



Scottish Freemasonry - An Introduction

What is Freemasonry?

A simple, but accurate, description is that
Freemasonry is two things:

A Way of Life and a Moral Education.

This brief introduction explains
something about each of those aspects.

A Way of Life

There are now about 4 million Freemasons under more than 100 "regular" Grand Lodges worldwide. Membership of the Craft is open to every respectable man who believes in his personal Supreme Being - usually known in Masonic terms as the Great Architect of the Universe, Grand Geometrician of the Universe or Most High. These descriptive names show the importance the Freemason places on his Supreme Being in the order of things in Life.

Principles

Three great but simple principles, Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, unite Freemasons of every colour and many creeds. Non-Freemasons often unfairly criticize not knowing that members of the Craft are guided by such honourable objectives. The good Freemason builds these principles into his daily life as a law abiding Man and Citizen of the world.

BROTHERLY LOVE is the concern which each Freemason has for his Brother, which is readily shown by tolerance and respect for the beliefs, opinions and practices of his fellows and his willingness to care for his Brother and that Brother's dependants.

RELIEF The Freemason is by nature and teaching a charitable man. He will cheerfully and kindly assist those less fortunate (whether Freemasons or not!). He will care for and support his community - local, national and international.

TRUTH The Freemason believes in Truth in all things in honesty and integrity in his personal, business and public life, in fair dealings and in firm standards of decency and morality.

An Education

As every Man progresses in Life by education so every Freemason is taught how he can be a better Man. This is done by a series of degrees - each degree educates him and answers some questions but leaves a door beyond. When the candidate has grasped the teaching of one degree, that door is opened by his progress to the next degree.

Freemasonry is believed to have begun its evolution 500 or more years ago among the bands of working, skilled builders known as "masons". The traditional framework into which most Masonic degrees are woven is the story and symbolism of King Solomon's Temple. The connection of Masonic teachings to the building of that great edifice comprises a system of education related to the traditional craft of masons and interesting to the candidate and therefore more likely to be effective in his development.

Freemasonry and Religion

A man's religion is precious and personal to him. Discussion on matters of religion often causes arguments and many wars have been fought ostensibly to impose or defend one religion against another. As he loves all his fellows, understandably Religion is a topic which the Freemason, in that capacity, is just not allowed to discuss - nor would he want to.

Freemasonry is most certainly not a Religion. It has no "Masonic" God. When Freemasons pray together, as they do in their lodges, each is addressing his personal Supreme Being. So Freemasons of many creeds can in love and fellowship meet and pray together, irrespective of their individual religions. The Holy Book (known as the Volume of the Sacred Law) of each religion represented in the Lodge is open during meetings. It is common for 5 or 6 different V.S.L.'s to lie open during Lodge meetings abroad.

Freemasonry and Politics

For much the same reasons as above the discussion of political matters among Freemasons is absolutely prohibited. A man's politics are his own concern and the Craft, being completely non-political, will never interfere in the world of Politics nor will the Grand Lodge of Scotland express any views on political ideology or theories.

Freemasonry and Secrecy

It is often wrongly stated that Freemasonry is a Secret Society. There are many thousands of books on Freemasonry openly available in libraries everywhere. The Masonic Temple is usually a fairly conspicuous building in most communities. In Scotland many lodges advertise and publish details of their meetings in the local press. The Museum and Library of the Grand

Lodge of Scotland are open to - and used by - members of the public who are not Freemasons. Are these the hallmarks of a Secret Society?

The truth is that the principles and many of the practices of Freemasonry are anything but secret. Members are perfectly free to make it known that they are Freemasons. The only masonic "secrets" are just those methods which members of various degrees throughout the world use to recognise and greet each other. It's as simple as that!

Summary

Freemasonry is an ancient and honourable Society. Its principles are just steady standards of life and conduct in a changing world. The practice by the Freemason of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth and the other principles of the Craft will go a long way to making a good man better.

The Grand Lodge of Scotland

Scotland has the oldest Lodges in the world and has many lodges at home and abroad. In Scotland, Grand Lodge has arranged its lodges in Provinces; abroad they are arranged in Districts. The Grand Lodge of Scotland is one of the oldest in the world and works in harmony with all other "regular" Grand Lodges - i.e. those whose members follow the same basic principles and practices as the Scottish Freemason.

Further information about
Scottish Freemasonry is available from:

The Grand Secretary's Office,
Grand Lodge of Scotland,
Freemasons' Hall,
96 George Street,
EDINBURGH, EH2 3DH.
Telephone: 0131 225 5304
Fax: 0131 225 3953
Website:

<http://www.grandlodgecotiand.com>

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