wahiduddin.net/words/bismillah.htm>

Continued on page 10

Finally, a bit of American commercial exploitation of Christmas is Coca Cola. Years past their advertisements showed Santa Claus drinking a Coke and now we have polar bears enjoying it. Motivation for these ads was to convince the public that drinking a Coca Cola was not just for summer but could be enjoyed in the winter as well.

From the Council of Kadosh we wish all our Brothers in the Rite and their families a very merry Christmas and our prayers for happy and safe 2021.

Paul M. Fiel



Working on updating the Clinic

Emma is a bright, sweet and inquisitive eight-year-old-girl who currently receives speech and language services at the San Jose Scottish Rite Childhood Speech and Language Clinic. Emma loves unicorns and telling stories about



adventures she has with her family. She comes to therapy sessions with a smile on her face and ready to work! Emma was diagnosed with an articulation disorder primarily affecting her /r/ and /s/ phonemes. Her parents commented that Emma's difficulty with her speech "impeded her ability to learn to read, which in turn affected her self-esteem."

After Emma was admitted into the clinic's speech and language program, Emma's parents "saw an immediate change in her abilities". Emma received weekly therapy sessions and homework. She has worked hard in our program and her efforts are paying off as Emma is nearly ready to be discharged for meeting all of her speech and language goals!

"We couldn't be more grateful for all that she has learned, and the ability she has to read at grade level. Her self-confidence has since skyrocketed and her motivation to learn has been leveled up. Without the help of Ms. Rachel Sense, I don't know where Emma would be academically. We are so very grateful for the time and dedication Emma has received to overcome the aversion of having a speech impediment." We are so proud of Emma and all of her accomplishments too! She has been a treasure to see each week and we will miss her!



Recommended Reading

Commander Albert Pike dedicated over 100 pages to the philosophy of this degree in *Morals and Dogma*. I recommend reading Art De Hoyos's annotated edition, since he corrects some factual misunderstandings Pike reflected in the original work.

Here are a few references if you would like to learn more about Sufism:

- https://curlie.org/Society/Religion_and_Spirituality/Islam/Sufism/
- https://www.livingislam.org/m/tsw_e.html
- <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0759>

III. Daniel Doornbos 33°



New window coverings in auditorium and dining room and new stage lighting.



III. Roger Bibb 33° Class

TBD in 2021



ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED SCOTTISH RITE OF FREEMASONRY,
SOUTHERN JURISDICTION, U. S. A.

Petition for Degrees

(Full) Name: _____
FIRST NAME MIDDLE NAME LAST NAME DATE

Street Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Work Phone: (____) _____ Cell Phone: (____) _____

Month, Day, and Year of Birth: _____

City, State, Country of Birth: _____

Are you a US Citizen? YES NO If "No", where are you a citizen? _____

E-Mail Address: _____ Wife/Partner's Name: _____

Years as M.M.: ____ Blue Lodge Name _____ No. _____

Lodge City and State: _____

Date and Place Raised: _____

Occupation: _____ Employer Name: _____

Have you ever previously petitioned for any Scottish Rite Degrees? YES NO

Hat Size: ____ (example: "7 1/8")

"I, the above named and below signed, confirm a belief in a Supreme Being, the inculcation of patriotism, respect for law and order, and an undying loyalty to the principles of civil and religious liberty, and the forbearance of a state sponsored religion, principles embodied by the Founding Fathers of the United States of America. I respectfully petition to receive the 4th through 32nd Degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. I am currently a Master Mason in good standing."

_____	Degree Fee	Spring	Fall
<i>Candidate's Signature</i>		\$150	\$150
_____	Annual Dues	\$50	\$0 (For Current Year)
1st Sponsor PRINTED NAME			
_____	Total Due:	\$200	\$150
<i>1st Sponsor Signature</i>			

2nd Sponsor PRINTED NAME _____ I hereby authorize the San Jose Scottish Rite to charge \$ _____
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2nd Sponsor Signature Expiration Date ____ / ____

(Return Petition to Valley General Secretary's Office)

Signature of authorized card holder



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Future Scottish Rite and Masonic Events

Tuesday December 10th ~ Scottish Rite Stated Meeting 6:00 pm

Election of Officers for 2021

Council Opens

Tuesday January 12th ~ Scottish Rite Stated Meeting 6:00 pm

Lodge of Perfection Opens

Installation of Officers for 2021

Tuesday February 9th ~ Scottish Rite Stated Meeting 6:00 pm

Lodge of Perfection Opens