



ELU

(An oration presented by Dr. Bing Johnson, 32° KCCH
to the Grand Junction Scottish Rite Bodies on April 18, 2005)

Elu is a word that is heard in the opening and closing of our Bodies. This word is also used during the conferral of various degrees by the Lodge of Perfection.

Minister of State Sean Norris has suggested that we consider the meaning and use of the word Elu.

Elu comes from the French and means Elect, Elected or Chosen and characterized the names of approximately a score of the Hauts Grades. Probably no one has seen or even read the rituals of all Elu degrees and, hence it has been possible to circulate many unverified statements about them. 'Elect' was also a term used by Gnostics which defined some one who was in possession of divine knowledge acquired by revelation.

The Degrees conferred by the Lodge of Perfection, the Fourth through the Fourteenth, are called the Ineffable Degrees and are built upon the legend that forms the basis of the Third Degree of the Symbolic Lodge. The Scottish Rite version differs slightly from the that of the Symbolic Lodge.

They are called the Ineffable Degrees because their principle purpose is the investigation and contemplation of the ineffable name of Deity. The word 'ineffable' comes from the Latin *Ineffabilis* which means something which should not be spoken. As used in the Scottish Rite degrees it refers to the belief of ancient Judaism that the name of God was not to be spoken. They believed that the name of God possessed a peculiar power, the possession of which could not be worked for good or evil, thus the name was not spoken and its true pronunciation was lost forever.

This is a difficult concept. Albert Pike states: The Deity is thus not an object of knowledge, but of faith; not to be approached by the understanding, but by the moral sense; not to be conceived, but to be felt.

The legend of the Ineffable Degrees ends in triumph and disaster: the Temple is finished, the sacred name of Deity is discovered, and the Perfect Elus are created. Solomon, however, departs from the ways of the Lord. The Perfect Elus preserve in the face of much adversity and continue to transmit with scrupulous purity the knowledge of the true God.

In the Ninth Degree or Elu of Nine the original nine Elus were chosen by King Solomon to seek out the assassins of Hiram.

In the Tenth Degree or Elu of The Fifteen the fifteen who participated in the capture of the assassins are rewarded by admittance into a higher degree of the mysteries and a new order called the Elu of Fifteen.

The Eleventh Degree is the Elu of the Twelve or Prince Ameth. Ameth is a Hebrew word meaning truth, fidelity, firmness and consistency in keeping one's promises. Solomon is told that many complaints have been received from the people in his kingdom because those charged with the collection of tribute are practicing extortion and collected more from the people than was put in the treasury. King Hiram of Tyre consults Solomon to appoint his own officers to collect the revenues and to compensate them fairly. King Solomon selects by lot twelve of the fifteen Elus to be governors in Israel and charges them with collection of revenue and gives them supreme control in their province. The twelve are advanced to the rank and dignity of Princes Ameth and are advocates and champions of the people.

The Fourteenth Degree or Perfect Elu deals with the legend associated with the discovery of the cubical stone in the crypt of Enoch bearing the Ineffable Name of Deity. The stone was then placed by King

Solomon, King Hiram of Iyrah and the Master Hiram in a special underground vault. This Degree of Perfection represents the perfection or completion of the degrees of the Scottish Rite Symbolic Lodge.

The Lost Word represents the name of God, the peace of God and the ineffable nature of God.

Sources:

1. Coil, H. W., *COIL'S MASONIC ENCYCLOPEDIA*, Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Co., Inc., 1996
2. Hutchens, R. R., *A BRIDGE TO LIGHT* The Supreme Council, 33° Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction United States of America, 1997